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A SPECIFIC USE OF MASOCHISTIC FANTASIES

SHAILESH KAPADIA

In this paper I want to describe how a patient of mine, Max, used masochistic fantasies to detach himself from having any real emotional experience. I shall endeavour to show that by getting engrossed in these fantasies he was trying to prevent his internal good parents from having any meaningful relationship with him. Finally, I shall demonstrate that as a consequence of this mechanism Max's own efforts at having any proper relationship were frustrated.

My plan is to first describe the consultation session I had with him with a view to give a picture of his personality at that time. Then I shall give material from the early analysis where I obtained Max's picture of his parents. After this I shall proceed to demonstrate how this picture was enacted in the transference whereby it was possible for us to reach his masochistic fantasies and the use he put them to.

Consultation Session

Max was a six-foot tall, handsome man of thirty. He was dressed immaculately and seemed to have taken considerable care about his appearance. To start with, I made some encouraging sounds for him to begin. He remained silent. Soon I realised that if I did not ask questions Max was not going to say anything. It was not as if he did not *mean* to talk. He was distinctly waiting for me to ask questions. I finally decided to accept this situation. I asked him what had brought him to analysis.

He spoke in a very specific manner. His sentences were short

and abrupt. Also he spoke very fast. I shall demonstrate this. He said :

"I have this pain"

"In the testes".

"I went to Dr. Mistry—a specialist".

"Dr. Mistry said nothing wrong with them"

"Looks like an emotional problem".

"See an analyst".

"Therefore I phoned you".

He said all this so fast that I could not understand anything at all. I had to ask him to repeat himself a couple of times.

After this he again remained silent. I felt a pressure to ask more questions. If I did not the session was not going to move at all. I finally pointed out that he could not tell me anything without my asking questions. He said that he did not know what he was supposed to tell me. He was advised to see me and here he was. How was he to know what to say ?

I want to emphasise that there was no rudeness or cussedness in his talk. He seemed to be blankly stating what he thought were facts. Yet, one felt that there was something quite stupid about him.

I suggested that he might tell me more about his pain in the testes. He responded by saying that there was nothing to tell. It was just like any other pain. It had started a few months ago. He had ignored it at first. When it had recurred a couple of times he had consulted Dr. Mistry. What more can one say about a pain, he added.

I then asked him about his family and work. In very abrupt sentences he told me that he was thirty years old, Roman Catholic from Goa. He worked as a Clerical assistant in a private firm where he earned Rs. 300/- per month. He was the youngest of five children—one eldest brother and three elder sisters. The brother and two elder sisters had left the house because they were fed up with their father. Max and Ella, the sister two years older than him, lived with the parents.

Max then said that his father was a very difficult man to live with. He was terribly interfering. Nobody in the family could stand him. Max hated to live with the father but he was too afraid

to do anything about it. I could not get much information about Max's mother in this session. He only said that she was O.K.

He then said that he was not quite happy in his job. People in his office told him that he stared at women's breasts. *He himself did not know if this was true.* When others said so he felt disturbed.

After a brief pause he said that "by the way" he often had this urge to look at men's penises. Now, since this was the only information actually volunteered by him without my questions I had hoped that he might tell me more but nothing came out from him. I had to ask him what his feelings were when he had this urge. He replied in a totally surprised tone, "What feelings? It has nothing to do with feelings. I just look. Where do feelings come into this?"

I felt that now I had a clue to what was taking place between us. I had been pressurised to ask questions to which he had replied in a terribly matter-of-fact manner. I had asked all the right questions and he had answered them as well as he could. He had told me about his pain in the testes, about his difficult father and about his need to stare at penises and breasts. In a way all this would seem alright. Yet, it was not. Somewhere, all emotions were missing. He did not seem to *feel* the pain in the testes nor his anger at his father. He had no feelings when he stared at breasts but people said so. He had not come for analysis on his own but had only followed his doctor's orders. I was behaving like a proper analyst without having a proper analytical experience of any ordinary consultation session. On the whole, therefore, he and I were being forced to go through an experience without, in any way, feeling anything. And this seemed to be the crux of the matter. All affects were getting split off from the actual experience.

I wondered where these affects had gone. Then I observed that in my counter-transference I was getting slightly irritated and frustrated at having to ask so many questions. I also noticed that I was a little exasperated with Max for being a bit daft, a little bit stupid. Was I not being forced to experience these feelings? Max had distinctly conveyed to me that he could not allow any emotions to be attached to his experience. They had to be cut off and pushed into myself.

Here I formulated to him that he had come for analysis at the behest of his doctor. He was *supposed* to have emotional problems

but as far as I could understand it, he himself did not seem to think so. Only thing that he had admitted was that people commented on his staring at breasts. Even this, he himself had not noticed. I wondered therefore, I said, why he should feel compelled to come for analysis.

Max replied that what I said was quite true. If others did not say anything he did not feel he had any problems. But, he added, others did say so and it did disturb him. So it was a problem. I then told him how I conducted analysis. Surprisingly he heard me very attentively. I finally ended the session here after making arrangements of time and fees.

From this session following things were clear to me :

(1) Max had made an effort to cut off affects from the analytical experience. As a result, I was forced to ask him questions about his emotions in a way that did not seem natural to me.

(2) I felt that Max was a bit daft, a bit stupid but not really unintelligent.

(3) I had no idea whatsoever about his pain in the testes.

I shall now describe what I learnt about Max's view of his parents in the following few months. He seemed to volunteer this information on his own but he did this in a particular manner. He said that he read a lot of magazines. In one of them he read that one's present problems might be a result of the manner in which one's parents dealt with one. Hence he felt that he should tell me about them—not that he himself felt like telling me. He also said that his staring at breasts and penises might be a problem because this too he had read in a magazine. In short, he would tell me everything provided a magazine supplied the reasons for it. If I asked him what his views were he tersely retorted by saying, "I don't know these things".

Nevertheless, whatever he did tell me about his parents was quite revealing. He said that his father was a very interfering person. He did not allow Max to do anything or go anywhere. He suspected all Max's behaviour. The father had a habit of asking too many irritating questions like "where did you go, with whom, how, what did you do, how much did you spend, why didn't you go somewhere else, why didn't you come back at this time, why could

you not have done this some other day" etc.

Max found these questions profoundly exasperating. He could not understand what their purpose was since, in actual practice, the father could not stop him from doing anything. Max felt that the only reason he could imagine was that the father did not want him to have any sex. The father, it seemed to Max, was anxious that his children might go out and indulge in free sex which, being a Catholic, he could not tolerate. Max observed that the father had made serious efforts to prevent his first three children from getting married. All three had to elope with their spouses.

Max felt that it was not as if the father was genuinely concerned about his children's well-being. In fact, Max felt that his father was a very detached man. As long as Max kept off sex the father was not one bit bothered about him. Every day the father read The Times of India from its first 'T' to the name of the printer on the last page. If he finished reading this once he began all over again. Max felt that the father was too engrossed in this 'peculiar' habit to worry at all about his children's real problems.

Gradually Max started talking about his mother. He said that she was an illiterate woman intellectually far inferior to the father who was highly educated. There was a tremendous gap between the two. He felt that the mother was quite stupid and could not possibly understand either her husband or her children. She was felt to be a constantly complaining, bitchy, chatterbox of a woman by both Max and his father.

Max said that he could not understand what his mother wanted. She seemed to be ill and bitter all the time. If anybody asked her what the matter was she replied by saying "I don't know". He said that she was "obsessed with her own imaginary illness for which she did not take any medicines".

She too seemed to Max to be dead against sex. She too was anxious that Max should not go out with girls for "that would get him into trouble".

To sum up : Max felt his father to be

- (a) a detached, self-engrossed person who
- (b) had an irritating habit of asking intrusive questions.

He felt his mother to be

- (a) very stupid and
- (b) engrossed in her own illnesses.

Both of them were felt to be against Max's sexuality. With this I also learnt that in actual practice Max had no relationship whatsoever with any woman. In a way he seemed to have accepted his parents' directive of not indulging in sex.

I shall now demonstrate how these pictures of parents gradually and subtly entered into the transference. I would like to state here that sessions with Max were extremely slow and tedious. I had to wait patiently and long to arrive at any understanding at all. I am giving here only a few typical sessions which might not convey a proper picture of this tediousness.

Max began one session by remaining silent. It was a long drawn out silence where I had no idea whatsoever of his thoughts. I asked him what he was thinking about. He said "nothing". He then added that "just now" his father's face came to his mind. Again there was a long silence. I asked him what his feelings were when he had this face. He replied that it was just the face. There were no feelings.

After another long silence he said that he avoided using the front staircase because some boys stood there. He felt that if they saw him they might think him odd. He therefore used the back staircase.

I found it difficult to understand the jump from the father's face to these boys. It was clear that between the two associations he had thought of something but had said nothing about it. I again asked him a question: what made him think of these boys just now. He said "nothing". He just had this thought. I further asked him what he had meant when he said "they might find me odd". Max said that he did not know. People did find him odd and often said so. How they did this, he could not know.

There was yet another long silence. Then he said that the day before while going home he had seen a boy passing on the footpath. He was compelled to stare at this boy. When I asked him what his feelings were I met with the same "nothing".

We had another long silence. He then said that on the bus he had stared at a girl's breasts. This time, anticipating my usual question he quickly added that he did not know why he did all this staring because he derived no pleasure out of it.

I finally pointed out to him that by talking in the manner he did

and by remaining silent for long stretches he was setting up a specific situation between us. I was being forced to ask him questions without which I would not know what went through his mind. In this way I was made to behave exactly like his father who asked so many questions.

Max seems to be a bit startled at this but I noticed that he had not *planned* it to be so. He had just followed my instructions to tell me all his thoughts.

I said that when I had pointed out the similarity with the father he *did feel* a bit surprised. He got rid of this surprise very quickly. Max said that yes, it was true that I did ask him all these questions. With the father part of it he did not agree. My questions were genuine unlike his father's. I did not mean to interfere with him. He was therefore, a bit surprised that I should say such a thing. He did not like me asking him so many questions but he did not mind them because I was analysing him for his own good.

I had to end the session here but the point I want to make is how in this manner I was literally driven to behave like his father.

As I said before, this is only one of a long series of such sessions. At times, I was at the end of my wits to find out some other method apart from asking questions to get any material from Max. Realising the total futility of questions I decided to remain silent and see what emerged.

As I had feared, Max remained totally silent for the entire sessions. I allowed this to happen for quite a long time. I was surprised that in spite of practically nothing being discussed in the sessions Max continued to come for analysis with almost religious regularity. It was clear that he was communicating something quite important in these silent sessions.

In my counter-transference I noticed that I was never bored with Max. I felt extremely frustrated and angry. I also felt terribly rejected thinking that here I was, trying to understand this man so earnestly while he seemed to be so removed from the sessions.

I finally pointed out to Max that when he remained silent like this he seemed to be so remote and detached. It was as if I did not exist in the room. Perhaps, he was trying to make me experience what it was like to have a father who got so engrossed in his newspaper. Perhaps, he wanted me to know how frustrated and angry it

had made him feel. He must be feeling that no words could describe such an experience. The only way out was to make me suffer it.

Max was visibly moved by this interpretation. Almost as if in panic he rushed to say "no, no, no". He did not want me to feel so bad. He did not speak because he had no thoughts. I must not feel so burdened.

In spite of his conscious denials I felt that Max was quite touched. The evidence for this was that after the above session Max actually began to give a lot of information about his daily life. His speech which was so abrupt and fast showed a marked change. He became lucid and understandable. We seemed to have entered a new phase in analysis. The daily experiences that Max described revealed a new phenomenon which I think, related to his relationship with his "stupid" mother.

In one such session Max reported that he had a bad day in the office. The head-clerk asked him to type a sales report. In this some sales figures were missing. Max had pointed this out to the head clerk who had said that he himself would put in these figures when they were available. After typing the report Max had given it straight to the Director of Sales. Naturally the Director was furious and had shouted at Max for giving him an unfinished report. Max had told him what had taken place. The Director had got more furious and had told Max that he was stupid. He should have given the unfinished report to the head-clerk, could he not understand such a simple thing?

When he finished describing this Max asked me what his Director could have meant. While listening to this episode I had been feeling that Max was being really quite dumb. I felt quite irritated when he asked me this question.

Now, my question was why he was behaving in this fashion. From my experience with him I knew that Max was not devoid of intelligence. This definitely meant something. There was described a whole series of such incidents where one would be left wondering how a man of his age could be so stupid. In all such situations one thing was quite conspicuous. People around him felt irritated and angry with him—just as I felt in the session.

I then pointed out to Max how he became apparently stupid by identifying with his mother. When he asked me the question, "what

did the Director mean" he had tried to produce in me exactly the same kind of anger as he would feel with her.

Max agreed with me. He said that he did take after his mother but he had not realised how closely his behaviour resembled hers. I again pointed out that his idea was to make me experience the annoyance that he felt with his mother.

After I gave the above interpretation Max once again became silent in the sessions. This came to me as a surprise because he had now been talking a great deal and I had not anticipated this new silences.

I think that these new silences were quite different from the earlier ones. Due to our earlier experience, I did not ask him questions but on closer thinking I realised that I would sound so silly asking him what he was thinking about. He would say "nothing". In a way therefore, these silences were there to force me to be like his mother—stupid and ridiculous.

I pointed this out to Max. He responded by saying that he was pretty fed up with his mother because she always answered all his questions by saying "I don't know". He wondered how anybody could be so daft. I said that he had been behaving quite daft lately with me but he did not seem to notice it.

I think that in the above material it is evident that on one hand Max was trying to make me experience his own feelings as a child by alternately identifying with both his parents. On the other hand, I too was identified with them. It is also clear that he had no words to express his experiences. He simply had to act them out in order to communicate.

One result of this was that Max began to feel terribly confused about both his and mine sexuality. His need to stare at penises and breasts increased frantically. Understandably, this produced a great deal of anxiety in him. I suggest that he dealt with this by projecting into myself both his little-boy-Max and little-girl-Max anxieties. I shall demonstrate this now.

On a Saturday night Max dreamt that he saw a girl of about six near a hut behind his house. She was urinating on the pavement. He went close to her to watch. He noticed that she had a boy's genitals. He felt very confused and woke up.

Typically, he did not give any associations. I interpreted that the girl behind his house was myself behind the couch in the session.

During the work by identifying alternately with his parents he had made me feel his childhood feelings. Due to such identification he must have felt terribly confused about his own sexuality. In the dream he had projected this confusion into myself. I was therefore a little girl with a penis. This is why, perhaps, he was forced to watch penises and breasts alternately.

This led us into what to me was the most difficult and tedious phase of Max's analysis. It lasted for more than a year. In this we again had long silences which lasted for months. I had to contain Max's frustrations and analyse his defence of identification. When he spoke I had to meticulously sort out his sexual confusions. I felt convinced that this was the only way in which Max could be helped.

Max seemed to be quite aware of this because once he said that he was amazed at my capacity to tolerate him. He said that it must be very tiring for me to analyse him. He appreciated that I was taking so much trouble to help him sort out his problems.

It was, completely new experience for Max to have somebody who took a patient interest in his life. I had hoped therefore, that he might show some improvement. I soon discovered how wrong I was.

In spite of his appreciation and his admission that he felt understood by me we were caught up in these never ending silences. In fact, now the silences began to be more unbearable.

In one such silent session I pointed out to Max that analysis was becoming increasingly painful to both of us. It was as if we were engaged in some sort of mutual torture.

To my utter surprise Max said that actually when he was silent he had some fantasies in which he was tortured most cruelly. In one of them he imagined that a group of boys caught hold of him and took him to the terrace of our house. They then beat him up with long sticks. The other fantasy was that a girl called Ann from his office kept insulting him in the most humiliating fashion in front of the whole staff. He said that he could go on with these fantasies for hours.

I said here that by getting into these tormenting fantasies he had avoided getting properly analysed. It was as if he had been frustrating our analytical intercourse. I also added that it was quite a surprising thing to do when he had begun to feel understood with me.

Max responded by telling me that he had these fantasies right from childhood. He then gave me a long list of these fantasies. I shall give a few of them here.

- (a) I taunted him for being impotent.
- (b) I talked about him to my colleagues in order to laugh.
- (c) I told his parents that they should give up all hope of Max improving because he was too dumb.
- (d) I beat him up mercilessly
- (e) He was cheated of large sums of money by various types of con men.
- (f) He got married and his wife ran away with another man. He came to me and cried. I told him that he deserved this.

Max told me that all these were pure fantasies since he did not believe a word of them. He felt filled up with them. They ran through his mind like a movie and he enjoyed watching them.

I think that this was a very important revelation for both of us. He had begun to get engaged in these masochistic fantasies exactly when he had felt better understood. I had not been aloof like his parents. Why was he spoiling a good experience with me? Why was he frustrating this intercourse between us?

I shall now quote from a session where Max gave four dreams which demonstrate comprehensively this new situation between us. Max did not give any associations for any of them as was his habit.

First Dream: Max was at the ticket counter of a railway station. The counter however was that of a theatre. He gave some money to buy his tickets but his money was not enough. He was very excited because it was a Film Festival where he expected to see films which would show people making love. When his money fell short he did a strange thing. Apparently he had five tickets with him already. These he gave at the counter instead of money. Still the man at the counter did not give him anything. Max moved away to the railway platform. There he met a man. Max told him that the man at the counter was a rascal.

A train came and Max boarded it with this man. He then felt very anxious that he was in danger without a ticket.

I interpreted that he wanted to be on this analytical journey. Instead of doing the straightforward thing of giving me proper information (not enough money) he remained silent.

In his silence during the sessions (five tickets-sessions) he turned analysis into a movie of his masochistic fantasies. Instead of getting analysed he treated his sessions as a Festival of sexual films where he watched my intercourse with him getting frustrated.

In this he found that I refused to respond (the man at the counter did not give him any tickets). This made him feel furious when he said that I was a rascal.

In spite of his behaving in this manner I continued to analyse him (he did board the train) but this made him feel anxious (like the ticketless traveller).

Second Dream: Max was in Jill's (an acquaintance) house. He was alone and saw Jill's underwear. Then he saw Jill's husband's underwear. He wanted to go on staring at these but he remembered *in the dream* that he might have to report this to me so he stopped staring.

I interpreted that instead of allowing his needy self (Jill) and myself (Jill's husband) to have an intercourse he kept staring at breasts and penises (which were under the "wears"—the clothes). But now he knew that I might notice it. Hence he decided to stop staring.

Third Dream: Max was watching a fight between two professional fighters. One of them gave huge blows to the other. This other chap was so very strong that he did not even feel these blows. Max felt a great deal of admiration for him.

I interpreted that these two represented him and myself engaged in a constant battle. He gave blows after blows (session after session) to me trying to hurt and frustrate me. He avoided feeling any responsibility for this by assuming that I was so strong and hence felt no pain.

Fourth Dream: A woman who stays behind his house was urinating on the road. Max went close to her when he found that it was not she but her son who was urinating. I interpreted that so far he had believed that his parents were messing up his life but now when he looked closely at the situation in analysis (woman behind his house) it was clear to him that it was he himself—the son—who was messing up their intercourse.

I think it is evident from the above material that Max was using these movie-like masochistic fantasies to prevent any proper analyti-

cal intercourse to take place. He did this precisely when he felt understood by me. In the transference I represented his helpful, creative parents who had taken so much trouble over him. If he allowed this thought to develop Max was bound to feel guilty. Masochistic fantasies helped him—like an addiction—to avoid this sense of guilt.

After the above session Max began to get very depressed. In one session he spoke of his parents with a lot of sorrow in his voice. He said that he could understand his father's anxieties about himself. The father was so old now and Max was the only child who yet did not earn enough. The father wanted to leave all his savings and his house to Max but naturally he was worried because Max did not have any real capacity even to look after the inheritance.

He said that the father had worked hard to become a senior government official. He came from Goa and had no influence whatsoever. Yet, due to his own merit he had achieved much. Max added that he could now understand that the father might have been frustrated with his mother. He was so highly educated while due to traditions, he was forced to marry a girl that his parents had chosen. It must have been lawful for him. Yet, he had supported the woman so well.

Towards the mother too, Max became more sympathetic. He said that obviously she must have been quite aware of the gap between the father and herself. What could she do to bridge this gap? She must have felt pretty helpless. Yet she too, had put up with her difficulties and had supported the father in his early days of poverty and struggle.

In this new description of his parents I could see that Max's image of them had altered considerably. They were not at longer-heads with each other. The father was no longer detached but was actually concerned about Max's future. The mother was no longer an object of ridicule. There certainly was an intellectual gap between the two but now they were mutually supportive. As a consequence of this, Max's relationship with the outside world improved a great deal. He started dating girls. Here he had a big problem—his pain in the testes. Whenever he had any sexual contact with his girl-

friend e.g. when he kissed her, Max would develop this pain. A dream from this time of analysis revealed Max's fears connected with having any sexuality now.

In this dream Max was travelling in a taxi to keep an appointment with a friend. When they approached the appointed place he saw his friend standing at a bus stop waving at him to stop. Max told the taxi driver to stop but he did not. The taxi driver was engaged in his own thoughts. Max felt very frightened because he noticed that the taxi was headed towards a mountain cliff. Soon the taxi lifted in the air and was going to fall in a valley. Max woke up almost screaming with fear.

Now he gave some associations. He said that I was the only person he saw with a prior appointment. About driving in the taxi he said that the previous evening he had dropped his girl-friend home in a taxi. He had kissed her but then had developed his pain.

I was able to show him that the taxi driver was the part of himself that got engrossed in his masochistic fantasies. I was the analytical friend who waved at him to stop these fantasies. He himself in the dream represented the part that did not want to get engrossed in this manner but wanted to form a proper relationship with a girl.

He was now afraid that since he had so far frustrated his internal good parents by getting self-absorbed in his fantasies he would meet with their fate himself. The taxi rising in the air and then heading for a fall was like a penis rising in an erection and then meeting with a disaster. He feared that when he tried to have intercourse with his girl-friend he might get an erection but would not be able to perform properly because his penis would fall flat. This is why perhaps, he had the pain in the testes while kissing her.

After this dream we were able to work fruitfully on Max's castration anxiety. Due to this the pain in the testes reduced considerably.

At the end of the third year of analysis Max became much more relaxed and free. His speech was no longer abrupt and fast. He began to relate to myself in a more intense and direct fashion. His relationship with his parents became quite warm and friendly. The pain in the testes became a rare thing and even when he got it he was able to work it out within himself till it stopped.

Conclusion :

I have tried to demonstrate how by remaining silent Max identified alternately with his parents whom he felt to be detached. By this process he projected into myself his own frustration and pain.

This process created in him a confusion about his own sexuality forcing him to watch penises and breasts alternately.

When I was able to contain his frustration and sort out the sexual confusion Max felt understood but then he got engaged into a series of masochistic fantasies.

I have tried to show that the moment I was felt as helpful, supportive parents in the transference Max began to feel anxious. He was then faced with his sense of guilt towards his good internal parents. Max used these masochistic fantasies, like an addiction, to avoid this guilt.

This insight helped us to understand Max's pain in the testes. This pain represented his anxiety that his own efforts at forming a mutually supportive relationship would meet with failure.

When Max was able to pull out of his addiction it was possible for him to feel compassion for both the parents. This finally freed him from his castration anxiety—the pain in the testes.

METRO-RAIL AND THE UNCONSCIOUS*

AMARENDRANATH BASU

I

Calcutta is proud of its privilege of having the Metro Railway, the first of its kind in India. It is the seventy-first city in the world in this regard. Metro Railway was first constructed in London in the year 1863. Since then a Metro or Underground Railway system has been a mark of privilege and prestige for the advanced countries.

All major ancient civilizations had developed underground tunnelling systems; therefore it is nothing new to us. In Babylonia a 300 feet long tunnel was built around 2180 to 2160 B.C. under the Euphrates River to connect the then Royal Palace with the Temple. Tunnels were built there also for irrigation purposes. In Austria the salt-mine tunnel was built in about 2500 B.C. In Greece, in the island of Samos 3400 feet long underground tunnel was built for drainage and water conveyance in the 6th C. B.C. The longest tunnel, so far known, was that of Naples, 4800 feet long, 25 feet wide and 30 feet high, and was built in 36 B.C. (Encyclopaedia Brit.; 18; 1979).

In modern times, in France, Canal du Midi was built through the years 1666 to 1681 linking the Atlantic and Mediterranean. Now-a-days underground is explored and penetrated for variety of purposes other than laying Railway tracks. In 1970 an international meeting

of 20 countries was held in Washington to explore the possibilities of underground constructions to tap natural resources (Encyc. Brit.; 18; 1979). In Calcutta there is a tunnel under the river bed of the Ganges which was built in the year 1929 and onwards. This tunnel was built by the Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation and it carries the electric cables from the Calcutta side to the Howrah side of the River Ganges or Hooghly (Chatterjee, 1983).

The architects and planners of the congested cities of the advanced countries have constructed their underground railway systems upon the plea that there is paucity of space above the ground. Moreover beneath the ground higher speed is attainable unhindered. But we must take into account the technological hazards in the construction work. Since ancient days thousands of slaves and workers have been laying down their lives for underground constructions.

In the case of our Calcutta, in the period of late 50s, the feasibility of Metro Rail was probed into and ultimately the experts abandoned the plan on the consideration of unsuitability of underground soil. But eventually we find that in the inner mind the Calcuttans did not forsake the idea of underground railway. They kept it going on like an under-current to be manifested in the future. And now they have made it a reality in spite of their other pressing problems and financial stringency.

Now, it may be asked: why should man go down in the dark chamber of the earth, renouncing natural light and air, and embracing various types of technological perils? Is it only utility that impels man to undertake all the risks? Or there are some other urges which are not apparent, but which goad man to go down into the nether world.

(In this article Metro Rail has been taken as a representative of all the underground projects that man has undertaken so far.)

Going by the evidence from pre-history and history of man we come to know that human species, since its earliest infancy, or to put it more accurately, since the time of its primate ancestors, had been feeling an attachment to the underground. In the remote antiquity of Ice Age, man, naked and without any house and fire for protection from cold, found shelter and warmth in natural caves and caverns or by digging burrows in soft loess soil of the river valleys (Childe, 1965). These dug out burrows of the Magdalenians of the

* Read at the scientific meeting of Indian Psychoanalytical Society, Calcutta, on 29-12-84.

latest palaeolithic period went, perhaps, upto two miles beneath the earth (Childe, 1965). Man found his true home and shelter under rock ledges and in caves as the Ice Age approached with its maximum severity (Wells, 1956). When fire was discovered man could dislodge animals from those places and occupy those for themselves. Again, postglacial palaeolithic people fought among themselves, in different groups, over the possession of caverns and underground chambers (Wells, 1956). To the primitive people underground was synonymous with safety.

The palaeolithic men used to lay their dead at rest for safety and protection under the heaps of earth which are known as barrows, and in the underground holes, caves and caverns. Death was not thought to be a definitive end or annihilation. As plants come out alive from the bosom of the earth, so the dead might come alive again from beneath the earth. That is why the dead bodies were kept in embryonic position as if in the womb (Eliade, 1960 ; Bachofen, 1967). Getting protection in the holes or chambers of the earth from severe cold has a functional similarity to being warm in mother's arms or fold. The closeness between mother and child on the basis of need satisfaction found a parallel in the affinity of man with the earth or vice versa. The earth was homologised to mother and gradually it became the Earth-Mother. According to Eliade (1960) "Earth-Mother is a very old divinity, known since palaeolithic times". Subsequently, with the discovery of agriculture, the idea of the Earth-Mother was reinforced and acquired a complete shape. Plants come out from the womb of the Earth-Mother ; those are sustained on her bosom by the juice she supplies from underneath the ground as if the plant world is breast fed. Seed is deposited beneath the ground, i.e., in the womb of the Mother-Earth, and infused with life.

In the neolithic period man found out minerals and metals from inside the earth. Eliade (1960) points out that mines were likened to the vagina of the Earth-Mother. Similar ideas were projected on caves and caverns. The Egyptian word 'bi' means both 'vagina' and 'gallery of a mine'. "It is probable that the ores extracted from a mine were likened to embryos" (Eliade, 1960). Again in Indian treaties on mineralogy emerald has been described as an embryo in the womb of rock. The Sanskrit term for it is 'acmagarbha'—'the

rock born' (Eliade, 1960). The things the Mother-Earth carries in her bowels were likened to embryos in their course of gestation in the subterranean womb. The reflections of all these concepts culminated in the images of the mythical Mother-goddesses of almost all the races.

The concept of nether world occupies a very important place and plays a vital role in myths, including those of the tribes, of different countries. Here, only a few of them would be put forward, because this is not a place to go into detail.

In the myths of Sumerians (or Mesopotamians) we find that Ishtar or Inanna, the queen of heaven, descended into the under world where her sister Ereshkigal ruled. Inanna while passing through the seven gates of the nether world had to strip herself of her clothing at each gate. In Sumer Earth-Mother was named Ninursag (Hook, 1975).

According to the Greek myth the nether world, a dark sunless region, is divided into two : Tartarus, the horrible one, and Elysium, the happy one. The under world is called 'Hades', meaning 'unseen' (Chambers's Encyc. ; 7 ; 1963).

Egyptian Rhamsinitus or Ramesses III descended into the nether world and played dice with Demeter, the Greek goddess of agriculture and family life (Bachofen, 1967).

In Lycian mythology mourning rites were dedicated to the Mother-Earth in subterranean chambers as the dead became Demeterian, because only the Mother-Earth had bond with the dead as she took them back. Only women could observe those rites (Bachofen, 1967).

Some mythological (Greek) marriages were also celebrated in caverns : for example, marriage of Peleus and Thetis, of Aeneas and Dido (Eliade, 1960). Persephone or Proserpina was kidnapped by Hades into the nether world and raped (Collignon, 1890).

In Indian myths we come across the story of Bhim's presence in the land of the Nagas (after he was drowned in the Ganges by the foul trick of the Kauravas) beneath the earth. There he was attended upon by the Naga damsels with pomp and luxury (Adiparva ; Mahabharata). In another story we find Utanka, the disciple of the sage Veda, went to the land of Nagas in the nether world where he found a very beautiful city (Ibid). Again, the sage Narada and Matali, the charioteer of Indra, visited the magnificent cities of

Bhogavati and Hiranyapura in the under world. They went there to find out a bridegroom for the daughter of Matali. They also went down to the seventh layer of the nether world, called Rasatal (Udyogparva : mahabharata).

In the tragic end of the Ramayana, Sita torn of pathos of her life went down into the fold of the Mother-Earth where she could rest in peace (Ramayana).

Izanami of the Japanese myth descended beneath the earth after her death and Izanagi, her husband, went there in search of her (Eliade, 1960).

But the most significant or suggestive of all the myths is the myth of Oedipus's passing away from this mortal life. Sophocles describes the death scene of Oedipus ; ".....He went on as far as the brink of the chasm, where the Brazen staircase plunges into the roots of the earth—near the rock-basin which commemorates the famous covenant of Theseus and Peirithous. There he stood, among those hallowed objects—the Basin, the Rock of Thoricus, the Hollow Pear-tree, the Stone Tomb. He sat down ; took off his toil-stained garments ; and calling for his daughters, asked them to fetch water from the stream, so that he might wash and pour water-offerings. They went, towards the Hill of the Harvest-goddess, which lay in front of us ; and soon returned bringing him what he asked for

.....there came a peal of thunder, the voice of the God of Earth ; and the women trembled and wept, falling at their father's knees ;

.....A god was calling to him. 'Oedipus'. Oedipus'

.....'It is time : you stay too long'

Oedipus again groped blindly for his children, and said : Now, my children, you must be brave and good, and go from this place. You must not ask to see forbidden mysteries ; there are things you must not hear. Go quickly. Only Theseus is permitted to remain and see the rest

In what manner Oedipus passed from this earth, no one can tell. Only Theseus knows. We know he was not destroyed by a thunderbolt from heaven nor tide-wave rising from the sea, for no such thing occurred. May be a guiding spirit from the gods took him, or the

earth's foundations gently opened and received him with no pain" (Sophocles : Oedipus at Colonus).

In the myths of the tribes the resonance of the idea of attachment to the Mother-Earth is found with all importance :

The Iroquois believe that in a remote age they lived under the earth (Eliade, 1960).

According to the Zuni (a South American tribe) myth there are four subterranean worlds ; these are the four wombs of the Earth. Man at the beginning lived in the deepest womb of the Earth. From there they, through gradual development, passed serially from one womb to the other and finally came in a developed form into the fourth womb, called the 'Womb of Parturition.' Here the light is like that of dawn. The second 'cavern-womb' is nearer to the earth's navel'. It is the 'Umbilical Matrix or place of Gestation. The third 'cavern-womb' is called the 'vaginal-womb'. It is nearer to light. The gynaecological and obstetric symbolisms are very clear here and the image of the earth is perfectly homologized with women (Eliade, 1960).

Thus in most of the myths we find traces of a nostalgic feeling of kinship with the earth. Due to this nostalgia, since the prehistoric times, man has been experiencing a cosmic relatedness with his birth place. This mystical experience of autochthony, i.e., of having been born of the native land, or to conceive more widely, of the earth like rocks, rivers, plants and deserts has created in man a sense of belongingness to the Mother-Earth which is stronger than the bond of consanguinity. This experience has left traces in man's thoughts and language : In Roman sepulchral inscription it is often written—"here he was born, here he is laid". The Rumanians call a bastard the "child of flowers" (Eliade, 1960). The Dakota tribe of the U.S.A. regards itself as "possessed by its homeland" and expresses its sensitivity and relatedness to the natieland by the term 'Mother-Earth' (Muller, 1971). In India it is professed that 'Mother and Motherland are greater than the heaven'. In the Ananda-Lahari verses Sankara conceived of the earth and universe as the Mother-goddess Bhagavati. In the 'Vande Mataram' song Bankimchandra depicted Motherland as Mother Durga. In many poems poets of different countries, ancient and modern, expressed this cosmic sense of relatedness with Nature. Therefore, at death it is the great desire

of man to return to the Earth-Mother — the Mother-land or Biswamata, the universal Mother. It is said in the Rig Veda (X, 18, 10) : "creep back to the earth thy mother". And the Atharva Veda (XVIII, 4,48) says : "thou, who art earth, I put thee into the earth". There is a Chinese saying : "let the flesh and the bones return once more to the earth" (Eliade, 1960).

From the mortuary rites of primitive and ancient peoples it is evident that they regarded death as a temporary re-entry into the mother's bosom—"a return to the Mother-Earth". Death to them was not the end of life but an opportunity to repeat it from the beginning ; so to return or reenter into the womb was only to start it anew. Life can start anew if it regresses to its premordial position. Therefore, going down into the earth means to get rejuvenated. That man was born of earth was a universal belief in every people. From that remote past of the palaeolithic age, may be from the time of our primate ancestors, we have been carrying in our archaic mind a severe urge to get united with the Mother-Earth.

The evidences of our desire to go down into the womb of the Mother-Earth not only come from prehistory and mythology, but also from modern minds. A few dreams of a young man of 34 years old, suffering from depression are presented here. He dreamt that he had gone to a work-site of the Calcutta Metro Rail somewhere near Esplanade. He found mounds of earth dug out of a cavity stretching far beneath the ground. He looked through the orifice of the cavity with amazement and pleasure. The inside appeared to him dark and mystical.

On analysis it was found that the whole picture represented the vaginal cavity stretched to the womb. It was the womb of Mother-Calcutta.

In another dream the same person dreamt like this : There was a house with a big courtyard where a big cavity was dug out. A couple was going down through the cavity beneath the ground and after a while coming up. This was repeated—going down and coming up.

This dream represented a sex situation in the safety of the underground. Again the cavity was homologized to the vaginal orifice. The woman appeared to the dreamer having the motherly qualities and the man was his friend.

A young girl of 25 related the following dream : She had gone to an underground theatre-hall accompanied by her mother and had been viewing a very pleasant theatrical show. The place appeared to her very safe, free from external disturbances.

This girl was tormented with some strains and stresses of her life. She was suffering from depression with a regressive pull. She found in her dream a place of safety beneath the ground, in the womb of the Mother-Earth. She compared the underground hall with the Metro Rail station of Calcutta.

Next, a fantastic phantasy recounted by a newly married young man is given here. The youth narrated, in free-association : "I wish I could enter through the vaginal passage of my wife and go into her body with necessary provision to stay there months or years together, without returning back. There is no satisfaction in penetrating only the male organ into her body ; I as a whole want to get into her. That, I think, would be a state of eternal pleasure."

There is nothing to comment over this phantasy. It speaks clearly for itself.

The above dreams and phantasy indicate clearly a primary craving in human unconscious to return to womb. The dreams at the same time satisfy the craving in terms of both biological mother and the Mother-Earth. The craving in both the ways, ontogenic and phylogenic, is fulfilled. In our archaic unconscious, due to our racial experience through prehistoric ages, the Mother-Earth and biological mother, or in a general way women, are mingled together. They substitute and represent each other.

II

The theory of Primary Return-to-womb phantasy propounds that "Infants resent their extrusion from the womb and seek to return there" (Bowlby, 1969). Behind this craving work two factors : (1) an attachment to a primary love-object and (2) the primary urge of inertia, which is a derivative of the death instinct, renamed by Freud (1920) the Nirvana principle. The attachment to the love-object develops through the satisfaction of "need for nourishment" (Freud, 1940). Freud (1926) was "struck by the functional similarity of mother's womb and mother's arms as modes of infant care" (Bowlby, 1969). Thereupon he postulated the concept of "temporal regression

to infancy (in extreme cases, to a time when the subject was in his mother's womb). (Freud, 1926). The need of the child includes food, warmth, contact, protection and such other things as are necessary for survival. In individual's infancy these are provided by mother. And in the infancy of human race these were furnished by the Earth-mother—protection in natural or dug out caves, warmth from natural fire and food that nature had supplied. Therefore, the primary love-object of the primitive men of glacial ages was the Mother-Earth. Along with this tie with the Mother-Earth there works the drive "to return to the peace of the inorganic world" (Freud, 1920)—the Nirvana principle. It can be said that this drive displays itself in the primary phantasy of returning to the womb, both ontogenetically and phylogenetically.

It is very appropriate to mention here that M. Balint followed by the Hungarian school of psychoanalysts conceived of this phantasy as "something on its own....." (as quoted by Bowlby, 1969), without having any link to any of the erotogenic zones. [Bowlby (1969) regrets not having given due weight and consideration to this Hungarian view]. If so, then this primary phantasy can be explained only on the postulation of the hypothesis of archaic object-relation with the Mother-Earth; it has a link with the process of archaic craving for the lost paradise, as is reflected in the myths. This is an inheritance from glacial ages which still works in our racial unconscious. It impels us to return to the womb—to the womb of both biological mother and the Earth-Mother.

Perhaps this drive to go down beneath the earth had a survival value at a time. Whether that exists today is a matter of controversy. Apart from that, we have been fulfilling that same urge, even today, with the difference that prehistoric men took resort to the fold of the earth by entering into the natural caves and caverns or caves dug out by primitive implements, and we in modern times are applying our highly technological skill for this purpose, as in the case of Metro Rail or in some other underground projects.

Now, several tit-bits of facts are referred to which are no less important in our investigation. It is a very striking semblance in naming underground Railway as 'Metro Railway'. The terms 'Metro' and 'Mother' have their roots in Latin and Greek term 'meter', which is again connected with the Sanskrit term 'matri' (Chamber's

Dic); all these signify mother. Then derivatively Metro Railway means Mother Railway. The Greek term 'metra' means womb (Chambers Dic.).

Again recently we have witnessed a very funny thing which has the resemblance of prehistoric group rivalry (though not physical, but only oral) over the possession of caves, symbolically the Earth-Mother's womb. The State authority and the Central authority in Calcutta are wrapped up according to Newspaper reports after the completion of the first phase of Metro Rail) in jealous conflicts over the affairs of Metro Rail. The State authority finds fault in it and the Central authority feels privileged in its construction, as if, it is the favoured child of Mother-Calcutta in having a place in her fold. And in an emotional zeal the State authority vows to make Calcutta 'Kallolini' and adorn her like 'Tilottama' (Kallolini stream with sweet murmuring sound of running water; here it represents a beautiful damsel having sweet voice. Tilottama — a mythological beautiful damsel: an Apsara).

Furthermore, persons in rebellion or in opposition to the ruling establishment go into hiding for safety and that action is figuratively expressed as "have gone underground."

Do not all these tit-bits point to some unconscious dynamics? Calcutta Metro, in a representative way, has stimulated as well as, facilitated our unconscious phantasies and opened the doors to many mystical feelings.

Lastly, it may naturally come to our mind that this nostalgia for a return to the Mother-Earth may do harm to a race if it predominates in a collective way over the mass mind. In that case the society may give up the struggle for living a life and may approach extinction very quickly. That is the case with the Yaruros of South America as reported by Eliade (1960). The tribe as a whole suffers from this nostalgia of lost Paradise. They are impatient to die and reenter into Mother Earth. That is why only a few hundred of them live today. Nevertheless, we need not get alarmed at this nostalgia and think it a harmful phantasy; because Eros, the life instinct, works in company with it in an inseparable way. "Our speculation," says Freud (1920), "then supposes that this Eros is at work from the beginnings of life, manifesting itself as the 'life instinct' in contradistinction to the 'death instinct' which developed through the animation of the

inorganic. It endeavours to solve the riddle of life by the hypothesis of these two instincts striving with each other from the very beginning. Again he (1923) says, "It would be possible to picture the id as under the domination of the mute but powerful death-instincts, which desire to be at peace and (as the pleasure-principle demands) to put Eros, the intruder to rest; but that would be to run the risk of valuing too cheaply the part played by Eros." Consequently, instead of being harmful, this urge to return to the womb has become a source of creativity—art, science, literature, religion and so on. Hence, metro and all other digging or underground projects are fruits of human creativity. And human mind bears an underground relationship with all these works.

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