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**The Savage Freud**  
**The First Non-Western Psychoanalyst**  
**and the Politics of Secret Selves in**  
**Colonial India**

OF THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY European schools of thought that have shaped our self-definition in this century, the two most influential 'in-house' critiques of the modern West are those offered by Marxism and psychoanalysis. Both are deeply ambivalent towards their culture or origin. They seek to bare the normative and institutional anomalies of the Enlightenment and to demystify the bourgeois culture that has inherited the anomalies, but they do so in terms of the values of the Enlightenment itself. This is what makes the schools internal, rather than external critiques of the modern West.

The other aspect of this ambivalence is the tendency of both schools to own up their cultural roots by building into their theoretical frames aggressive Eurocentric critiques of non-western cultures. For both, the primitive world, especially the Orient, is an anachronistic presence and represents an earlier stage of cultural order that social evolution has rendered obsolete. Through this second criticism, that of the non-West, the schools pay homage to their first target of criticism, the West, and atone for being dissenting children of the Enlightenment.

Both schools, it is true, have their self-doubts, expressed through their lurking nostalgia towards the very cultures they try to relegate to the dustbin of history or the wastepaper basket of the clinic. Apart from the fascination the Orient exercised over their founders—the Orient viewed as a victim of imperial Europe or as an anthropological field populated by the 'natural', the antiquated, and the exotic—both schools have

produced ideas such as those of primitive communism and regression at the service of ego as latent reparative gestures, to correct for or work through the arrogant social evolutionism that structures their theories of progress. It is the obverse of Albert Schweitzer's famous reparative gesture towards the West, to disabuse all those who thought that his medical mission to Africa was a homage to human dignity or an atonement for colonial violence. The African was his brother, the intrepid missionary agreed, but a younger brother.

When Marxism and psychoanalysis were imported into the savage world in the high noon of imperialism, this racial arrogance was not obvious to their native converts. For the main attraction of these schools of thought in the tropics was their bidirectional criticism—of the contemporary European society *and* of the savage world. Afro-Asian scholars and activists found these schools excellent instruments of self-criticism. In fact, when it came to the native way of life, such scholars and activists rejected or undervalued ideas that softened the critical thrust of the two schools. Thus, psychoanalysts such as Carl Jung, who were especially open to the Indian world-view, found few adherents in India; Marxist scholars such as Ernst Bloch, who sought to establish a continuity between the Marxist vision and the older religious world-views, never enjoyed a vogue in non-European societies organized around religion. Such 'returns to tradition' were considered legitimate attempts to enrich social criticism in the modern West, not in societies bogged down in tradition.

Marxism was to have a more lasting impact on intellectual and political life in the South than psychoanalysis, which, after an early flurry of activity in a few societies—after as it were a late spring lasting about two decades—gradually became peripheral to the culture of public life in the South. Was this because Marxism became a political movement in Asia and Africa at a time when politics was about to become the most important sector of these societies? Or were there other reasons that had to do with the culture of psychoanalysis, such as the torn personalities of those who tended it in its new habitat and the persisting indigenous theories of the mind that, like a chronic illness, resisted western remedies prescribed for the problems of living in Asian and African backwaters?

This essay pursues the second set of questions. It does so by focusing on the cultural meanings psychoanalysis acquired in its early years in India where it first established a bridgehead in the 1920s. The essay examines these meanings through the prism of the personal experiences, intellectual concerns, and metapsychology of the first non-western psychoanalyst, Girindrasekhar Bose (1886–1953), who pioneered the discipline in India.

Bose began trying out psychoanalytic concepts and methods in his

clinical practice towards the end of the 1910s when, following the partition of Bengal in 1905, the Swadeshi movement had become a significant political presence; and he founded the Indian Psychoanalytic Society in 1921, when the non-cooperation movement had started and Gandhi had become the leader of India's freedom struggle. Both these political events had their cultural counterparts, such as renewed efforts to revalue indigenous systems of knowledge and growing awareness that the West's intellectual domination depended greatly on the philosophy of science and analytic categories popularized by the European culture of knowledge.

Psychoanalysis in its early years reflected these changes in India's intellectual climate. The discipline came to represent something more than a therapeutic technique that could be adapted to the mental health problems of India's burgeoning, partly deculturated, urban bourgeoisie, even though that is how Bose often viewed it, especially when writing for his international audience. Psychoanalysis also had to serve as a new instrument of social criticism, as a means of demystifying aspects of Indian culture that seemed anachronistic or pathological to the articulate middle classes, and as a dissenting western school of thought that could be turned against the West itself.

The following story tells how Bose's unique response to Freud's theories was shaped by the psychological contradictions that had arisen in Indian culture due to the colonial impact and by the cultural contradictions within psychoanalysis itself. As a result, the usual encounter between an ancient culture with its distinctive culture of science and an exogenous science with its own distinctive culture fractured the self-definitions not only of Bose but of many others involved in similar enterprises. At the same time, the encounter initiated a play of secret selves which widened as well as narrowed the interpretations of both Indian culture and the culture of psychoanalysis. The story suggests that the more speculative, political, cultural-critical aspects of the young science—its disreputable 'secret self'—gave greater 'play' to non-western psychoanalysis in the early years and might even have given it a stronger creative 'push' under another kind of political-intellectual dispensation.

## Part One: The Psychology of Morality

### I Śarvilaka's Gita

In ancient Magadha in eastern India, there lived a powerful, learned, highly respected, rich Brahmin called Śarvilaka. Disciples came to him from distant lands and his house resonated with the recital of and discussions on sacred texts.

Śarvilaka had a gifted son called Puṇḍarīka. Though young, Puṇḍarīka had already mastered the religious texts. When Puṇḍarīka reached the age of sixteen, Śarvilaka told him, 'Son, today is an auspicious day. Fast for the entire day and maintain your purity by following the right practices. At 2 o'clock tonight, when the moonless night begins, I shall initiate you into our *kaulika prathā* or family custom. From evening onwards stay in seclusion and meditate.'

At 2 AM Puṇḍarīka was still reciting the name of God when, suddenly, the doors of his room opened. In the faint light of a lamp, he saw a huge man entering the room. The intruder wore a loin-cloth, his body shone with oil, and he held an axe on each shoulder. With a shock Puṇḍarīka recognized that the stranger was his father. Śarvilaka said, 'Son, do not be afraid. The time for your initiation has come. Come, dress yourself like me, take one of these axes, and follow me.' Puṇḍarīka followed as if mesmerized.

Through a maze of streets, Śarvilaka led his son to the highway connecting Magadha to Varanasi and stood under a banyan tree. He then said, 'Puṇḍarīka stand quietly in the dark, so that nobody can see you.' Puṇḍarīka stood trembling with fear, shock, and the strain of the long walk.

A rich merchant was travelling from the palace of Magadha to Varanasi in a horse-drawn carriage. He was carrying with him 10,000 gold coins. The route being dangerous, he had eight armed guards escorting the vehicle. As soon as the carriage reached the banyan tree, Śarvilaka attacked it with a mighty roar. In the faint light, he looked even more fearsome. The driver and guards immediately ran off. Śarvilaka decapitated the merchant with his axe, picked up the heavy bag containing the gold coins on his shoulders, and came back to the banyan tree. Puṇḍarīka by then was shaking with terror; his axe had fallen from his hand. Śarvilaka picked up the axe and led Puṇḍarīka by the hand towards home. He then pushed his son into his room and latched the door from outside.

After a long while, Puṇḍarīka regained some of his composure. By now, his mind was churning with contempt, anger and hurt. He decided not to stay at his father's home for even one moment. In this state of high tension, he fell asleep. When he woke up in the morning, he found the sun's rays shining into his room. His father was standing near the bed, his usual serene self, wearing his usual dress. For a moment Puṇḍarīka felt that his memories of the previous night were part of a nightmare. But his own oily body and loin-cloth showed otherwise. Śarvilaka broke the silence to say, 'Son, do not be unnecessarily perturbed. Nothing has happened which should cause you heartburning.' Puṇḍarīka said, 'I don't

want to stay in your house even for a moment.' His father responded, 'You are not in the right state of mind because you haven't eaten or slept properly, and you are tense. Have a bath, eat and rest. Then I shall tell you about our family custom. If after hearing me out you still want to leave, I shall not stop you.'

Śarvilaka returned in the afternoon and had a long conversation with his son. He first narrated how the family had followed the same *kaulika prathā* from the time of the Mahabharata and how he himself was initiated into the custom by his father. He said he knew he seemed a hypocrite, robber and murderer to his son. But he also had faith in his son's intellect and knowledge of the sacred texts. Śarvilaka then went on to justify every act of his by the tenets of the Gita, for he felt that Puṇḍarīka's moral anxieties were similar to those of Arjuna before the battle of Kurukṣetra; they were born of *moha*, attachment. Arjuna, too, had felt like living on alms rather than killing his own relatives for material gain.

Śarvilaka's arguments were sophisticated and they could be summed up by three broad propositions. First Śarvilaka agreed, he did not openly talk of his *kulācāra* (family practices) because he feared public censure and harassment. He followed *lokācāra* (customary practices) by day and *kulācāra* at night. As a result, he now appeared to be a hypocrite to his own son. Yet no one could survive in the world by being totally truthful. All human beings were weak to a degree; to defend themselves they had to lie. Even Lord Kṛṣṇa had to hide his intentions when he killed the demon Jarāsandha. Otherwise, too, untruth was of divine origin. The creator of the universe had equipped some of his creatures with the capacity to lie and cheat; even animals like lions and tigers resorted to stealth when stalking their prey. Human beings were too insignificant a species to invent on their own the idea of falsehood.

Second, everyone was to some extent a robber. When one ate fruit, one deprived the trees of their fruit or perhaps animals of their lives. Living itself meant living off other lives. Moreover, God had not sent anyone to earth with property or riches. One won worldly success by depriving others. *Vasundharā vīrabhogyā*—the earth was for the enjoyment of the brave.

Third, one had to overcome the fear of being called a murderer. Arjuna feared the epithet when the battle of Kurukṣetra was imminent and the correct response to that fear, Śarvilaka felt, was best given in Kṛṣṇa's sermon to Arjuna in the Gita. The oppressor and the victim, the Gita said, were both unreal because *ātman* (soul) was the sole reality and it was indestructible—*na hantā na hanyate*. None should rue the loss of a destructible, transient body. The prosperous merchant killed on the road

to Varanasi was aged and yet attached to his worldly goods. The destruction of his body had actually done him good. If Śarvilaka had forsaken his *kuladharmā* or family's code of conduct to spare the traveller, that would have been far more sinful. Human beings were mere agents of divinity—*nimittamātra*.

Puṇḍarīka listened to this discourse with rapt attention. The doubts and contradictions in his mind rapidly dissolved. At the end of the discourse, he touched his father's feet to pledge undying loyalty to their family custom.

With this story of homicide, secret selves, a seductive 'immoral' father, his vulnerable 'moral' son, and their final Oedipal compact after an aborted rebellion, the world's first non-western psychoanalyst, Girindrasekhar Bose, begins in 1931 his interpretation of the Gita in the pages of *Pravāsī*, the influential Bengali journal of the pre-independence years.<sup>1</sup> Bose was already a famous psychiatrist and had founded the Indian Psychoanalytic Society. By the time he began his work on the Gita, he had been exposed to psychoanalysis for nearly two decades. Yet there are odd anomalies. Though it has been called 'perhaps his most significant work' and a pioneering attempt 'to correlate Hindu philosophy to western psychology',<sup>2</sup> the interpretation is more social-philosophical than psychoanalytic. Though Bose claims to be motivated by psychological curiosity rather than religious faith,<sup>3</sup> in many places psychology enters the interpretation almost inadvertently, even diffidently.

Was Śarvilaka's interpretation of the Gita correct? Did the Gita permit him the interpretation he offered? And if he was wrong, on what grounds was his interpretation flawed? What were the real meanings of the *śloka*s Śarvilaka cited? Bose interprets the Gita in response to these questions.<sup>4</sup> In a society where texts survive as living texts mainly through

<sup>1</sup>Girindrasekhar Bose, 'Gita', *Pravasi*, 1931, 31, Part 2(1), pp. 9–16.

<sup>2</sup>Jagdish Bhatia, 'Pioneer Who Explored the Psyche of India', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 13 August 1987.

<sup>3</sup>Bose, 'Gita', p. 15.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 13. Bose's commentary is based on the following principles he enunciates in the opening paragraphs of his work on the Gita: 'Wherever more than one meaning of a *śloka* is possible, the simpler and more easily comprehensible meaning is taken. Gita, it is presumed, is meant for the ordinary people and the author of Gita did not lack the skill to write lucidly.'

'If an interpretation of a *śloka* contradicts other *śloka*s, it is rejected. So are all internally inconsistent interpretations. Also rejected are all supernatural meanings. As a general principle, the commentary also tries to be imperial and non-sectarian.' *Ibid.*, p. 15.

interpretation and reinterpretation, Bose could create a space for his new science of interpretation only by enunciating and demonstrating its principles. Yet he ventures his interpretation of the Gita without any open reference to a psychoanalytic concept.

To find out how Bose relates his interpretation to his own theories of consciousness, especially psychoanalysis, we shall therefore have to go to some of his other writings. Before we do that, however, we should be aware of the broad outlines of the personal and social background he brought into psychoanalysis. For we must remember that while the story of Śarvilaka affirms the emergence of a new exegetic voice, that of an Indian psychoanalyst, it also enforces on Bose strange silences. It remains unexplained why Bose has nothing to say about the passive resolution of the Oedipal encounter that takes place in the story or about the inverted relationship between a weak son personifying his father's manifest moral self and a powerful father personifying moral seduction and the amoral rationality latent in the son. Was Bose's psychoanalysis a negation of Puṇḍarīka's weak, transient rebellion against a strong, amoral, paternal authority? Did that defiance of defiance make Bose's cognitive venture an ethical statement? Why does Bose refuse to consider the possibility that Śarvilaka's secret self, the one that his son finally owns up, represents unmediated primitive impulses of the kind that psychoanalysis subsumes under the category of the id? Is it because there is in Śarvilaka a complex structure of rationalization, including an element of controlled, dispassionate violence, that defies the conventional definition of the id and the primary processes?

Nor does Bose explain why his partiality for Puṇḍarīka's early Oedipal dissent is justified not in the language of the ego but that of the super-ego, whereas Puṇḍarīka's moral seduction by Śarvilaka is cast not in the language of the super-ego but that of the ego. It was as if the triumph of the therapeutic in South Asia heralded not so much a new bridgehead of the ego in the realm of the id as an empowerment of the super-ego through an abridgement of the sphere of the unencumbered, psychopathic ego. The rest of this essay can be read as an attempt to work out the full implications of these abstract and somewhat opaque formulations.

## II The Rediscovery

Girindrasekhar Bose was probably born on 30 January 1886, the youngest of four sons and five daughters. He often described to his students and trainees, with great relish, two details about his early years: first, he was a breech baby. As he loved to put it, he was born feet first, holding his

head high. He paid dearly for the privilege; injury at birth left him with one foot slightly shorter than the other. Second, he was breast-fed till he was five. Defying psychoanalytic wisdom, Bose claimed that the prolonged breast-feeding had not heightened his oral dependency needs; rather it had contributed to his psychological well-being and optimism.

The Boses came from Nadia in West Bengal. Girindrasekhar's father Chandrasekhar had worked for an English landlord early in his life, but was the Maharaja of Darbhanga's Diwan when his youngest son was born. As a result, the son spent most of his formative years outside Bengal, in north Bihar. His childhood memories of Bihar occasionally emerged in later years in the form of rustic wisdom laced with wit, and provided a part-comic but robust counterpoint to urbane babus in his works of fantasy.

Chandrasekhar conformed to the Bengali urban élite's ideal of a gentleman: he was known for his managerial efficiency, financial probity, and Vedantic scholarship. By the time he reached middle age, the Boses were established as a rather successful Kayastha family—respected, prosperous, and committed to learning. Chandrasekhar himself, however, despite his social status, was regarded with some ambivalence by the local Brahmins on account of his attempts to break into traditional scholarship. That might explain why the family, despite their orthodoxy, moved in the social world of reformist Brahmos after they moved to Calcutta. Many actually mistook the Boses for Brahmos. That did not improve matters much; the Brahmos now began to make fun of the orthodox ways of the Boses, especially their faith in gurus, *purohitas*, *kuladevatās*, *īstadevīs*, etc.

Chandrasekhar's first two wives had died young. A daughter by his first wife had also died early. In middle age, he remarried yet again, this time a young girl 22 years younger than him called Lakshmimani, who bore him all his nine surviving children. If Chandrasekhar was a scholar, Lakshmimani had imagination. Superbly well read, especially in the *purāṇas*, she was also a poetess who had a lively intellectual curiosity. The two provided for their children a potent intellectual atmosphere, enlivened by stories from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Two of Chandrasekhar's sons were to become well-known writers. Rajsekhar, the most successful of the siblings, became famous as a satirist, classical scholar, translator, grammarian and, perhaps reflecting Chandrasekhar's range of interests, an applied chemist and industrial manager. He was also an early patron of the Indian Psychoanalytic Society; the first psychoanalytic clinic in South Asia, probably the first in the non-western world, was established on a piece of land donated by him.

Of the siblings, Rajsekhar remained the closest to Girindrasekhar. His literary work resembled in style the self-articulation Girindrasekhar

assumed in his scientific discourse. There was a combination of rigour and robust directness, on the one hand, and a dependence on the idiom of the epics and the philosophical visions of the classical Sanskrit heritage, on the other. Both brothers strove for the nearly-unattainable—an austere, rationalist discourse that would reflect the moral urgency and poetry of the classics. Both, one suspects, were searching for culturally rooted moral codes appropriate for their times, away from the puritanic moralism of the reformist Brahmo and the defensiveness of the orthodox Hindu.

We know little else about Girindrasekhar Bose's childhood. Though a psychoanalyst, he showed a certain reticence about his own personal life, born partly from a sense of defensive privacy and partly from an indifference to history. Even his own comments about himself, of the kind I mentioned earlier, were off-the-cuff, casual ones; they served mainly as capsuled, psychoanalytic witticisms. They were also gulped down as such by his students, trainees, and admirers. As a result, even today, an enterprising clinician cannot easily produce a psychoanalytic case history of the Southern world's first psychoanalyst. The reader will have noticed that one cannot be absolutely certain even about the exact date of Bose's birth. By way of a life history, one is mainly left with the memories of a few surviving contemporaries and the biographical notes of some of his students and trainees, notably those of psychoanalyst Tarun Chandra Sinha, his closest associate.<sup>5</sup> In addition, there are the outlines of Bose's educational career, which followed a course somewhat resembling that of his chosen guru, Sigmund Freud.

According to Sinha, Chandrasekhar was a 'true' father who exercised 'full authority and control'.<sup>6</sup> He was a strict disciplinarian and a conservative who conformed to family traditions 'fairly rigidly'.<sup>7</sup> Though Sinha hastens to add that Chandrasekhar was no autocrat, as if apprehensive that he was hinting at a classical Oedipal situation, something of the father's style rubbed off on the son. Girindrasekhar, it seems, was domineering even as a child and he enjoyed exercising his authority.<sup>8</sup> This was probably tolerated by the family because of his physical handicap and his fragile health, caused by an attack of blood dysentery in the first year of his life. The child despot was taken to school in a palanquin, we are told.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Tarun Chandra Sinha, 'A Short Life Sketch of Girindrasekhar Bose', *Samiksha*, Bose Special No., (ed.) Nagendranath Dey, 1954, pp. 62–74.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*

Girindrasekhar's early schooling took place in Darbhanga. As a result he had a good command of Hindi. He was also well-versed in Sanskrit, thanks to his father. However, Girindrasekhar later claimed, in some Bengali essays, that his knowledge of the language was inadequate and that he depended on the help of traditional Sanskrit scholars in his serious work. (Perhaps he felt intimidated by Rajsekhar's superb Sanskrit and highly creative use of Hindi.) We also know that Girindrasekhar was a handsome, self-confident child despite his physical handicap, and was, perhaps because of the handicap, protected by and close to his mother. This self-confidence must have been an asset when, having been brought up in an environment alien to the world of Bengali babus, he later entered Calcutta's intellectual life.

In 1904, at the age of seventeen, Girindrasekhar was married off to Indumati, a girl of ten. They had two daughters, one born in 1908, the other four years later. From the beginning, it seems, Bose kept family life separate from his academic life. The former was private, the latter public. Except on a few rare occasions, Bose's students and trainees never had a glimpse of his family; many of them never even met or even saw his wife or daughters. This may or may not have anything to do with his attitude to women. His brother and ego-ideal, Rajsekhar, who was a bachelor, maintained a similar, if not stricter, separation between his private and public lives.

After finishing school, Girindrasekhar joined the Presidency College, Calcutta's foremost educational institution and intellectual hub, where he studied chemistry, a discipline that was Rajsekhar's vocation, too. After graduating in 1905, Girindrasekhar joined the Medical College in Calcutta. At about this time his father retired and the entire family moved to Calcutta, purchasing a house in north Calcutta (14 Parsibagan Street), and settled down there. The house was to become famous afterwards as a citadel of psychoanalysis in India. In 1910 Girindrasekhar got his medical degree and started private practice.

Bose's earliest passion was yoga and a focus of scholarly curiosity in his teens was Patañjali's *Yogasūtra*. Bose's nephew Bijayketu Bose, a psychoanalyst himself, believes that his uncle was basically searching at this point of time for supernatural or magical powers, *alaukika kṣamatā*.<sup>10</sup> Later on, at the age of fourteen or so, Bose developed a keen interest in

<sup>10</sup>Psychoanalyst Bhupen Desai believes that an analogous search for magical powers explains the choice of psychoanalysis as a career by many Indians. Desai says that he himself was motivated by the search for omniscience and gives the examples of others whose unconscious goals were similar.

magic and hypnotism, and became an amateur magician and hypnotist. This was not particularly uncommon in Calcutta at the time. Many middle-class Bengalis had begun to take an interest in these pursuits, perhaps attracted by their liminal status. In Bose's case, if we accept his nephew's interpretation, there was also a direct continuity between the choice of magic as a vehicle of self-expression and the earlier search for magical powers.

Bose made a success of this venture. While still a medical student, he gave occasional public performances, and even won a prize for an original article in a journal of magic. He went still further with hypnosis. Encouraged by some of his teachers, he used hypnotic therapy with partial success in cases of insomnia, nausea in pregnancy, and, more dramatically, in an instance of cardiac asthma. This was while he was still an adolescent (1902–7). Later, when he came to know more about psychoanalysis, he did not entirely give up hypnotism in deference to the psychoanalytic belief in the absolute superiority of free association.<sup>11</sup> He retained, as part of his analytic technique, hypnotic suggestion as an occasional therapeutic tool. He even made good use of the differences between two types of hypnosis: the father-type and the mother-type. One was didactic; the other persuasion-based.<sup>12</sup>

After taking his medical degree, Bose quickly established himself as a general practitioner, and became within a decade one of Calcutta's leading doctors with a large private practice. When in 1926–7 he decided to restrict his general practice and concentrate on cases of mental illness, he was barely forty.<sup>13</sup>

Bose's fascination with Freud's new science began with casual encounters. Though he might have heard of psychoanalysis as early as 1905–6, his interest in it was first stimulated around 1909 by articles published in various periodicals. At the time only Brill's translation of a selection of Freud's papers was available in English. (Bose began to learn German only in his middle years.) The preface to *Concept of Repression* suggests that Bose, when he started psychoanalytic work, had not even

<sup>11</sup>See a brief discussion of Bose's long-term interest in hypnosis later in this essay.

<sup>12</sup>The classification was borrowed from Sandor Ferenczi. See Girindrasekhar Bose, *Concept of Repression* (Calcutta: Sri Gauranga Press, 1921, and London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Troubner and Co., 1921), pp. 140–1.

<sup>13</sup>This account of Bijayketu Bose is not consistent with Sinha's claim that Bose had to undergo financial hardships in his early years as a doctor. Perhaps Sinha had in mind the fact that when Bose concentrated on psychiatry, his average income declined dramatically to about Rs 100 a month. Sinha, 'A Short Life Sketch', p. 64.

read Brill.<sup>14</sup> The preface, in fact, reveals that some of the concepts Bose thought he had developed he found had already been developed by Freud when translations of Freud began to reach India after the World War ended in 1918. He was not defensive about the discovery; he accepted the superiority of the psychoanalytic concepts and began to use them in his work. He was actually better off in this respect than his more famous Tamil contemporary, the untutored mathematical genius, Srinivasa Ramanujan (1887–1920). A large proportion of Ramanujan's discoveries later turned out to be rediscoveries; he had to reconcile himself to being an immortal in the world of mathematics on the basis of the remainder.

Over the next five years, three more translations of Freud's books were published: *The Three Lectures on Sexuality* (1910), the lectures at the Clark University in the United States, published as *Five Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (1910), and the *Interpretation of Dreams* (1913). By that time Bose was committed to the new science. One suspects from the sequence of events that the reasons for his decision to switch from conventional psychiatry were not purely intellectual ones, that he gave his allegiance to Freud even before he had read him systematically. Something in the framework and concerns of psychoanalysis had deeply touched the young doctor. The strange, new-fangled ideas of the controversial Viennese physician *did* have something to say about Bose's own world.

Bose's 'conversion' did not signify much to his community, for few people in India had heard of Freud. Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1940) relates in a letter that a Bengali admirer of Freud, while speaking to Tagore about psychoanalysis, consistently pronounced 'Freud' as if it rhymed with 'fruit'. Bose, however, found in Freud a kindred soul and saw immense possibilities in psychoanalysis. He eagerly read everything available on the subject and began to apply the method in his psychiatric work; he appears to have been satisfied with the results. At any rate, given his background and the intellectual position he had been moving towards before discovering psychoanalysis, he did not have to make too many modifications in his therapeutic style.

Bose's new passion heightened his curiosity about the discipline of psychology in general. From his early years, he had been an orderly person and, in many respects, a perfectionist. Once his interest in psychology was aroused, he began to feel handicapped by his limited knowledge of abnormal psychology. Whatever he knew was derived from the

<sup>14</sup>Bose, *Concept of Repression*, pp. v–viii.

undergraduate courses in medicine he had attended, inadequate grounding for a practitioner especially interested in the theory and practice of psychiatry.

When the Calcutta University opened a new department of psychology in 1915, Bose enrolled as a student, and got his Master's degree in two years, once again doing well in the examinations. He was immediately appointed a lecturer in the department. One of the first things he did was make courses in psychoanalysis compulsory for all students of psychology, making the department one of the first academic establishments in the world to do so.<sup>15</sup> He was then thirty-one.

After four years, Bose completed his doctoral thesis which was published as the *Concept of Repression*.<sup>16</sup> Though fascinating in many ways, it is a clumsy work, made still clumsier by Bose's awkward and cluttered English. Despite this, it was well received. The thesis was reportedly dictated to a stenographer in a week, in response to a bet taken with a fellow member of the Utkendra Samiti or Eccentric Club that Bose and some of his friends had founded at his Parsibagan residence. His friends had ragged him, claiming that his disregard for degrees and formal qualifications was a pose, meant to hide his incapacity to get a doctorate.<sup>17</sup> Bose's dissertation was to remain the only doctoral thesis in psychology completed in an Indian university during the 1920s, and this further underwrote the pre-eminence of psychoanalysis in Indian academic psychology. Perhaps in no other country was psychoanalysis to register such easy dominance as in India.

When his thesis was published, Girindrasekhar sent a copy of the book to Freud. It bore the inscription: 'From a warm admirer of your theory and science'. Freud was pleasantly surprised and wrote back almost immediately. The old dissenter was not used to easy acceptance; he was genuinely intrigued that in far-off India psychoanalysis should have met with so much interest and recognition so early in its career. Thus began an intermittent correspondence between the two which lasted nearly two decades.<sup>18</sup> Bose never met Freud. Going to the West for an education and 'proper' recognition of one's worth was popular among the westernized élites of colonial India and this irritated Bose. Despite an invitation from

<sup>15</sup>Christiane Hartnack, 'Psychoanalysis and Colonialism in British India', Ph.D. dissertation, Berlin, Freie Universität, 1988, p. 85.

<sup>16</sup>Bose, *Concept of Repression*.

<sup>17</sup>Sinha, 'A Short Life Sketch', p. 64.

<sup>18</sup>Sigmund Freud to Girindrasekhar Bose, 29 May 1921, in 'Correspondence regarding Psychoanalysis', *Samiksha*, 1956, 10, pp. 104–10, 155–66.

his guru, he refused to go abroad because that would be 'more of a fashion than need'.<sup>19</sup> There were also, according to Ernest Jones who invited Bose to Europe several times, Bose's numerous duties in India and 'perhaps a certain shyness'.<sup>20</sup>

In 1922, barely three years after the British Psychoanalytic Society was formed, Bose founded the Indian Psychoanalytic Society in Calcutta at his own residence. Of the fifteen founding members of the group, nine were college lecturers of psychology and philosophy, five were doctors, and one a business executive who also happened to be a generous patron of the Society. Of the thirteen Indian members, twelve were upper-caste Bengalis; the two remaining members were whites. The social origin of the thirteenth Indian member is not apparent from his name. Of the five doctors, two were British, one a relatively nondescript doctor in the colonial health service. The other was Owen A.R. Berkeley-Hill (1879–1944), also a member of the health service but already famous as the psychiatrist who had made the Ranchi Mental Hospital one of the best known in the East. Berkeley-Hill's name is inextricably linked to the history of modern psychiatry and psychoanalysis in India, and he epitomized in many ways some of the central problems in the culture of the two disciplines in South Asia. He was the first westerner to attempt a psychoanalytic study of the Hindu modal personality and the first westerner to use psychoanalysis as a form of cultural critique in India. A word on him will provide a counterpoint to Bose's philosophy of knowledge.

Berkeley-Hill was no ordinary migratory bird in India. Son of a wealthy and famous English physician, he was educated at Rugby, Göttingen, the University of Nancy, and Oxford, from where he received his medical degree. Berkeley-Hill entered the Indian Medical Service in 1907 and, except for a four-year stretch during World War I, spent the rest of his life in India, complaining all the while about living conditions in the colony. He married a Hindu, despite his preoccupation with the distorted personality and culture of the Hindus. The marriage and its Eurasian offspring were an almost certain indicator, during the period we are talking about, both of social defiance and uncertain social status among the whites. Neither defiance nor uncertainty was lacking in Berkeley-Hill. Christiane Hartnack points out that in Berkeley-Hill's autobiography,

<sup>19</sup>Bhatia, 'Pioneer'. Also Freud to Bose, 1 March 1922, 'Correspondence', *Samiksha*, 1956, 10, p. 108.

<sup>20</sup>Ernest Jones, 'Foreword', *Samiksha*, 1954, Bose Sp. No., p. 1.

which includes an open discussion of his premarital sex life and ends with 'a detailed description of the character and look of his horses, there is less mention of his wife than of [his] extra-marital affairs'.<sup>21</sup>

Perhaps as a result of his liminal stature, Berkeley-Hill showed in many of his papers an aggressive psychoanalysis. Given his fractured self, simultaneously repelled and seduced by imperial England and Brahminic India, this analysis took necessarily a particular form. As befitted an Edwardian gentleman educated at an English public school and Oxford, he showed a deep concern with the vicissitudes of anal eroticism and found in its patterning among the Hindus *the* clue to their cultural pathology and moral depravity. He passed judgment on their character, on behalf of all other cultures, in the following words:

It is not unlikely that the strange antipathy that is felt for the Hindus by most, if indeed not all, the races of the world is nothing more than an expression of an unconscious feeling of antagonism brought about by some of the peculiarities of the manifestations of anal eroticism as met with among the Hindus. It is certainly a fact that wherever the Hindu may go, no matter whether it be in Asia, Africa or Europe, he is to the inhabitants of that country a veritable Dr Fell. We must therefore assume that this obscure but nevertheless very real dislike which is shared by all races of mankind for the Hindu, must, from its very nature, have its roots in some deeply buried source of feeling. Books on India teem with references to this singular 'otherness', if I may use the term, of the Hindu as compared, for instance, with the Muslim or Christian Indian.<sup>22</sup>

On the basis of the theoretical work of his mentor, Ernest Jones, Berkeley-Hill then goes on to identify, rather charmingly and with the confidence of one advancing a dispassionate scientific thesis, the two effects of anal eroticism.<sup>23</sup> The valuable qualities thrown up by anal eroticism are:

individualism, determination, persistence, love of order and power of organization, competency, reliability and thoroughness, generosity, the bent towards art and good taste, the capacity for unusual tenderness, and the general ability to deal with concrete objects of the material world.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup>Hartnack, 'Psychoanalysis and Colonialism', pp. 28–9. Most of the biographical material on Berkeley-Hill used in this paper is from Hartnack's comprehensive work on the shadow cast by colonialism on the work of the first psychoanalysts in India.

<sup>22</sup>Owen A.R. Berkeley-Hill, 'The Anal-Erotic Factor in the Religion, Philosophy and Character of the Hindus', in *Collected Papers* (Calcutta: The Book Co., 1933), pp. 75–112; first published in the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 1921, 2, pp. 306–38.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 108–9.



The despicable ones are the obverse of the above:

incapacity for happiness, irritability and bad temper, hypochondria, miserliness, meanness and pettiness, slow-mindedness and proneness to bore, the bent for tyrannising and dictating and obstinacy.<sup>25</sup>

Predictably, the Hindus suffered from a 'metapsychosis' featuring the second set of traits. On the other hand, 'the character traits of the English people as a whole belong for the greater part to the first of the two groups distinguished by Ernest Jones.'<sup>26</sup>

Berkeley-Hill's views were, however, not as one-sided as these extracts from his papers suggest or as Hartnack would have us believe. On occasion, his defiance overcame his social insecurities and he could be remarkably incisive in his cultural analysis. Nearly twenty-five years before James Baldwin made such ideas a part of American folklore, Berkeley-Hill suggested that colour prejudice among the whites sprang from a deep fear of the perceived greater potency of the blacks and from the fear that the whites would lose their womenfolk to the blacks.<sup>27</sup>

The aggressive psychoanalysis was, however, the dominant tone. Like Kipling's imperialist stance, it reads today like an exaggerated gesture of allegiance by a marginal man to the culture of the ruling community, though at one time it must have appeared to be a pungent exercise in social criticism and demystification. Berkeley-Hill, like Kipling, was both fascinated and repelled by India, and the fascination was more painful to bear. It cut him off from his own kind and tainted him as culturally impure. His writings make it obvious that to him India was a living negation of the Victorian ideal of a moral self, and the seductive appeal of Indian culture had to be fiercely resisted.

For Berkeley-Hill to pursue the cultural-critical aspect of psychoanalysis to its logical conclusion would have meant taking a political position against a part of himself and against the social evolutionism that underpinned Victorian morality and sanctioned colonialism. He could not afford to own up that responsibility. He had to defend himself by turning the tools of his new-found critical apparatus against the Indian culture itself, both with a vengeance and an immense effort of will, the way Kipling had earlier turned against that part of himself which constituted his Indianness.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup>[*ibid.*

<sup>26</sup>[*ibid.*, p. 111.

<sup>27</sup>Berkeley-Hill, 'The "Colour Question" from a Psychoanalytic Standpoint' (1923), *Collected Papers*, pp. 139-48.

<sup>28</sup>For a brief sketch of Kipling from this point of view, see Ashis Nandy, *The*

Berkeley-Hill began his personal analysis at London with the well-known Welsh psychoanalyst, Ernest Jones, and he probably completed his training with Bose at Calcutta. Along with his lesser-known compatriot Claud Dangar Daly, another protégé of Jones and subsequently an analysand of Freud and Ferenczi, Berkeley-Hill defined for his generation of psychoanalysts the domain of psychoanalytic studies of modal personality or national character in India.<sup>29</sup> We have already told a part of that story. The political psychology of that pioneering effort—especially the links between psychoanalysis, colonialism, and the culture of science in the inter-war years—is neatly summed up in Christiane Hartnack's verdict on the two British psychoanalysts. After analysing their work and interpretive styles, she concludes:

There is an unquestionable tendency in both writers to find in psychoanalysis a new scientific tool for getting a grip on problems of public order that were getting out of control . . . This explicitly political appropriation of psychoanalytic theory . . . coincided in the 'twenties and 'thirties with the first successes of the newly formed Indian independence movement. In line with European thought at the time, Berkeley-Hill and Daly conceptualized a moral hierarchy with white men at the top and dependent people, women, infants, so-called primitives, and neurotics at or near the bottom.<sup>30</sup>

Thus,

Berkeley-Hill's and Daly's writings on Indians had in common that they . . . both failed to note any achievement or positive aspect of the Indian culture . . . Both men identified themselves fully with British colonialism. For them, Indians were a source of threat and had thus to be combatted, and resistance had to be smashed not only on a military but also on a cultural level. Unlike Orwell, who left colonial India in order not to cope with the dual identity of a colonial bureaucrat by day and a questioning and critical human being by night, Daly and Berkeley-Hill worked to . . . contribute to a properly functioning colonial world.

Contemporary psychoanalytical thought offered them models to legitimize their . . . separation from Indians. If one was not a British (i.e., Christian) adult healthy male, one was in trouble . . . Victorian women, Anglo-Indians, Irish,

*Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983).

<sup>29</sup>For example, Owen A.R. Berkeley-Hill, 'A Report of Two Cases Successfully Treated by Psychoanalysis', *The Indian Medical Gazette*, 1913, 48, pp. 97-9; and 'The Psychology of the Anus', *ibid.*, pp. 301-3; also 'The Anal Erotic Factor'. One wonders after reading the last paper if its diagnosis was not partly influenced by Berkeley-Hill's long personal acquaintance with Bose. Also Claud Dangar Daly, 'Hindu-Mythologie und Kastrationkomplex', tr. Peter Mandelsohn, *Image*, 1927, 13, pp. 145-98.

<sup>30</sup>Hartnack, 'Psychoanalysis and Colonialism', p. 5.

Moslems, children, sick and old people could to some extent still be accepted, as there were some common denominators between them and the British ideal. But women who did not obey the Victorian mores, mentally disturbed British subjects, Hindus and people of colour . . . were not only perceived as entirely different and thus inferior, but were also considered to be dangerous. They were not only in the majority, but there was the potential of hysteria, violence, revolution, sexual seduction and other supposedly irrational acts, which would be difficult to control. Therefore, it was the 'white man's burden' to keep them under surveillance . . . .<sup>31</sup>

One should not be too harsh on the two well-meaning, simple-hearted practitioners of the young science of psychoanalytic psychiatry when the dominant culture of the now fully grown science has not done much better and when all around them the two could find even Indians lovingly embracing the same overall perspective. It is fairly obvious that both British psychoanalysts were strictly allegiant to a transfer-of-technology model that had already become popular on the Indian scene and would remain paramount in Indian intellectual life four decades after formal decolonization. Berkeley-Hill and Daly, like many before them and after, saw psychoanalysis as a state-of-the-art therapeutic device and hoped to introduce it with minor modifications into India as a partial cure for the worst affliction Indians suffered from—Indianness. The exclusive universality imputed to most systems of modern scientific knowledge was a function, then as now, of the political privileges such a transfer created for specific individuals and groups.

With hindsight, is it fair to ask if the early Indian analysts were adequately aware that they were caught in a colonial grid of knowledge? Did they sense that analytic responsibility in the hot and dusty tropics had to own up a new political responsibility? They both did not and did.

Manifestly, they did not react at all to the colonial psychology of Berkeley-Hill and Daly. To the first generation of Indian psychoanalysts, such politically loaded cultural interpretations were not uncommon and they blended with the dominant tone of the humanities and social sciences at Indian universities; Berkeley-Hill and Daly would not have appeared particularly vicious or scathing. Also, the Indians attracted to analysis were themselves searching for new modes of social criticism that would make sense to their community; they were themselves given to provocative and arrogant psychoanalytic summary trials of the Indian culture and personality. To them their British colleagues were probably merely two

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 73.

slightly overenthusiastic white associates of Bose having their fling at the psychoanalysis of Indian culture. After all, in Bose's circle their formal status though high was not formidable.

But psychoanalysts, too, have their unconscious. During the early years of the Indian Psychoanalytic Society, one member of the Society did an imaginary portrait of Freud, not having seen the master nor even a photograph of him. This portrait, a near-perfect test of projection, was, appropriately enough, gifted to Freud. Freud was pleased, but complained in a letter that he looked a perfect Englishman in the portrait.<sup>32</sup> None pointed out to the ageing patriarch the analytic implications of his casual remark and the political tragedy that lay unarticulated in it.

Some questions, however, still remain unanswered. Were Berkeley-Hill and Daly merely tropical extensions of the arrogantly international, 'universal' culture of knowledge of which psychoanalysis was trying to be a part? Or were they adapting to the stress induced by the colonial situation with the help of existing psychoanalytic categories and by seeking sanction from the acceptance of psychoanalysis by some 'learned Hindus', as Freud described them?<sup>33</sup> Were Bose's attempts to locate psychoanalysis in the Vedantic tradition and giving it a distinct non-progressive language an unintended response to the colonial psychoanalysis of his two white colleagues and the social evolutionism implicit in the dominant culture of psychoanalysis?<sup>34</sup> Is it coincidental that some methodological comments in his *Purāna Praveśa* read like a direct response to Berkeley-Hill's interpretive style? Was it significant that both British psychoanalysts had a record of mental illness and therapy under Jones? Were they both 'infected' with the hard-boiled social evolutionism and positivism of Jones and the 'imperious', 'opinionated', 'spiteful' aspects of his self?<sup>35</sup> Did they pick up from Jones his fear of ideas, metaphysics and, above all, the fear of a reading of psychoanalysis that would allow one to turn the discipline upon itself? Or was the problem deeper and did it begin with Freud himself? I shall attempt an indirect answer to a few of these questions later in this essay.

<sup>32</sup>Sigmund Freud to Lou Andreas-Salome, 13 March 1922, in Ernest Pfeiffer (ed.), *Sigmund Freud and Lou Andreas-Salome Letters*, trs. W. Robson-Scott and E. Robson Scott (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, 1972), p. 114, quoted in Hartnack, *Psychoanalysis and Colonialism*, p. 1. One wonders if this is the same portrait that the well-known illustrator Jatindra Kumar Sen did of Freud.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Bose claimed to be a Vedantic, even though he reportedly helped his wife in her *pūjā* or worship, Sinha, 'A Short Life Sketch', p. 69.

<sup>35</sup>Paul Roazen, *Freud and His Followers* (London: Allen Lane, 1976), pp. 345–6.

Berkeley-Hill and Daly did not define entirely the culture of psychoanalysis in India. Other psychoanalysts were also to leave their mark on the history of psychiatry and psychology, though in different ways. Tarun Chandra Sinha was one of the pioneers of psychoanalytic anthropology in India; Haripada Maiti and Pars Ram were to be associated with the founding of major institutions of psychoanalysis and psychology at Patna, Ahmedabad and Lahore; Bhupen Desai contributed handsomely to the growth of psychoanalysis in Bombay; Suhrit C. Mitra and S.K. Bose became central to the growth of professional psychology in the country. Two of the most important pioneering figures in the Indian social sciences and humanities were also in the psychoanalytic movement: Nirmal Kumar Bose, in later life the doyen of social anthropology in the country, and Debiprasad Chattopadhyay, who was to make signal contributions to the philosophy and history of science in India. Others like Rangin Halder and Sarasilal Sarkar made crucial inputs into Bengali cultural life. Many of them were not merely Bose's students, the imprint of Bose's intellectual and clinical concerns carried over into their work, including some of the limitations of Bose's distinctive style of psychoanalysis. Of his students and trainees, Sinha, who had had psychological problems and had been Bose's analysand, was to prove particularly dynamic organizationally. He used his therapeutic experience creatively to become a talented psychoanalyst and a gifted institution-builder, enabling psychoanalysis to be a continuing presence in Bengali social life after Bose's death.

Through Freud and Ernest Jones, then the president of the International Psychoanalytic Association, the Indian Society soon got affiliated to the international brotherhood of psychoanalysis. And Bose joined two others, Freud himself and August Aichhorn, as one of the only three psychoanalysts ever to be recognized as psychoanalysts on the basis of his self-analyses. Bose remained president of the Indian Psychoanalytic Society till his death in 1953.

It is not easy to judge Bose's contribution as the founding father of the Indian Psychoanalytic Society. One gets differing assessments of him as an ideologue, organizational man and as a person. Some say he was indiscriminate in his admissions policy and overly eager to spread psychoanalysis to all corners of India. Others point out that he never had many trainees, and that many dropped out in any case. However, there are two things about which one can be more certain.

First, the formal requirements of psychoanalysis were often diluted for organizational and logistic reasons in India, so that the technical aspects of psychoanalysis remained underdeveloped. This may not have been entirely a tragedy. The under-emphasis on technique allowed

psychoanalysis to retain the potentiality (never actually realized) of becoming something more than an Indian subsidiary of a multinational professional corporation.

Second, as a pioneer in matters of the mind and as an organizational innovator, Bose showed remarkable ideological tolerance. He was a difficult person and, according to one of his students, a relatively self-contained man of knowledge. It is doubtful if for him psychoanalysis was an ideological movement with a core of inviolable dogma. He used to say, an associate remembers, that psychoanalysis was a medical system like ayurveda or homeopathy; it worked with some people, while other systems worked better with others. Others mention that Bose never pushed psychoanalysis with his students of psychology and his own psychological theories with his analytic trainees or colleagues.

This non-ideological stance was mirrored in Bose's politics, or non-politics. Psychoanalysis became established in India at politically tumultuous times, when Gandhi was emerging as the new leader of the anti-imperialist movement, displacing both moderate and extremist leaders. Among those being threatened by such displacement and facing political demise were the entire old leadership of Bengal, with their base mainly among the Hindu middle classes and the cities. Before their very eyes politics had become mass politics, bypassing them to reach into India's sleepy villages. Even in the metropolitan cities, the political atmosphere was no longer what it had been only five years earlier. Though there is some controversy among those who knew Bose about his response to Gandhi, he probably did believe that Gandhi represented the 'well-sublimated', rational, healthy personality.<sup>36</sup> Otherwise, but for a vague patriotism, Bose remained quite apolitical throughout his life. Even that patriotism was, according to some, methodologically open. He was never particularly enamoured of political movements or the nitty-gritty of politics.

This apolitical attitude might have underwritten the low salience of

<sup>36</sup>Debiprasad Chattopadhyay believes that Bose was a *nisthāvāna* or loyal Gandhian; others like Bijayketu Bose and Charuchandra Bhattacharya strongly disagree. An indirect but important clue to Girindrasekhar's attitude to Gandhi is in Rajsekhar Bose's futuristic, comic fantasy, '*Gāmānus Jātir Kathā*', in *Galpakalpa* (Calcutta: M.C. Sarkar, 1950), pp. 1-19. The fantasy lends indirect support to Chattopadhyay, rather than to Bose and Bhattacharya. On the other hand, Bhupen Desai himself a Gandhian and from a family of Gandhian freedom fighters that has made major sacrifices for the Gandhian cause, remembers the touch of sarcasm with which Bose once talked about Gandhian asceticism. Desai believes that Bose, though he admired Gandhi, rejected the Gandhian attitudes to sexuality and the *varna* system.

the cultural-critical aspects of the new science in India, but it allowed Bose to hold the loyalty of a wide variety of young enthusiasts belonging to diverse ideological strains, ranging from Indra Sen, one of the first transpersonal psychologists of our times and later on a prominent mystic at the Pondicherry Ashram, to Debiprasad Chattopadhyay, then a budding radical philosopher of science, apart from being a practising psychoanalyst. The latter, however, did have to bear Bose's aggressive interpretation of the Oedipal roots of Marxism.<sup>37</sup> Probably Bose's belief that psychoanalysis was primarily a method helped him to be ideologically open; he expected methods to have limitations and to be controversial. (Apparently the Indian Psychoanalytic Society failed to retain its intellectual catholicity after Bose's death. Chattopadhyay was excommunicated soon after his mentor died as his Bengali book, *Freud Prasange*, an early Marxist interpretation influenced by the likes of John Somerville and Joseph Needham, was found too critical of Freud, though it was less so than many works produced later by pillars of the psychoanalytic establishment. *Freud Prasange* paid handsome tribute to Freud's method and accepted it fully but faulted the master on his philosophical assumptions. The tribute did not help Chattopadhyay; he was expelled all the same. After Bose's death, a stylistic similarity appears to have developed between the psychoanalytic movements in India and the West. Both shared the same internal contradiction when it came to dissent—limited theoretical tolerance with unlimited organizational intolerance.)

It says something about Bose's organizational skills that, unlike its western counterparts, the Indian Psychoanalytic Society quickly acquired a sound financial base. Once when the parent body was in financial trouble, the Indian branch sent it some money as a contribution. It is not known how his friend Berkeley-Hill reacted to such evidence of organizational ability, whether he attributed the trait to Bose's deviation from Hindu culture through self-analysis or to the persistence in him of Hindu anal-erotic style.

Bose himself, however, changed in the process of becoming a psychoanalyst and institutionalizing the new discipline, at least according to his wife. From being an 'energetic' and 'jolly' person he became a 'thoughtful'

<sup>37</sup>Chattopadhyay recounts his debate with Bose on the subject. It seems he once asked Bose why, if Bose was so keen on an Oedipal explanation of communism and the indigenous 'terrorist' movement, he exempted Gandhi from it, even though Gandhi also had risen against authority. Bose's reply was that Gandhi had been effective because of his rationality and his cool, dispassionate, efficacious politics. This conversation seemingly confutes Bijayketu Bose's belief in the methodological openness of his uncle's politics.

one.<sup>38</sup> He also, it appears, had different styles of management for the Indian Psychoanalytic Society and the Department of Applied Psychology of the Calcutta University, which he had headed since it was established in 1937. In the Society he was easy and egalitarian; in the university more paternalistic, socially withdrawn, and unwilling to share power. When Sinha says in his biographical note that Bose was considered stingy, impersonal and aloof, he was probably speaking of Bose in the university setting.<sup>39</sup> Some who knew him in the university find similarities between his style and that of his friends J.C. Bose, whom we have already mentioned, and P.C. Mahalanobis (1893–1972), the pioneer of modern statistics and development planning.

However, it was not the Society or the Department which ensured the early success of psychoanalysis in the metropolitan culture of India. It was Bose's own intellectual presence and, later, that of some of his talented students and admirers such as Tarun Chandra Sinha, Haripada Maiti, Pars Ram, Rangin Halder, and Indra Sen. Bose's own intellectual range was formidable: he was chemist, Sanskritist, historian of ideas, experimental psychologist, doctor, teacher, artist, translator, and man of letters. In addition he wrote scholarly commentaries on sacred texts and was the author of a highly popular children's tale, *Lāl Kālo*, which included some lively poems and a drawing that could have adorned a Gothic horror story.<sup>40</sup> His very personality attracted some of the better young minds of metropolitan India. (Bose had a ready Freudian explanation of the careerism which did not allow the brightest of the Bengali youth, with a few exceptions, to come to psychoanalysis.)

This intellectual presence was underscored when the Indian Psychoanalytic Society belatedly brought out its journal, *Samiksha*, in 1947. The journal was an immediate success and its early days were the last few golden years of Indian psychoanalysis. Apart from Indians, the contributors included Geiza Roheim, David Rapaport, Clara Thompson, George Devereaux, Edmund Bergler, K.R. Eissler, Jules Masserman, and Fritz Wittels. Moving evidence of how seriously the journal was taken is a contribution by James Clark Moloney, who wrote from aboard a warship approaching Okinawa before one of the climactic battles of World War II.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>38</sup>Sinha, 'A Short Life Sketch', p. 68.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Girindrasekhar Bose, *Lāl Kālo* (Calcutta: Indian Associated Publishing Co., 1956).

<sup>41</sup>James Clark Moloney, 'The Biospheric Aspects of Japanese Death by Suicide'; *Samiksha*, 1949, 3, pp. 104–24.

Bose was a gifted therapist, too, effecting cures that were nothing less than spectacular. His writings give the impression that he was overly didactic, in the sense in which the same expression is used by some of Erich Fromm's erstwhile colleagues to describe Fromm's therapeutic style. Such directness is said to have been not entirely alien to Freud's own therapeutic style, either.<sup>42</sup> It has also been said that Bose reinvoked the *guru-śiṣya* relationship in his analytic encounters.<sup>43</sup> Perhaps he did, but the result was dramatic therapeutic successes. As a result, by the time he was in his late forties, he had become for the urban Indian a legendary doctor of the mind.

This directness, however, also introduced into Indian psychoanalysis a theoretical twist. Therapy was viewed primarily as a cognitive venture, involving the acquisition of knowledge or information, and only secondarily as a matter of rearrangement or reinterpretation of emotions. His success as a therapist suggests that he may have deviated from this view in practice, but the view did influence and, according to some, lowered the standard of analytic training in India.

As a person, Bose was, like many successful clinicians, a bundle of contradictions. Since many of those who knew him belonged to the fraternity of psychoanalysts, he also comes off as a depot of neurotic symptoms. Some remember his pronounced orality—his love for food, cooking and the spoken word; his language skills; and his emphasis on the core fantasy of the split mother, what Sudhir Kakar calls the 'hegemonic myth' of Indian culture. Others remember Bose's long struggle with the hypertension that finally killed him. (The concern with the fantasy of the split mother has proved particularly resilient. From Berkeley-Hill, Daly, Philip Spratt and G. Morris Carstairs, to John Hitchcock, Leigh Mintern, Monisha Roy, Susan Wadley, Kakar, and Alan Roland—a wide range of social scientists influenced by psychoanalysis, including this writer, have returned to the myth with the feeling of making a new and important discovery.<sup>44</sup> They have been strengthened in their belief by a

<sup>42</sup>Marie Jahoda, *Freud and the Dilemmas of Psychology* (London: Hogarth, 1977), p. 10.

<sup>43</sup>Sudhir Kakar, 'Stories from Indian Psychoanalysis: Context and Text', in James W. Stigler, Richard A. Shweder, and Gilbert Herdts (eds.), *Cultural Psychology* (New York: Cambridge University, 1990), pp. 427–45. On the *guru-śiṣya* relationship as a possible model for therapeutic work, the best-known paper is J.S. Neki's 'Guru-Chela Relationship: The Possibility of a Therapeutic Paradigm', *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 1973, 43, pp. 755–66.

<sup>44</sup>Berkeley-Hill, 'The "Colour Question"'; Claud D. Daly, 'Hindu Treatise on Kali', *Samiksha*, 1947 1(2), pp. 191–6; Philip Spratt, *Hindu Culture and Personality* (Bombay: Manaktalas, 1966); G. Morris Carstairs, *The Twice Born: Study of a Community*

galaxy of Indian writers and artists, myth-makers in general, who have regularly reinvoked the fantasy of a partitioned mother in their creative works and autobiographies.)<sup>45</sup>

Most remember Bose's obsessive-compulsive ways—the meticulous records, the orderly minutes, the spotlessly white, immaculately starched Bengali dress that was virtually his uniform, the frugality and—as with many nineteenth-century Indians exposed to the western concept of time and seeking to over-correct for the perceived Indian overemphasis on 'timelessness'—the fanatic devotion to punctuality. The frugality was of a special kind; it went with much wasteful expenditure to ensure order and cleanliness. For his small family he had a retinue of twelve to fourteen domestic servants and his wardrobe included, one student claims, at least eighty dhotis. His orderliness influenced his taste in music: he liked *dhrupada* with its austere, orderly, rigid frame and not the flamboyant *khayāl* with its greater emphasis on fluidity and imagination.<sup>46</sup> He recognized these traits in himself; he once bluntly told his trainee Desai, 'I am obsessive-compulsive'.

Whether the orderliness interfered with his own creativity or not, he retained a sharp sensitivity throughout his life to the obsessive-compulsive traits of his students and analysts. Remarkable stories are told about how he would leave coins scattered about on his desk and draw diagnostic conclusions from the way some of his visitors and students handled them. Indian psychoanalysis inherited this sensitivity; some of the most fascinating work on individual cases and cultural patterns in India centres around the analysis of the same psychopathology.

Others remember livelier scenes. Debiprasad Chattopadhyay remembers Bose washing with an antiseptic lotion the goat to be eaten at his

*of High-Caste Hindus* (London: Hogarth, 1957); J. Hitchcock and Leigh Mintern, 'The Rajputs of Khalapur', in Beatrice Whitting (ed.), *Six Cultures* (New York: John Wiley, 1963), pp. 203–361; Monisha Roy, *Bengali Woman* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1975); Susan Wadley, *Shakti: Power in the Conceptual Structure of Karimpur Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1975); Sudhir Kakar, *The Inner World: A Psychoanalytic Study of Childhood and Society in India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978); Alan Roland, *In Search of Self in India and Japan: Toward a Cross-Cultural Psychology* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University, 1988); Ashis Nandy, *At the Edge of Psychology: Essays in Politics and Creativity and Authenticity in Two Indian Scientists* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995).

<sup>45</sup>Kakar has recently related this myth to the difference between Bose and Freud on gender psychology. Bose believed that the acceptance of the maternal-feminine component by Indian males in themselves made them less prone to castration anxiety and hence psychologically healthier. Sudhir Kakar, *Intimate Relations: Exploring Indian Sexuality* (New Delhi: Viking, 1989), ch. 7.

<sup>46</sup>Sinha, 'A Short Life Sketch', pp. 68–9.

daughter's wedding. Charuchandra Bhattacharya remembers how he went, armed with a stop-watch, from Bose's home to the Howrah railway station on two successive days, once without and once with luggage, as a rehearsal for Bose's planned train journey the following day. Desai remembers Bose saying once that for his holidays at Deoghar in Bihar, he had calculated beforehand all the possible expenses, including that of the wear and tear of his car tyres. Many speak of the twelve goats that Bose purchased for his nephew Bijayketu's marriage feast being fed on gram to make their meat more tender. Though he planned the marriage and marriage reception with meticulous care, he could not attend the actual ceremony, because he had to go to bed at his usual hour, at exactly 8 PM. All this contributed to the myth.

There might have been a weightier reason, too, for Bose's emergence as an important cultural figure in Bengal. Bose turned to psychoanalysis at a time when the traditional social relationships that took care of most of the everyday problems of living—the neuroses and less acute forms of psychosis—were breaking down in urban India. These relationships and the world-view that informed them were being replaced by a new network of social relationships sanctioning a new set of 'superstitions'—constructions of mental illness derived from remnants of traditional ideas of lunacy and available scraps of modern psychiatric knowledge. The first victims of this change were the psychologically afflicted; they were no longer seen as aberrant individuals deserving a place within the family and the community, but as diseased and potentially dangerous waste products of the society. As Bijayketu Bose puts it, the shock-absorbing capacities of the society had declined considerably at the time. And as a Michel Foucault or a Ronald Laing might have said, the dialogue between sanity and insanity had broken down; the society was now dominated by a monologue of sanity.

Girindrasekhar Bose took it upon himself to attack these perceptions and to offer the mentally ill a more humane treatment and voice. In 1933, he established India's first psychiatric out-patient clinic in Calcutta's Carmichael Medical College and Hospital. In 1948, on the initiative of Sinha and partly financed by Rajsekhar Bose, the Indian Psychoanalytic Society established a hospital and research centre at Calcutta's Lumbini Park. In 1949, Bose founded a school for small children organized on psychoanalytic lines.

A word on the early impact of psychoanalysis on urban India in contrast to that on Europe and North America, may be appropriate at this point. Freud's explosive emergence on the European intellectual scene

had shattered the Victorian world image. The image, as Carl Jung once pointed out, was not merely a feature of Anglo-Saxon societies but of much of Protestant Europe, though on the continent 'it never received such an appropriate epithet'. Along with that image went a concept of bourgeois respectability built on attempts to artificially keep alive through repression a set of anaemic ideals. These ideals were, Jung felt, remnants of the collective ideals of the Middle Ages, badly damaged by the French Enlightenment.<sup>47</sup>

When Freud challenged this respectability, he seemed to flout the basic tenets of social decency and challenge the moral universe of nineteenth-century Europe that framed and 'stabilized' everyday culture after the disruptions and uprooting brought about by the industrial revolution. In this stabilization, along with the concepts of the nation-state and progress, a central role had been played by the concept of scientific rationality, viewed as a tool of knowledge and power but serving in fact as a moral fulcrum. The concept might have been thrown up by the Enlightenment but ensured now, independently, a certain moral continuity and social sanction. By invoking this concept of rationality and hitching it to the newly dominant philosophy of individualism, Freud sought to legitimize a new concept of self that would accommodate a rediscovered, previously disowned underside of the self—a 'more real self' operating according to principles the 'apparent self' knew nothing about or rejected as immoral.<sup>48</sup> The Victorians could neither ignore nor swallow them.

Freud's ideas were much less controversial in India. He might have viewed himself as one of those who disturbed the sleep of the world, but he did not disturb many Indians even in their waking hours. Only small sections of the Indian middle classes had deeply internalized Victorian moral codes. Even fewer were exposed to the Victorian social norms relating to sexuality—among them, objections to psychoanalysis were often strong and impassioned. Many of them saw Bose's love for psychoanalysis as a moral betrayal and the content of psychoanalysis as dirty. (For instance, one well-known Bengali writer, Saradindu Bandopadhyay, in one of his plays compared the Freudian to a pig enjoying itself in a sewer. And Debiprasad Chattopadhyay's father stopped sending money to Debiprasad when he found that his college-going son had purchased Freud's works with this money. Such hostility

<sup>47</sup>G.G. Jung, 'Sigmund Freud in His Historical Setting', in Frank Cioffi (ed.), *Freud: Modern Judgement* (London: Macmillan, 1973), pp. 49–56; see pp. 49–50.

<sup>48</sup>Cf. Roland, *In Search of Self*, esp. chs. 1 and 2, for insights into the comparative impact of psychoanalysis in India, Japan, and the West.

was not widespread. Only a Marxist outfit named after Ivan Pavlov kept up the barrage till the late 1950s by rejecting psychoanalysis as being bourgeois and pornographic.)

Otherwise, Indian academics did not find Freud's ideas particularly wicked. Psychoanalysis might not have made much headway in India as a discipline, but the opposition to it could hardly be called frenzied. Most Indians, perhaps even most Indian psychoanalysts, would have been perplexed by Freud's famous statement to Jung on their way to Clark University as their ship approached New York harbour in 1909, 'They don't realize we're bringing them the plague'.<sup>49</sup> Why this indifference?

The easy answer is that there was both a casual unconcern with the content of the discipline and a widely felt need for an updated, reasonably holistic theory of mental illness in urban India. The need was strong enough for many to ignore the actual content of psychoanalysis. While this might on the whole be true, there is also a less pleasant answer. The bourgeois respectability that Freud attacked and which paradoxically defined him—the way industrial capitalism defines trade unionism—came to colonial India as part of the West's cultural baggage, intertwined with other forms of respectability. But these other forms—colonialism itself, secularization, scientism, individualism and impersonalization of social relationships are four examples that immediately come to mind—were rarely targets of the social criticism psychoanalysis offered in the Southern world. As a result, psychoanalysis was bound gradually to look like another tame professional enterprise, another of those many new sciences being imported by westernized Indians, rather than as a critical, subversive presence. For a discipline that was 'double-edged'—both a means of exploring the human mind and a means of avoiding such exploration—this could not but lead to loss of selfhood.<sup>50</sup> Let me spell out the first and easier answer here because it relates directly to Bose's life. I shall return to the second answer at the end.

It was from Bengal that the British empire had started expanding after the Battle of Plassey in 1757. Bengal was the region where colonial intrusion was the deepest and the most disruptive in South Asia. Calcutta was not only the capital of British India, it was the second largest city in the empire and probably the liveliest marketplace of ideas from the East and the West in the world. Already some modern institutions—such as those providing western education and law—had entered the interstices of Bengali society and created a flourishing westernized middle class

<sup>49</sup>Douglas Kirsner, 'Is there a Future for American Psychoanalysis?'. *The Psychoanalytic Review*, 1990, 77, pp. 176–200, see p. 197.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*

that sustained a variety of cultural forms, neither exclusively western nor Indian. From theatre to food, from family dynamics to sports, and from dress to style of scholarship, every area of middle-class life in Bengal carried the imprint of the West.

Living in two worlds is never easy, and the new middle class in Bengal had lived for decades with deculturation, the breakdown of older social ties, and disruption of traditional morality. In response to these, the class had even produced a series of highly creative social thinkers and reformers who sought to design new world-views and new moral visions for fellow-Indians.

As it happened, none of these reformers had directly addressed the psychological problems thrown up by the breakdown of social ties and cultural uprooting. There had been indirect efforts to grapple with such problems in literature, social criticism and theology; there were even the rudiments of new social and political theories sensitive to them. But there was as yet no new theory of consciousness, no new culturally rooted, self-assured theory of modern individuality and subjectivity. Modern Bengal and for that matter urban India, were waiting for a theory of personality and selfhood to explain the psychological forces by which they were being buffeted.

This was the need Bose attempted to meet with the help of psychoanalysis. There might also have been a vague awareness in him that the sectoral, one-dimensional approach of the various schools of conventional academic psychology could not really cope with the psychological problems of Indian society or establish a durable link with Indian traditions. Psychoanalysis with its complex, holistic approach to the human personality—with its invocation of the person as a thinking, feeling, driven individual—at least allowed one to reinterpret its interpretations and to adapt them to the complexities of Indian society. To turn the discipline on itself, psychoanalysis could allow itself to be used as a projective medium for parts of Indian society, while being simultaneously used as a critique of that society.

It was this possibility of the young discipline that Bose exploited, and it was this possibility that gave it its early start in India. Even Freud, no stranger to theoretical speculations, was impressed by the vivacity and intellectual power of the first Indian psychoanalyst and recognized the Indian's philosophical acumen. On receiving *Concept of Repression*, he wrote:

It was a great and pleasant surprise that the first book on a psychoanalytic subject which came to us from that part of the world should display so good a knowledge of psychoanalysis, so deep an insight into its difficulties and so much deep going

original thought... [the author] is aiming at a philosophical evolution... of our crude, practical concepts, and I can only wish psychoanalysis should soon reach up to the level to which he [Bose] strives to raise it.<sup>51</sup>

Of course, there was a touch of politics in Freud's enthusiasm and, later, that of Ernest Jones, who reviewed Bose's book in the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*.<sup>52</sup> Both were happy to see psychoanalysis spread to India when it was still beleaguered in Europe and North America. Hence also Freud's emphasis, in a letter to Lou Andreas-Salome, on the fact that most members of the newly founded Indian Psychoanalytic Society were 'learned Hindus', not white expatriates or semi-literate native dilettantes.<sup>53</sup> Its cultivated Indian converts gave psychoanalysis, apart from ethnic colour, the semblance of cross-cultural validity.

However, there might also have been in Freud's and Jones's views a mix of awe and ambivalence that Bose spanned so effortlessly the worlds of psychoanalysis, philosophy, and cultural tradition. Certainly Jones, nurtured in the heady atmosphere of Anglo-Saxon positivism, might have found Bose's speculative bent of mind a bit of a trial. Jones needed, he himself said, 'the sense of security which the pursuit of truth gives'—in this instance, the certitudes produced by science—and he lived in an intellectual atmosphere in which Bertrand Russell was soon to call J.B. Watson the greatest scientist after Aristotle and compare the ultra-behaviourist with Charles Darwin.<sup>54</sup> For Jones, as for James Strachey, even Freud's cultural origins were an 'eccentricity' rather than a 'living factor in his life' and all religions were superstitions.<sup>55</sup> But then, Jones also had a more mundane reason to tolerate Bose's flirtation with philosophy. In another few years, he would want to make the British Society the regulating psychoanalytic body for the British empire, with the societies in the colonies functioning as subordinate groups. Bose's support in this venture might have been seen as vital.<sup>56</sup>

Freud, on the other hand, was brought up in an intellectual culture in which the pedagogic split between philosophy and science had not ossified. It was typical of the 'temperamental differences' between Jones

<sup>51</sup>Freud to Bose, 20 February 1922, in 'Correspondence', 10, p. 108.

<sup>52</sup>Ernest Jones, 'Review of *Concept of Repression*', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 1921, 2, p. 453.

<sup>53</sup>Freud to Andreas-Salome, p. 1.

<sup>54</sup>Ernest Jones, *Free Associations: Memories of a Psychoanalyst* (London: Hogarth, 1959), p. 63; also David Cohen, *J.B. Watson—The Founder of Behaviourism: A Biography* (London: Routledge, 1979).

<sup>55</sup>Roazen, *Freud and His Followers*, p. 347.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 346.

and Freud, Roazen says, 'that whereas the former feared religion's anti-naturalism, the latter was more afraid of the dangers of medicine's scientific materialism'.<sup>57</sup> Freud could not but be intrigued by Bose's daring. Though he claimed to steer clear of philosophy, Freud was nevertheless impressed by it; it was with some difficulty that he kept his interest in metapsychology in check.<sup>58</sup>

Neither this support from Freud nor its precocious growth and cultural distinctiveness saved Indian psychoanalysis from exhaustion within a few decades. So much so that Alan Roland has recently asked why psychoanalysis developed so early in India, and why it has not grown there as it has, for instance, in America or even France since the late 1960s.<sup>59</sup> Roland gives the answer at two planes. He notes the ease with which a theory of the unconscious can be integrated within a culture demanding 'extraordinary interpersonal sensitivity' from those living in extended families and other traditional groupings as well as the 'highly particularistic emphasis on a person's development through the combination of their qualities (*gunas*), power (*śakti*), effects of familial and individual actions (*karma*), and attachments (*samaskāras*) carried over from past lives'.<sup>60</sup> Roland's answer to the second part of the question is socio-cultural and it supplements what has already been said about the non-controversial impact of psychoanalysis on Indian society. Comparing India with the western developed societies, Roland speaks of the 'deconversion' that has taken place from the belief systems and symbols of the traditional communities in the West and of the shift to a culturally less integrated society that shares only the symbols of science and where each individual must create his world-view of symbols and meaning.<sup>61</sup> The individual has been thrown back upon himself or herself in the West; not in India.

In other words, the factors which gave vibrancy to psychoanalysis in its early years in India may also have handicapped it as a vocation. The individuation that has taken place in the West remains in India the characteristic of a small proportion of the society. Psychoanalysis as a therapeutic technique in such circumstances has to remain a matter of cognitive choice; it cannot resonate with the private search for

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 354–5. Roazen bases himself on a letter of Ernest Jones to Sigmund Freud, 10 January 1933 (Jones Archives).

<sup>58</sup>On Freud's ambivalent attempts to distance himself from philosophy, see Section IV of this paper below.

<sup>59</sup>Roland, *In Search of Self*, p. 57.

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 58.



self-definition or a theory of life for the majority of Indians. In a paper on the early years of psychoanalysis, Kakar says: 'Cut off from the thrust and parry of debate, controversy and ferment of the psychoanalytic centres in Europe, dependent upon not easily available books and journals for outside intellectual sustenance, Indian psychoanalysis was nurtured through its infancy primarily by the enthusiasm and intellectual passion of its progenitor.'<sup>62</sup>

Probably it was. Probably, for the same reason, psychoanalysis in India never grew spectacularly as a clinical discipline. In a culture in which complex, often ornate, theories of consciousness of both right- and left-handed kinds were an important component, psychoanalysis had neither enough philosophical punch as a theory of the person. It neither threatened to supersede all other theories of the person, nor did it carry a strong enough impress of the evil and the smutty (in a society that treated the *Kāmasūtra* as a sacred text) to become the subject of a highly charged moral debate on the nature of the human mind. Psychoanalysis rather quietly became the best-known school of western psychology in India, controversial but not particularly live politically.

Christiane Hartnack says that 'the reception of psychoanalysis in British India varied from outright rejections of Freud's concepts as inappropriate for Indian conditions to unquestioned transfers.'<sup>63</sup> Actually, the 'outright rejections' here means in most cases nothing more dramatic than a certain unconcern. Only a few pages later, Hartnack is surprised at the public response to Rangin Halder's paper on the Oedipus complex in Rabindranath Tagore's poetry:

Halder's attempt[s] to demystify the writings of this celebrity, the first Indian Nobel prize winner, who was seen as a kind of national hero in his country, do not seem to have caused any negative reaction from the Bengali side.<sup>64</sup>

So much so that Halder presented the same paper a few years later to a wider audience at the Indian Science Congress—this time in English.

One reason for such 'tolerance' was public ignorance about Bose's world-view. Bose was not popularly known to the urban middle classes of India as a psychoanalyst, though that is usually what he called himself. Most Indians knew him as a doctor of the mind. They were relatively

unconcerned (*udāsīna* is the expression Bijayketu uses) about psychoanalysis. Girindrasekhar himself, as we shall see below, may have been obsessive about many things, but not about the purity of psychoanalytic concepts, their philosophical roots in western thought, or about the therapeutic tradition being built in Europe by the Freudian movement. Nor did he stress that psychoanalysis was unique as a school of psychology.

Was psychoanalysis, then, merely an artefact in urban India's attempts to explore its own soul? Was it severely refracted through and, hence, incidental to Bose's personal quest for selfhood as a healer? That, too, is doubtful. It says something about the science that Bose, already exposed to a wide range of eastern and western options—from Patañjali's *Yogasūtra* to academic psychiatry to behaviourism and experimental psychology—should have chosen to call himself a psychoanalyst. Somewhere, at some plane, the discipline's concerns and implicit social-critical thrust had crossed the boundaries of culture, though not in the sense in which its Viennese founder's Eurocentric world-view would have it.

On the other hand, one must hasten to add that Freud's Eurocentrism, too, had its in-built checks. The most conspicuous of them was his concern with the future of psychoanalysis. He did want the discipline to cross cultural barriers and become a truly international movement; when faced with a choice, therefore, the old war-horse did try to create a space for Bose's concerns within the mainstream of psychoanalysis. Perhaps in the case of Bose he was spared some of the anxieties that dogged his relationships with his European followers. Certainly in his treatment of Bose's work there was no reflection of the 'tragic flaw' in Freud's personality to which Peter Rudnytsky has again recently drawn our attention.<sup>65</sup> But that tolerance of Bose by the founding father of psychoanalysis had its own limits:

After corresponding with Bose and confronting his publications, . . . Freud could no longer easily defend his claims for the universality of his concepts. Confronted with Bose's deviant theory, Freud considered working aspects of Bose's concepts into his system. He evidently intended to functionalize Bose's contribution like some kind of intellectual raw material, and to incorporate them into his own theory, not realizing that these were based on an entirely different conceptual system.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>62</sup>Kakar, *Stories from Indian Psychoanalysis*.

<sup>63</sup>Hartnack, 'Psychoanalysis and Colonialism', p. 151.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., pp. 161–2.

<sup>65</sup>Peter L. Rudnytsky, 'A Psychoanalytic Weltanschauung', *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 1992, 79, pp. 289–305.

<sup>66</sup>Hartnack, 'Psychoanalysis and Colonialism', p. 192.

## Part Two: The Morality of Psychology

### III *The Relegitimation*

The compliment from Freud notwithstanding, Bose's English papers on the range and concerns of psychology, especially psychoanalysis, lack something of the philosophical imagination and elegance of his Bengali papers on the same subject. The reasons for this are not clear. Perhaps he was less at ease in English than in Bengali, being more self-conscious and aware of an international audience when he wrote in English. It is even possible that in Bengali he could more openly reconcile Indian classical traditions and the science of psychoanalysis, not as two distinct cognitive orders but as two aspects of his own self. Thus, while 'The Aim and Scope of Psychology' (1932) and 'A New Theory of Mental Life' (1933) are both competent and fresh, one misses in them the touches of theoretical daring born of cultural self-confidence that one finds in some of his Bengali papers.<sup>67</sup>

Both papers introduce the reader to the broad disciplinary framework within which he, the first non-western psychoanalyst, worked and the conceptual boundaries of his depth psychology. 'The Aim and the Scope' specifically seeks to create a legitimate place for psychology in the world of knowledge by anticipating and resisting attacks on the infant discipline on three fronts. First, the paper rejects as invalid the behaviourist approach in psychology, for behaviourists deny the existence of mind on the grounds that mind cannot be perceived without the intervention of matter. Bose considers the denial analogous to a physicist's rejection of the existence of matter on the grounds that matter cannot be 'seen' without the intervention of mind.<sup>68</sup> Second, the paper tries to reclaim from physiology terrain that rightfully belongs to psychology. Bose rejects attempts to reduce psychology to the functioning of the brain and the nervous system: using the same arguments, one could then claim endocrinology was a branch of psychology. If changes in psychological states follow changes in the brain, glandular changes also follow from psychological changes. The paper obviously does not suffer from the positivist modesty which sometimes afflicted Freud. It does not even hint that in some distant future psychology would in effect become the biology of the mind.<sup>69</sup> Finally,

<sup>67</sup>Girindrasekhar Bose, 'The Aim and Scope of Psychology', *Indian Journal of Psychology*, July-Aug. 1932, 9, pp. 11-29; and 'A New Theory of Mental Life', *Indian Journal of Psychology*, 1933, 10, pp. 37-157.

<sup>68</sup>Bose, 'The Aim and Scope', p. 13.

<sup>69</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 14.

the paper takes on 'the oldest claimant to the psychological terrain', philosophy. Here Bose is more tolerant, given his own bent of mind, and he makes his point with qualifications. 'I am quite willing to admit that philosophical studies afford an excellent discipline to the science students but I cannot understand why it should be tacked on to psychology alone and not to any other science such as physics.'<sup>70</sup>

The second paper recapitulates Girindrasekhar's once-popular theory of pan-psychic psychophysical parallelism, first propounded in *Concept of Repression*. Now entirely forgotten, the theory was at one time taken seriously in many circles. It also subtly influenced the course of his friend Jagadis Chandra Bose's vitalistic biophysics, which took the world of knowledge by storm in the inter-war years.<sup>71</sup> The theory has parallels with Freud's belief in his student days that 'the physiological processes of the brain and the psychological processes of the mind were not parallel and causally linked but, rather, were identical. They were one and the same thing apprehended by the scientist in two different ways: through external observation in the natural sciences and through inner perception in psychological investigation.'<sup>72</sup> 'A New Theory' is unlikely to impress even a sympathetic psychologist reading it in the 1990s; it is likely to interest only the historians of science. For though it is the work of a psychologist well-versed in and committed to the non-dualist Vedantic tradition, it can be read as only a plea for a dualist psychology rooted in the Vedanta. The dualism, however, is a qualified one; it is set within the frame of a non-dualist vision and idiom.

In sum, while neither of the two papers reveals Bose's hand fully, both show that, unlike Freud and some of the early analysts, Bose made no attempt to underplay the philosophical and social meaning of the new science. Nor did he share Freud's belief that psychoanalytic therapy 'would be overtaken within half a century by biochemical therapies'.<sup>73</sup> On the contrary, he was not hesitant about making large claims for his discipline. 'We can look forward to the day', he grandly says at the end of 'The Aim and Scope', 'when Psychology [note the capital] will establish itself as our guide, friend and philosopher in all human affairs, and will be looked upon as the greatest of sciences.'<sup>74</sup>

<sup>70</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>71</sup>See Nandy, *Alternative Sciences*, Part II.

<sup>72</sup>William J. McGrawth, *Freud's Discovery of Psychoanalysis: The Politics of Hysteria* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1986), p. 18.

<sup>73</sup>*Psychoanalysis and Faith: The Letters of Sigmund Freud and Oscar Pfister* (London: Hogarth, 1963), quoted in Jahoda, *Freud and the Dilemmas*, p. 10.

<sup>74</sup>Bose, 'The Aim and Scope', p. 29.

In Bengali, Girindrasekhar Bose wrote voluminously and with enormous intellectual energy. (Most of these writings are now out of print and not easily available; some of his essays and important letters are lost.) The most remarkable feature of his Bengali writings is that, when on India's sacred texts and epics, they were often surprisingly unencumbered by his disciplinary faith. Thus, his *Purāṇa Praveśa*, a three-hundred-page tome on the Indian epics, is mainly a meticulous—some may say Teutonic—study of genealogy, a chronological dynastic history of the *purāṇas*, not a study of fantasies or defences.<sup>75</sup> There are, however, in the book fascinating comments on the politics of scholarship and the responsibility imposed on Indian commentators on the *purāṇas*. We shall touch on this later. Similarly, there is the low-key presence of psychoanalysis in his commentary on the Gita, as we have already noted. All this 'restraint' was observed at a time when the analysis of myths and religious texts had already become, thanks to Freud himself and to younger psychoanalysts like Ernest Jones and Geiza Roheim, an important and fashionable part of psychoanalysis and even in distant India some had experimented with such analysis.

However, Bose did write a few perceptive essays in Bengali which help to link his reading of Indian culture to the Freudian theory of mental life. Unlike Berkeley-Hill and others who followed him, in these essays Bose did not use psychoanalysis solely to demystify Indian culture and everyday life or to bare the pathologies of western middle-class culture in the colonies. He also used Indian cultural categories to domesticate psychoanalysis for Indians. From this point of view, his two most important papers are: '*Sattva, Rajah, Tamah*' and '*Mānuṣer Mana*', both written in Bengali and published in 1930.<sup>76</sup> Some of the ideas in the essays were later included in his English works but they lacked the same directness. The first essay offers an understanding and justification of psychological knowledge in native terms, leading up to the Freudian tenet that the ego should ultimately supplant or supersede the id. The second extends the argument further and defines psychology as a science of persons, a personology, as Henry A. Murray might have described the venture.

Both papers depend on Indian classical texts and on a particular reading of India's past. The second dependence has however to be gleaned

<sup>75</sup>Girindrasekhar Bose, *Purāṇa Praveśa* (Calcutta: M.C. Sarkar, 1934).

<sup>76</sup>Girindrasekhar Bose, '*Sattva, Rajah, Tamah*', *Pravāsi*, 1930, 30, part 2(1), pp. 1–5; Girindrasekhar Bose, '*Mānuṣer Mana*', *Pravāsi*, Āśād 1337 (1930), 30, part 1(3), pp. 339–53.

from Bose's other Bengali writings. Thus, from *Purāṇa Praveśa*, also written in 1933 though only published the following year, we come to know of Bose's conviction that foreign—read western—historians of India are bound to be partial. They cannot be fair to the Indian texts because they think of themselves as a superior race. To expect an impartial history of India from the *videśis* or foreigners is, Bose says, the same as expecting the British to protect Indian self-interests in politics.<sup>77</sup> Bose tries to correct for such racist interpretations by proposing that the *purāṇas* are supported both by reason and empirical data.<sup>78</sup> There is no need to study the history of these epics, for they themselves are the Indian equivalent of history.<sup>79</sup>

Then, responding as it were to Berkeley-Hill, Bose mentions the two kinds of exaggeration to which Hindus are allegedly given: the fantastic exaggerations in the *purāṇas* (*atiranjana*) and the exaggeration of the past achievements of their culture. As for the former, Bose believes that the stylized exaggerations of the *purāṇas* can be handled through *atyukti vicāra*, analysis of overstatement. It is a question of appropriate and empathetic reading of texts. Bose's response to the second issue is more political. He traces the hostility of western scholars to things Indian to two main causes. First, Indians, unlike the ancient Babylonians or Egyptians, have survived to flaunt their glorious past against their inglorious present status as colonial subjects.<sup>80</sup> This cannot but infuriate many westerners. Second, western scholars project into the Indian situation the enmity between Church and State existing in Europe. This makes them hostile to Hinduism and virulently anti-Brahminic.<sup>81</sup> Under such circumstances, given that the organizing principle of Indian culture has always been religion, any serious consideration of India's past cultural achievements is bound to look like an exaggeration.

'*Sattva, Rajah, Tamah*' discusses *guṇas* (traits, attributes or qualities) in *prakṛti* or nature. The concept of *guṇa* is notoriously complicated and, some may say, slippery. The essay mentions in a footnote that even Max Müller found it difficult to understand the concept, but found Indian philosophers so clear about it that no explanation was needed.<sup>82</sup> The essay suggests that these qualities are of two kinds: *guṇas* that control *ajñāna* or the absence of knowledge (in a person) and *aprakāśa* or the non-manifest (in nature) are classified as *tamah*.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., p. 212.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., pp. 1, 3.

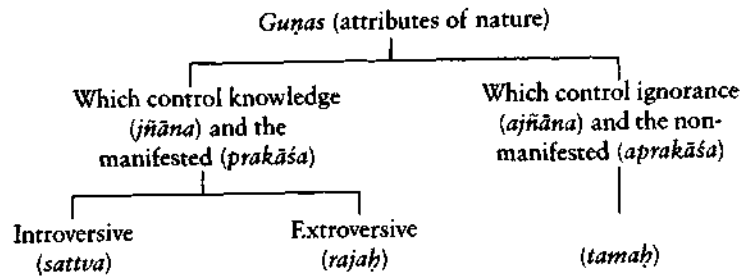
<sup>79</sup>Ibid., p. 179.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., pp. 212–13.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid.

<sup>82</sup>Max Müller, quoted in Bose, '*Sattva, Rajah, Tamah*', p. 3.

The second kind of *guṇa* controls *jñāna* or knowledge (in human personality) and the manifest (in nature). These *guṇas* can, in turn, be of two types: *bahirmukha*, literally outer-directed or extroversive and *antarmukha*, inner-directed or introversive. The essay identified the former as *rajaḥ*; and the latter as *sattva*.<sup>83</sup> Bose summarized his argument in the following manner:



It is not clear whether Bose borrows the second-order dichotomy—between extroversion and introversion—from Carl Jung, who had published his work on personality types in 1923.<sup>84</sup> The work should have reached Calcutta by the time Bose wrote his essay in 1930. On the other hand, the impact of Jung on the first generation of Indian psychoanalysts was limited, despite the overlap between his theories and aspects of traditional Indian thought. This is surprising when one remembers that Bose and some of his associates were well-versed in traditional philosophy and should have found Jung especially attractive. As inexplicable seems the fact that, though Jung visited India in 1938 and it was a triumphant visit, Bose probably did not meet him.<sup>85</sup>

Were these measures of the loyalty of the Indian group to psychoanalytic orthodoxy, as Hartnack assumes?<sup>86</sup> Were Indian psychoanalysts repelled by Jung's inadequate knowledge of Indian traditions, as some of them were to later claim? Or did Freud meet some deeper needs in Indians, who were searching at the time not so much for in-house criticisms as for a critical theory adequately discontinuous with a psychologically minded culture and able to serve as a radical critique of it? Probably the latter;

Jung probably was too close to India to serve as a base for social criticism or to avoid cultural incorporation of the kind Bose nearly brought off in the case of Freud. We shall come back to this point.

What emerges clearly is the hierarchy Bose imposes on the entire set of *guṇas*. Like Freud, he believes that the unconscious and the non-manifest (together constituting the *tamaḥ*) represent an inferior level of personality functioning. Unlike Freud and Jung but like a true Hindu, Bose extends this hierarchy to extroversion and introversion. In his model, the extroverted or *rājasika* becomes inferior to the introverted, seen as definitionally more *sāttvika*.<sup>87</sup> However, the hierarchy has no social-evolutionist thrust, of the kind that permeates the work of psychologists such as Abraham Maslow. Nowhere does Bose imply that only after the basic needs of a person have been met can he or she graduate to introversion as part of a developmental profile.<sup>88</sup> As in Jung, the hierarchy remains in essence a classificatory scheme.

Bose goes on to say that the *ātmā* or self is *bhūmā* or all-pervasive; it pervades all nature.<sup>89</sup> Compared to *ātmā*, nature is narrower and more limited. And it is not so much the knowledge of self but the relationship between self and nature that is the stuff of genuine knowledge. The *śāstrakāras* or writers of sacred texts in India were primarily concerned, according to Bose, with this relationship. For the knowledge of this relationship can be truly emancipatory.<sup>90</sup> I should emphasize that the few concepts verging on technical psychoanalytic terms in the paragraphs above are mine, not Bose's. The entire essay, though it provides an excellent indirect comparison between some aspects of the traditional Indian theory of the person and psychoanalysis, seems strangely oblivious of its own range. There is no direct mention of any psychoanalytic concept in the essay.

Bose offsets his typology of *guṇas* with the proposition that awareness of—or encounter with—the self is the same as the awareness of the ultimate reality of being and God. In his scheme, the *ātmāsakṣātkārī*, one who encounters one's own self, is automatically a *brahmasākṣātkārī*, one who encounters/confronts the absolute, and *atmajñāna* (self-

<sup>83</sup>Bose, 'Sattva, Rajaḥ, Tamaḥ', p. 3.

<sup>84</sup>Carl G. Jung, *Psychological Types* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1923).

<sup>85</sup>Hartnack, 'Psychoanalysis and Colonialism', p. 93; Bose's student Charuchandra Bhattacharya says that Bose probably met Jung but did not have any extended exchange with him.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid.

<sup>87</sup>Bose, 'Sattva Rajaḥ, Tamaḥ', p. 3.

<sup>88</sup>See a discussion of this issue in Ashis Nandy, 'The Idea of Development: The Experience of Modern Psychology as a Cautionary Tale', in Carlos Mallmann and Oscar Nudler (eds.), *Human Development in Its Social Context: A Collective Exploration* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1986), pp. 248–59.

<sup>89</sup>Bose, 'Sattva, Rajaḥ, Tamaḥ', p. 3.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

knowledge) is *brahmajñāna* (knowledge of the absolute). One must, therefore, know *ātmā*; *ātmānam viddhi*, know thyself.<sup>91</sup>

Further, *antarmukha jñāna* or inner-directed knowledge is the knowledge of pure experience or awareness, whereas *bahirmukha jñāna* is material knowledge. 'From pure experience gradually grows pure knowledge . . . In pure knowledge there is no plurality (*nānātva*). *Na iha nānāsti kiñcana*.'<sup>92</sup> This pure knowledge is self-knowledge and, therefore, knowledge of the absolute. It defines the nature of the soul. So the non-duality that sacrificed for the sake of the mind-body duality in Bose's concept of psychology is restored at another plane. (Elsewhere, Bose equates pure consciousness with the state of *samādhi* as described in Patañjali's *Yogasūtra*.)<sup>93</sup>

Obviously, Bose is here trying to locate contemporary psychology in the Indian experience and to legitimize the discipline as a natural outgrowth of traditional knowledge. As it happens, the space thus created for psychology also accommodates a heavily textual version of Advaita as the core of Indian consciousness. The psychologist is the ultimate scientist because he or she tries to look within. Psychology is *sāttvika*; so is the psychologist's work. The work of the psychiatrist and the psychotherapist, like that of the physicist and the chemist, is applied or instrumental and, hence, *rājasika*.<sup>94</sup> When counterpoised against Bose's formal emphasis on the therapeutics of psychoanalysis, this proposition makes strange reading. It is as if, after justifying psychoanalysis in terms of its *sāttvika* content, Bose is pleading for a less exalted *rājasika* role for it.

The second proposition of the essay is to define the individual as the ultimate unit of intellectual and, presumably, social analysis. Bose quotes from the *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad*:

Do not try to understand speech; try to understand the speaker. Do not try to know smell; try to know the smeller. Do not try to know beauty; try to know the beautician; do not try to understand words; try to understand the listener . . . do not try to know the deed (*karma*); try to know the doer (*kartā*). Do not try to understand the mind; try to understand the thinker.<sup>95</sup>

As opposed to the first proposition, which is clearly identifiable with aspects of Vedantic thought, the second goes directly against some of the

<sup>91</sup>Ibid.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., pp. 3–4.

<sup>93</sup>Girindrasekhar Bose, quoted in Hartnack, 'Psychoanalysis and Colonialism', p. 98.

<sup>94</sup>Bose, 'Sattva, Rajah, Tamah', p. 5.

<sup>95</sup>*Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad*, tr. Sitānāth Tattvabhuṣana, quoted in Bose, 'Sattva, Rajah, Tamah', p. 4.

most influential readings of the Vedānta. For Bose does not emphasize essence or platonic quality; he emphasizes the carrier of the essence. One suspects that he needed this sanction for using the individual as the basic unit of analysis both as a psychologist and as an urban Indian being constantly exposed to a wide variety of new institutions ideologically wedded to individualism.

A few other propositions emerge from '*Mānuṣer Mana*' as by-products of Bose's unselfconscious attempt to break out of the regime of the positive sciences. Science has become a fashionable word, Bose says, and it is invoked as an 'explanation' even for magical episodes in the Indian epics and rituals by Indians defensively seeking to give the episodes some respectability in contemporary times. This is natural, Bose feels, for wherever a science becomes popular, it produces its counterpoint, an *apavijñāna* (false or bad science).<sup>96</sup> To avoid the pitfalls of such cheap scientism, he justifies psychoanalysis, and psychology in general, in larger philosophical terms.

To Bose it is natural that psychology is a new science, the last science to crystallize as a separate discipline, for human beings are more interested in the outside world than in the inner.<sup>97</sup> According to the *Kāthopanīṣad*, God has created human beings as *bahirmukha*: our sense organs are oriented to externalities. A few serene persons (*dhīravayakti*) very occasionally cross the barrier of attachment to the outside world, to face and examine the self. From the wishes of this minority arises the need for *ātmadarśana*. According to the sacred texts *ātmajñāna* or self-knowledge is impossible unless the mind becomes inner-directed.<sup>98</sup>

*Parāñcikhāni vyatīnat svayambhūh  
Tasmāt parāk paśyati nāntarātman  
Kaściddhīrāḥ pratyagātmānamaiḥṣa-  
dāvṛtta cakṣuramṛtattvamicchān*

Hence the small number of psychologists in the world. Bose implies that most people, being extroverted, are driven by emotions like anger and fear; when angry and fearful, we do not examine the internal changes in us.<sup>99</sup>

In other words, from the point of view of the Hindu *śāstras*, psychology is the highest of the sciences.<sup>100</sup> The growth of psychology is not merely

<sup>96</sup>Bose, '*Mānuṣer Mana*', pp. 339, 349.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., p. 339.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., p. 340.

an expression of the intrinsic power of the Indian civilization but also a marker of the intellectual and cultural maturity of Indians. This growth has a disciplinary meaning, too. Bose believes that as a science develops, its boundaries are better defined. By defining the boundaries of psychology more clearly, he is helping the science to grow.<sup>101</sup>

'*Mānuser mana*', a slighter essay, makes three other points. First, it relates psychological awareness to the study of sensibility and draws the readers' attention to the scientific works of Jagadis Chandra Bose which show that there can be sensibility even in inert objects. After Jagadis Chandra, to assert the presence of such sensibility is no longer a form of mysticism, the essay claims.<sup>102</sup> Second, there is an untearable (*acchedya*) chain of causality which ties together the entire material world.<sup>103</sup> This makes causality—presumably a scientific category—a special case of and intrinsic to the monistic vision of life. Third, at a more practical level, the essay affirms that the idea of the unconscious unburdens the individual of the need to believe in superstitions such as ghosts. Acceptance of the unconscious does not secularize one's world, for the unconscious is not particularly incompatible with spirituality, but it cures one of pseudo-spirituality:

Human beings usually try to attain happiness by extending their control over the external world. All the material sciences help men in this endeavour. The Hindu *śāstras* advise that there is no permanent happiness in external objects; genuine happiness comes from restraint over mind (*manahsanyama*). The serene person (*dhīraprajña*) is happy under all circumstances. To keep the mind under control, many advices/suggestions are given for rituals, institutions and asceticisms. Reduction of ignorance [unconscious?] is a way of attaining happiness and peace. The scientist of the unconscious (*nirjñānvit*) assures us that when the dammed instincts subside, the conflicts of mind dissolve and all sorrows are eliminated. Till now, the source of peace for the disturbed mind, tortured by mourning, anxiety, tiredness, lay in the moral lessons given by the religions. In this respect, the material scientist had to admit defeat at the hands of the religious preachers. Today, psychology, by offering human beings words of assurance and peace, has moved ahead to establish the dignity of science.<sup>104</sup>

Thus, the fate of the science of the unconscious, human happiness, and the dignity of science converge in the step-wise unravelling and

<sup>101</sup>Ibid.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., pp. 346–7.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., p. 347.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., p. 353.

transcendence of the *gunas*. According to the *śāstras*, Bose acknowledges, all three *gunas* are hindrances to self-realization but, of the three, inner-directedness poses the least problem.<sup>105</sup> Ultimately though, he says, one must rise above one's attachment to the way—even when it is inner-directedness and even when it goes with the analytic attitude—to reach one's destination.<sup>106</sup> But, in the meanwhile, unravelling the *tāmasika gunas* by focusing on inner experiences must become an important part of the agenda of any worthwhile theory of consciousness. Psychology, when it establishes the dignity of science, is presumably no longer a positivist science, but science as a philosophy of consciousness. It emancipates science from its own straitjacket, as Jagadis Chandra Bose's plant physiology has done.

Apparently the latent critical-moral stance of early psychoanalysis in India came from this tacit equation between the *tāmasika gunas* and the instinctual impulses. Analytic interpretation became not merely a cognitive venture or an instrument of therapy, but also a moral statement and a form of social criticism. Freud did not like to view his infant science as a philosophy of life and he would have shuddered to think of it as a moral statement—Philip Rieff or no.<sup>107</sup> Some of Freud's first patients were even made to feel that 'he was not at all interested in politics, ethics or philosophy of life'.<sup>108</sup> And the admiring Fritz Wittels, despite his belief that the master was 'too profound a person not to grasp the need for a *Weltanschauung*',<sup>109</sup> could not avoid confronting Freud's own statement made in 1926: 'I must confess I am not at all partial to the fabrication of *Weltanschauungen*. Such activities may be left to philosophers.'<sup>110</sup>

Bose had no such inhibitions when writing in the vernacular. His attempts to limit the critical-moral role of psychoanalysis and his stress on the therapeutic role of the discipline were not evidently the whole story. Nor, for that matter, was Freud's avoidance of philosophy and

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid.

<sup>107</sup>Philip Rieff, *Freud: The Mind of the Moralizer* (New York: Doubleday, 1959).

<sup>108</sup>Roazen, *Freud and His Followers*, p. 512.

<sup>109</sup>Fritz Wittels, *Freud and His Time: The Influence of the Master Psychologist on the Emotional Problems of Our Lives* (London: Peter Owen, 1956), p. 52.

<sup>110</sup>Sigmund Freud, 'Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety' (1925), in James Stretchy (ed.), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: Hogarth, 1959), 20, pp. 75–175; see p. 96. Freud had already declared a year earlier, 'even where I refrained from observation, I carefully avoided approach to actual philosophy. Constitutional incapacity rendered such self-restraint easy for me.' Sigmund Freud (1925), quoted in Wittels, *Freud and His Time*, p. 50.

world-views. I like to believe that the work of Berkeley-Hill and Daly had shown Bose that the declared value-neutrality of psychoanalysis was no guarantee against latent moral judgements tilted in favour of the powerful. But one can never be sure that the Indian read his British colleagues that way. What we know for certain is that at least one part of Bose, a part that was a not-too-secret self either, would have ceased to be what it was if it gave up its philosophical and ethical moorings. Like early analysts such as Wilhelm Reich and Karen Horney who sought an element of social criticism in their therapeutics even at the cost of therapeutic 'finesse' and methodological 'sanity', Bose would have found psychoanalytic ego psychology in particular and the highly professionalized psychoanalysis of the Anglo-Saxon world in general, anti-analytic. This despite the subsequent career of the discipline in his own country, a career that he himself helped to shape.

#### IV *The Fate of Psychology*

Girindrasekhar Bose was not the only person to create a space for western psychology in Indian public life and the culture of healing. Nor were his works, especially his English works, free of inelegance, crudity and simplification. But he was certainly the most colourful and robust figure to emerge in the world of Indian psychology in the first half of this century. No one since his time has moved back and forth so daringly and freely between the implicit psychology of traditional Indian thought, academic psychology, and psychoanalysis.

He obtained this freedom by operating at two levels: by emphasizing the organizational needs and the therapeutic role of psychoanalysis for his western and westernizing pan-Indian audience and by disembedding the discipline from its cultural moorings in the West to relocate it in Indian high culture and in the bicultural lifestyle of the urban middle classes in colonial India.

The first was by design, and it made him into yet another high priest of the-transfer-of-technology model that reigned supreme in the academic circles of India at the time. The latter was by default and that unintended dissent gave him his intellectual robustness. But the dissent, by the logic of his life experiences and personality, had to remain partial. Bose did believe the Sanskrit tradition to be the core of Indianness and, his exposure to and assessment of the little traditions of India being what they were, he could not help looking at the world of knowledge through the eyes of the babu. On the other hand, even this partial dissent paid him rich dividends. Though he often was 'too logical' and 'mechanical'—

the judgement was Freud's—when writing in English, he wrote in Bengali as if he had anticipated the adage of Christopher Lasch that, in an age that had forgotten theory, 'theory had to begin in remembrance'.<sup>111</sup>

As this narrative has shown, the memories Bose chose to excavate were not random ones. They were selected and shaped by his personality, which in turn mirrored the experiences of a civilization and the anguish of an age and a class. Naturally, the memories had their own half-life. While they let modern psychology go native and acquire a moral standing in local terms, they also narrowed the discipline's social base. This base sustained the young discipline as a sectarian profession and therapeutic technique, not as a cultural critique. Like many other imported systems of knowledge and some of the new theologies, reform movements, and refurbished cults in South Asia that began spectacularly and then withered away, psychology, too, gradually lost its sense of adventure and wider social appeal to become a 'proper' vocation.

During his lifetime, however, Bose did manage to keep it a significant presence in Indian intellectual life. That would have been a harder task had he not been living in Calcutta in near-total isolation from the day-to-day culture of psychoanalysis in Europe and North America. For the isolation allowed Bose to take advantage of a contradiction in the European culture of science which got telescoped into Freud's self-definition and which the late nineteenth-century Viennese medicine man was never able to reconcile in his life or work. It was this contradiction that made Freud's vision a Shakespearian one for some like Lionel Trilling.

The contradiction was defined by a number of polarities, not all of them orthogonal: the metaphysical versus the applied or the narrowly empirical; the clinical versus the experimental; the intuitive and aesthetic versus the tough-minded and the objective; and, above all, between Freud the holistic healer and social critic inspired by the romantic tradition of science versus Freud the heroic, masculine scientist-engineer and pioneer of a new theoretical school, self-consciously speaking the language of hard-eyed positivism.<sup>112</sup> Some of these polarities were to survive in a

<sup>111</sup>Christopher Lasch, 'Introduction', in Russell Jacoby, *Social Amnesia: A Critique of Conformist Psychology from Adler to Laing* (Hassock, U.K.: Harvester 1975), pp. vii–xv; see p. vii.

<sup>112</sup>A roughly comparable dichotomy is between critical and professionalized psychoanalysis used by Kirsner in 'Is There a Future?' Kirsner's dichotomy hinges on his understanding of where Freud's real interest lay. He quotes Freud's statement that the analytic relationship is based on 'a love of truth' and the prime interest of psychoanalysis is to find out what resistances this love of truth meets and the 'mental, theoretical and institutional formations based on our need to avoid the truth' (*ibid.*,

few of his followers and in the disciplinary culture they built, though they had to drive underground the culturally less acceptable ends of the polarities, for fear of the social and professional costs of their dissenting philosophy and politics.<sup>113</sup>

But first a word on Freud's self-definition as a scientist. Freud was the product of a culture of science within which German romanticism was not quite dead. For though he lived well into the twentieth century, he really belonged to the previous one. By his own admission, he decided to study medicine after reading Goethe's evocative essay on nature, and he was exposed through his friend Wilhelm Fliess to romantic medicine, many of the assumptions of which came from the *naturphilosophie* of Schelling.<sup>114</sup> The exposure was deep enough for Robert Holt to trace to it one entire genre of Freud's work. Holt calls the genre 'phylogenetic theory' and includes in it books such as *Totem and Taboo*, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, *The Future of an Illusion*, *Civilization and its Discontents*, and *Moses and Monotheism*.

Holt's paper was published in 1963 and there is in the author, as in Freud, a clear touch of ambivalence towards such speculative stuff. Within ten years, Iago Gladston is already less apologetic on behalf of Freud and considers the romantic tradition so central to Freud as to call him 'an ethologist and ecological and holistic scientist'.<sup>115</sup>

The culture of science that sustained Freud as a holistic scientist was, however, one into which the experimental method and the idiom of positivism had made heavy inroads. George Rosen succinctly evokes the changing culture of science when Freud was a student and a young researcher, especially the way four young experimentalists—Ernst Brucke, Emil du Bois-Reymond, Hermann Helmholtz, and Carl Ludwig—came to set the tone of late nineteenth-century German science.<sup>116</sup> Within

p. 181). Professionalized psychoanalysis, on the other hand, is heavily dependent on what Freud calls 'therapeutic ambition', which he sees as 'only half way useful for science'. For such ambition is 'too tendentious' (*ibid.*, p. 182).

<sup>113</sup>See, e.g., Russell Jacoby, *The Repression of Psychoanalysis: Otto Fenichel and the Political Freudians* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

<sup>114</sup>Robert R. Holt, 'Two Influences on Freud's Scientific Thought: A Fragment on Intellectual Biography', in Robert W. White (ed.), *The Study of Lives: Essays in Honour of Henry A. Murray* (New York: Atherton, 1963), pp. 364–87.

<sup>115</sup>Iago Gladston, 'Freud and Romantic Medicine', in Cioffi, *Freud*, pp. 103–23; see pp. 109–10.

<sup>116</sup>George Rosen, 'Freud and Medicine', in Jonathan Miller (ed.), *Freud: The Man, His World, His Influence* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972), pp. 21–39; see esp. pp. 27–9.

twenty-five years these four men had realized their youthful dream: they had not merely become the leaders of scientific physiology in the German language area, they and their students were a major influence in the entire western community of medical researchers. As it happened, it was in Brucke's laboratory that young Freud honed his self-concept as a scientist. Holt, in fact, considers it ironic that the 'attraction to a poetic, metaphysical, grandiosely encompassing approach to nature led Freud into medicine and thus into the University of Vienna Medical School, a hotbed of physicalistic physiology'.<sup>117</sup>

The heart of the project of the four researchers was their tough-minded experimentalism. They had prised out the disciplines of physiology and pathology from the clinic and relocated them in the laboratory. These were now independent basic sciences which employed the precise methods of the natural sciences. Clinical observations were now at a discount. Rosen writes:

Brucke and his friends were in the forefront of a generational movement. They were members of a generation of young physicians who insisted that medical problems receive scientific treatment based more on laboratory experimentation and less on clinical observation . . . .

Underpinning this mode of thought was a philosophical position . . . . Life was equated with matter and energy, so that their genesis and development had to be studied and explained in material terms, that is, in terms of the chemical and physical forces that determine these processes, and thus ultimately on the basis of the impersonal, objective laws of nature. Intention and purpose had no place in such an approach to biological phenomena. This doctrine, comprising positivism, mechanism and materialism, was the philosophy to which Freud was exposed during his formative years as a medical student and young physician. Transmitted to him by those with whom he had chosen to identify, it was a major factor in the formation of his mode of thought and his self-image as a scientist.<sup>118</sup>

Beyond these exposures lay Freud's own need for social recognition and self-acceptance. Recent work suggests that his family background was one of East European Jews exposed to Hassidic influence. Later his family moved from eastern Europe to Germanic countries, first Czechoslovakia and then Austria. But the earlier exposures did not entirely wear off; he had a much more traditional upbringing than he ever publicly admitted. As a result he struggled not merely with his Jewish self as denigrated by the gentile world but also with his non-Germanic self which

<sup>117</sup>Holt, 'Two Influences on Freud's Scientific Thought', p. 370.

<sup>118</sup>Rosen, 'Freud and Medicine', pp. 28–9.



was looked down on by German Jews as open to non-rational mystical influences.<sup>119</sup>

The basic contradiction in Freud, therefore, was between the inner logic of clinical work which demanded a set of categories that came from myths, fantasies, and self-analysis, and a philosophy of science which demanded a different language of self-expression. The conflict between his emotions and reason sharpened the contradiction. Billa Zanuso goes so far as to suggest that 'there is not a single trait of his character, not a decision he made nor an incident in his life, that cannot be interpreted in two different ways' due to this conflict.<sup>120</sup>

For an outsider to the western world these fissures within Freud opened up immense possibilities, some of them invisible to those close to Freud culturally. The most important was the scope to construct a Freud who could be used as a radical critic of the savage world and, at the same time, a subverter of the imperial structures of thought that had turned the South into a dumping ground for dead and moribund categories of the Victorian era. Whether the possibility was fully explored by the likes of Bose or not is, of course, another issue.

Before we deal with that issue, let me spell out the nature of the conflict within Freud himself in some more detail.

As a school of thought, psychoanalysis acquired its political thrust from being part of the western critical tradition. It was a tradition to which a galaxy of thinkers from Giovanni Vico to Frederick Nietzsche to Karl Marx had contributed. As part of the tradition, Freud expanded the Enlightenment vision of a desirable society and sharpened its major methodological weapon, demystification.

However, this participation in the Enlightenment project was overlaid by certain insecurities and ambivalences in Freud towards the relationship between science and philosophy. Even a person as blinkered as Jones, who spent all his life reading and defending Freud as a hard-boiled positivist, admitted that as a young man, Freud had an early but 'thoroughly checked tendency to philosophize'.<sup>121</sup> Only after a decade-long detour by way of the medical-biological sciences had Freud been

<sup>119</sup>Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Freud's Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991). I am grateful to Alan Roland for drawing my attention to this part of the story.

<sup>120</sup>Billa Zanuso, *The Young Freud: The Origins of Psychoanalysis in Late Nineteenth-Century Viennese Culture* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 64–86, esp. pp. 73–5.

<sup>121</sup>Ernest Jones, quoted in Roazen, *Freud and His Followers*, p. 24.

able, at an advanced age, to return to the problems of philosophy and religious psychology.<sup>122</sup> Holt is truer to the grain of psychoanalysis when he turns to the problem. He points to the

many indications that Freud's earlier inclination towards speculative psychology was something against which he felt a very strong need to defend himself . . . . [The] involvement of conflict and defence is perhaps more convincing when one reflects that Freud took no less than five courses in philosophy . . . during his eight years in the university, when he was supposedly studying medicine.<sup>123</sup>

Others have contextualized this defensiveness by identifying cultural influences on Freud that had an older, 'less respectable' pedigree, against which, too, he had to defend himself. David Bakan, for instance, has made an impressive case that Jewish mystical traditions found identifiable, if convoluted, expression in the master's work.<sup>124</sup> Still others have discovered in Freud the negation of at least some aspects of the Enlightenment culture of science. Some of them have used the discovery to denigrate psychoanalysis as anti-positivist and counter-modernist.<sup>125</sup> However, as the nineteenth-century concept of science itself has suffered a decline, scholars in recent decades have been more tolerant of these 'disreputable' aspects of psychoanalysis. Thus, unlike his forebears, Gladston is neither derisive nor defensive when he says:

Freud has been compared to Darwin, to Newton, and to Copernicus. I concur in these comparisons. Yet, to my mind there is one man he truly resembles—not in any other respect—but in the signature of his personality—that man is Paracelsus.<sup>126</sup>

Nor is Friederich Heer hesitant to admit that Freud's tragic vision implied a rejection of 'the simplest Anglo-American belief in the virtues of progress'.<sup>127</sup>

Freud himself, however, having driven underground his other self, worked hard to retain and use the idiom of tough-minded psychology.

<sup>122</sup>Sigmund Freud to Fredrich Eckstein, quoted in McGrath, *Freud's Discovery*, p. 94.

<sup>123</sup>Holt, 'Two Influences on Freud's Scientific Thought', p. 371.

<sup>124</sup>David Bakan, *Sigmund Freud and the Jewish Mystical Tradition* (Princeton, N.J.: Van Nostrand, 1958).

<sup>125</sup>For example, Hans J. Eysenck, *Fact and Fiction in Psychology* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1965); and *The Decline and Fall of the Freudian Empire* (London: Viking, 1985).

<sup>126</sup>Gladston, 'Freud and Romantic Medicine', p. 121.

<sup>127</sup>Friedrich Heer, 'Freud the Viennese Jew', tr. W.A. Littlewood, in Miller, *Freud*, pp. 22–39; see p. 24.

He was always fearful that psychoanalysis might otherwise be accepted not as a positive science but as a cultural artefact or philosophical speculation. One suspects that he avoided developing a world-view because he feared the outlines of the world-view he sensed within himself, 'Is Freud . . . a metaphysician?', Egon Friedell asks and goes on to answer, 'Yes, but he does not know it'.<sup>128</sup> Perhaps Freud knew but feared the knowledge.

The world-view Freud disowned was 'rooted in the culture of the late German Enlightenment with its interest in the exploration of dreams, emotions, and other mysterious phenomena in man's inner world.'<sup>129</sup> To the first psychoanalyst, seeking academic credibility, that world-view must have looked overly open to the culture of science associated with the German romantic tradition. He could warmly endorse Bose's work, blatantly philosophical though it was, because that was what the Hindus were known for and could get away with. He himself had to be more circumspect.

This other—and according to Bruno Bettelheim, more mature and humanistic—Freud, who emerged from the shadows only when he was in his late fifties, was unknown in the popular cultures of the West and the East during the days psychoanalysis was spreading to distant corners of the globe.<sup>130</sup> To most western-educated Indians, as to much of the Anglo-American world, what mattered were the comparisons being made between Freud, on the one hand, and Copernicus, Newton, and Darwin, on the other. These comparisons invoked connections that made psychoanalysis a positive science, an exportable technology, and an index of progress. They tied mainstream psychoanalysis not merely to the European Enlightenment, but also to the triumphalism of nineteenth-century European science. The other psychoanalysis survived, as did the other Freud, in the cracks of the modern consciousness, as reminders of an underside of the discipline that, regrettably, existed but should not be owned up.

As it happened, the Enlightenment vision, of which the dominant culture of psychoanalysis and the positivist sciences were now valued parts, came to India neither through apolitical cognitive choices nor through 'natural' cultural diffusion. They came to India through colonialism, riding piggy-back on Baconian science, the utilitarian theory of progress,

<sup>128</sup>Egon Friedell, quoted in Rosen, 'Freud and Medicine', pp. 23–4.

<sup>129</sup>McGrath, *Freud's Discovery*, p. 93.

<sup>130</sup>According to Bettelheim, this was mainly due to the destruction of the European traditions of psychoanalysis by the rise of the Nazis and shift in the locus of psychoanalytic activities to the Anglo-Saxon cultures and the faulty English translations through which Freud's works came to be known in large parts of the world. Bruno Bettelheim, *Freud and Man's Soul* (London: Fontana, 1985).

evangelical Christianity, and their practical extension, the British colonial theory of a civilizing mission. Together they sought to systematically subvert a way of life and devalue all surviving native systems of knowledge. When the vision won over sections of the Indian middle classes, it also won over people who, however creative in other ways, were to constitute an emerging class of intellectual compradors. As if the new psychological man in India had to be, by definition, a colonial subject. As if psychology had to be, by definition again, the latest in a series of techniques of retooling Indians into a prescribed version of the nineteenth-century European.

Bose's vernacular self tried to find a way out of the predicament by rediscovering an older version of psychological man in a traditionally psychologically minded society. He probably hoped that this discovery would anchor the new discipline outside the colonial progressivist discourse. It did not. In his own professional life, there were signs that the culture of Indian psychology was being integrated within the dominant global culture of psychology, its 'fangs' safely removed. By the time Bose died in 1953, he was already being seen both in India and abroad as a pioneer whose days were past. It is not insignificant that when he died many of the major international journals of psychoanalysis did not publish obituaries. Such slights did not burden Indian psychoanalysts overmuch. Even in Calcutta, where it all began, any 'critical engagement with received theory' was soon almost to disappear.<sup>131</sup>

For the moment, let us not ask whether or not such a colonial connection was inevitable for Enlightenment values, given their links with three processes that were to ensure the creation and substantiation of the concept of the Third World as a territorial and cultural category in the post-colonial dispensation—the search for the absolute secularization and objectification of the world and for total control of nature, including human nature, through science; the primacy given to history as a form of consciousness and as a way of constructing the past; and the hierarchy of cultures and social evolutionism written into the bond the Enlightenment forged between power and knowledge. The fact remains that the Enlightenment vision—especially its progeny, the Baconian philosophy of science—did systematically underwrite in Asia and Africa colonial theories of progress and the stratarchy of cultures and races.<sup>132</sup> Granting the emancipatory role this vision might have played in Europe, it was

<sup>131</sup>Kakar, 'Stories From Psychoanalysis', p. 433.

<sup>132</sup>Jarinder K. Bajaj, 'Francis Bacon, the First Philosopher of Modern Science: A Non-Western View', in Ashis Nandy (ed.), *Science, Hegemony and Violence: A Requiem for Modernity* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 24–67.

impossible to ignore its racist content and oppressive associations for the Southern world.

Any serious critique of cultures in British India had to take into account this anomaly. Even when accepting psychoanalysis as emancipatory in principle, such a critique had to turn it into a means of concurrently criticizing the native culture and the packaged progressivist discourse available as a legitimating ideology for colonial domination. That is, the analytic attitude, which Philip Rieff believes lies at the heart of the Freudian project,<sup>133</sup> had to bear a dual responsibility in India. It had to be self-critical at two planes: it had to demystify aspects of Indian culture and it had to demystify the proxy-West, constituted by the interlocking cultures of the colonial state and westernized middle-class Indians.

Many psychoanalysts—and social critics—chose the easy way out. Their ‘self criticism’ was directed against non-modern India, as if they were an organic part of it, and they exempted every category dear to westernized, middle-class India from criticism. As against them, Girindrasekhar Bose unwittingly—probably against himself—owned up this dual responsibility of the Indian psychoanalyst. This may be the other reason for his urgent attempt to reread psychoanalysis as a revised version or logical conclusion of some of the older theories of consciousness in India.

Bose’s rereading was backed by two methodological deviations from mainstream psychoanalysis, both prompted by the need to situate the new science in an old cultural milieu.

Freud was fond of saying that he had not discovered the unconscious; it had been discovered by some of the great minds of antiquity. All he had done was invent a method of studying it. He had in mind the technique of free association, which evolved in response to two felt needs. One was the need to venture beyond the limits of the method of hypnosis with which he had started his career; the second was the need to go beyond the method of introspection developed by experimental psychologists such as Wilhelm Wundt and E.B. Titchener towards the end of the nineteenth century. This method, European academic circles now felt, had run its course. Freud himself said,

It is . . . an illusion to expect anything from intuition and introspection; they can give us nothing but particulars about our own mental life, which are hard

<sup>133</sup>Philip Rieff, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic: Uses of Faith after Freud* (New York: Harper, 1968).

to interpret, never any information about the questions which religious doctrine finds it so easy to answer.<sup>134</sup>

Bose did not feel burdened by either of the two needs. He never felt called upon to transcend the techniques of either hypnosis or introspection. He was not fully exposed to the culture of academic psychology in the West, and such tides and ebbs in methodological fashion might have looked to him, undersocialized to the modern academe, as sectarian ones. He had been a hypnotist himself and, to him, free association did not supersede hypnosis, but built on it. Most psychoanalysts believed, following Freud, that hypnosis disguised, psychoanalysis revealed.<sup>135</sup> Wittels acts as their spokesman when she says:

Hypnosis is one of the states in which the secondary function is put out of action. The secondary function is delivered over to the hypnotist. He assumes the testing of reality, decides between fantasy and actuality, logical and ethical problems, and precisely in the degree in which the medium renounces his own use of the secondary function.<sup>136</sup>

It is difficult to believe that Bose, a practising psychoanalyst and one of the editors of the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, was not aware of Wittels’ argument. More likely, Bose sensed the presence of, and was impressed by, Freud’s other, less socialized self, more open to methodological adventures. As early as 1905, emphasizing the ancient origins of psychotherapy, Freud had said, ‘There are many ways and means of practising psychotherapy. All that lead to recovery is good.’<sup>137</sup>

<sup>134</sup>Sigmund Freud, ‘The Future of an Illusion’ (1929), *Standard Edition*, 21, pp. 5–58. This statement of Freud flatly contradicts Bettelheim’s claim that psychoanalysis is an introspective psychology wrongly converted into a behavioural one in the United States (*Freud and Man’s Soul*, p. 54). But the contradiction is only apparent, for the introspection that Bettelheim talks about is not the kind Freud had in mind when he rejected introspection but of the kind that Freud endorsed in the case of Bose.

<sup>135</sup>Sigmund Freud, ‘Lecture XXVIII: Analytic Therapy’, *Standard Edition*, 1963, 16, pp. 448–53.

<sup>136</sup>Wittels, *Freud and His Time*, p. 302.

<sup>137</sup>Sigmund Freud, ‘On Psychotherapy’ (1905), *Standard Edition*, 7, p. 259. In any case, there were probably limits to Freud’s enthusiasm for psychoanalytic therapy. At least on one occasion he is said to have remarked, ‘Neurotics are a rabble (*Gesinde*), good only to support us financially and to allow us to learn from their cases: psychoanalysis as a therapy may be worthless’. J. Dupont (ed.), *The Clinical Diary of Sandor Ferenczi*, trs. M. Balint and N.Z. Jackson (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), quoted in Rudnytsky, ‘A Psychoanalytic Weltanschauung’, p. 291.

Fourteen years afterwards, he was to restate that faith in a context that must have sounded strikingly familiar to Bose:

It is possible to foresee that at some time or other the conscience of society will awake and remind it that the poor man should have just as much right to assistance for his mind . . . .

We shall then be forced by the task of adapting our technique to the new conditions . . . . It is very probable, too, that the large-scale application of our therapy will compel us to alloy the pure gold of analysis freely with the copper of direct suggestions; and hypnotic influence, too, might find a place in it again . . . .<sup>138</sup>

As for introspection, Bose never disowned it. To him, to view introspection as only a method of psychology was a trivialization. Introspection had behind it the authority of at least two thousand years of India's past, besides the association with some European philosophers found relevant by Indians (such as David Hume, George Berkeley and John Stuart Mill). It was a method that had shown its possibilities over and over again. Fifty years of academic psychology in one cultural region of the world could not wipe out those possibilities.

Hartnack notes Bose's commitment to introspection, but fails to gauge its full meaning. When Bose said in 1938, surveying the work done in psychology in India during the previous twenty-five years, 'psychological truth can *only* be discovered through introspection',<sup>139</sup> he was in effect conveying four messages: that he was unaware that the free-associative method had grown partly in reaction to introspection in western psychology and he saw free association mainly as an extension of introspection; that to him, the discipline of psychology was inextricably associated with introspection, which in turn represented insight in its grandest philosophical sense; that, as a trained academic psychologist, he was aware of but uninterested in the transient western academic debates on method; that though he casually used the language of progressivism he had acquired from his western education, he judged all techniques in terms of the philosophical quest that had continued unbroken in his

<sup>138</sup>Sigmund Freud, 'Lines of Advance in Psychoanalytic Therapy' (1919), *Standard Edition*, 17, pp. 157–68; see pp. 167–8. Jahoda in *Freud and the Dilemmas*, p. 26, adds that, after Freud's death, 'some psychoanalysts reverted to hypnosis and could overcome its disadvantages, even its boredom'.

<sup>139</sup>Girindrasekhar Bose, 'Progress in Psychology in India during the past Twenty-five Years', in B. Prasad (ed.), *The Progress of Science in India during the Past Twenty-Five Years* (Calcutta: Indian Science Congress Association, 1938), pp. 336–52; see p. 345. Quoted in Hartnack, 'Psychoanalysis and Colonialism', pp. 97–8. Italics mine.

society over the centuries, unimpeded by the rise and fall of dynasties and regimes. To Bose, 'India's ancient learned men had a genius for introspective meditation and the Indian psychologist has that heritage. In this respect, he enjoys an advantage over his colleagues in the West.'<sup>140</sup>

It is facile to call this merely an expression of nationalism. It should rather be read partly as a statement of intent, a construction of the past oriented to a preferred future and serving as a critique of an imperfect present.

Was the tradition of introspection so dominant in Indian civilization? Was traditional India that psychologically minded and was colonized India its true heir? When Bose opted for psychoanalysis, was it psychoanalysis he opted for? When he anticipated the other Freud whom historians of ideas identified only some three decades later, what empirical and conceptual clues did he use? Or was he reading Freud, too, as a classical text open to diverse interpretations, because he had more freedom as a *bhāṣyakāra*, a traditional commentator on texts partly cut off from the modern West, than a formal psychoanalyst?

These questions remain unanswered in this essay. The issues they raise, I am aware, are debatable ones. Without prejudging the issues or foreclosing the debates, however, it is still possible to propose that, at one level of the intellectual culture Bose created, such questions were less than important. Bose, at this level, true to his vocation, was not concerned with unearthing the objective past, but with working through the remembered past. He seemed to know that, as with the individual, in some societies at some points of time the past flows out of the present as easily as in other societies, at other points of time, the present flows out of the past.

<sup>140</sup>*Ibid.*

\*Earlier published in Ashis Nandy, *The Savage Freud and Other Essays on Possible and Retrievable Selves* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995).