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SARADINDU BANERJI

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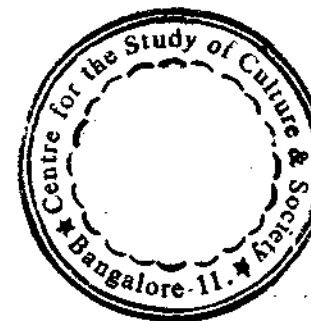
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OBSERVATIONS ON BODY IMAGE*

B. BOSE

The topic of body image is very intriguing. Freud was aware of its importance quite early in the history of psychoanalysis and remarked that our ego is essentially a 'body ego'. In so far as focus on body image is noticed in literature we are familiar with its role as an attribute of ego. But the body image may be observed to occur as an attribute of superego as well. In fact we may say that both ego and superego have their respective body images and that they jointly contribute in the formation of each other's body image indicating that body sensations are not the exclusive ingredients of the final body image as we observe it in the end.

What is further puzzling is that the body image instead of showing a constant form and function may show an unstable, changing character. Very often when the ego feels that it has a particular type of body, it also often feels that this is what the superego wants it for the ego. Similarly when the superego is attributed a special body image, it reflects not only the claims of the superego but also the attitudes of the ego which endorses the superego's claims to some extent at least. Of course, sometimes the ego-superego interactions may be more complex. There may be defiance of ego instead of compliance with regard to superego wishes concerning ego's body image resulting in various intermediate

* Read before the National Psychoanalytical Congress, 1985 organised by Indian Psychoanalytical Society at Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics, 92 Acharya Prafulla Chandra Road, Calcutta.

compromise formations.

We can, broadly speaking, discern three types of body images. Firstly, the normal reality conforming body image in which actual sensory impressions are unaltered; secondly, what may be called fantasy creations and thirdly, what may be termed as compromise products. End forms of body images what we commonly observe are mostly of the third variety.

I shall now present certain examples of body images which clearly demonstrate the distortion of the image compared to the actual reality. These examples have been collected from the following sources viz. clinical psychiatry, psychoanalysis of psychoneurotics, general literature, cartoons in journalistic literature, fairy tales, folklore and the Mahabharata. There are many other sources, but as I am not going to make the present paper unnecessarily unwieldy in size, I refrain from mentioning them in detail.

Examples from Clinical Psychiatry

A male elderly schizophrenic suddenly started laughing. When he was asked what was the matter? He replied that he had a very funny experience in which he found hundreds of little girls of the size of a thumb, like living dolls, are emanating from his body.

In many schizophrenics I often noticed a common complaint that they have been beaten so badly and all their body are broken up into small pieces so that the limbs are either pulled unusually long, bent into abnormal shapes or compressed into a small space causing indescribable pain. Evidences collected from a study of language e.g., 'beaten to a pulp' in English and 'হাড় গোট ভাঙা দ' *in Bengali also suggest the presence of similar fantasies even in normal people.

In certain cases clinically designated by Calcutta psychiatrists as Somatic paranoia, first pointed out by Bose, G. in his clinics, later described by Chatterjee, N. N. in a paper in 1948 and by myself in a paper in 1950, severe disturbances in body image could be noticed. They complained of contractures, inward pulling of eyes, body hair getting thorny, body becoming dry and juiceless, body secretions are powdery etc.

*Bones broken like the letter 'দ'

Examples from Psychoanalysis of Psychoneurotics

A very common complaint among many psychoneurotics is their worry over a small penis. This should be regarded as disturbed body image in which the genital organ of the body is felt to be unrealistically small. It is further interesting that this image undergoes correction after sufficient progress in analysis. Needless to say that this particular image is as a rule ego's perception for the most part in acquiescence of superego behest.

On the other hand, many psychoneurotics superimpose their superego's body image on the person of the analyst describing him in his free association as a 'giant whose head almost touches the ceiling'.

Examples from General Literature

Reduction and magnification in body size both are illustrated in the Gulliver's Travels. The story of 'Buro Angla' by Abanindranath Tagore is also an example of body image in which there is unusual reduction of size. While in Aladin's story, so well known all the world over we meet with an enormous body image. In Tagore's 'Shapmochan' meaning the liberation from a curse the hero suffers from an ugly misshapen body which is the result of a curse. Thus it indicates the importance of the hostile attitude of the authority figure in the genesis of a misshapen body image. Example of 'Kimbhoot' from the works of Sukumar Roy, a great humorist poet of Bengali literature is very instructive in many respects. The hero of this poem experiences a variety of desires concerning modification of different parts of his body anatomy and then in the end finds all his wishes fully realized so that his final body becomes an aggregate of parts derived from various animals and birds, and this composite body image looks bewilderingly complex while the hero himself appears to be in a very confusing state of mind. The lesson of the poem clearly suggests that there is an organising purpose which directs the growth and integration of a body image during developmental stages and the role of fantasy in body images. Interestingly however there is no indication of curse in this situation but fundamental role is ascribed to wishes of the hero i.e. the ego. On closer examination we cannot rule out the possibility of some role of superego, ego seems to desire what

the superego certifies as desirable.

Examples from the Mahabharata

In this book of encyclopaedic size there are numerous examples of distorted body image. Risi Astabakra, for instance, was born with his body bent at eight places due to a curse from his father. The story describes that Astabakra commented on his father's faulty recitations of the Shastras and at this the insulted father cursed him. Afterwards his father was imprisoned following a conflict with a court scholar who defeated him in arguments and Astabakra got him released. The happy father then relieved him i.e. Astabakra of the curse. Both male and female subjects are shown as changed into subhuman animal figures such as snake or crocodile on account of some irreverential attitude toward a person of superior status whose curse becomes responsible for the change. Thus again we see the role of ego-superego relationship in the genesis of pathological body image. It is further noticed that the curse occupies a limited period in time and the body image shows reversibility into normalcy as soon as the mutual ego and superego attitudes become normal i.e. the return of reverence in ego and love in superego.

Example of Fetry Tales

A survey will show numerous varieties of body images both for the ego as well as for superego. There are images like Rakshasas and demons with enormously big teeth and crooked body features indicative of their hostile aggressive intentions occupying frighteningly big dimensions or there may be friendly giants assisting the hero in all his adventures. There are also friendly pair of birds who whisper at night on the tree top underneath which the hero lies and gets all the tips necessary for his successful romance and adventure.

Example of Cartoons in Journalistic Literature

I can recall one example which caused much amusement to newspaper readers at the time it was published. A very prominent leader of Bengal Legislature before independence felt annoyed with a renowned central leader and remarked that he can put a thousand such central leaders in his pocket, the next day a paper came out with cartoon

which showed miniature images of the central leader coming out of the pocket of the provincial leader. This shows that a tendency to reduce body image to Lilliputian size is very common if not universal.

Example of Body Image in Pornographic Folklore

The phenomenon noticed here is exactly opposite to the psychoneurotics complaint of small penis. The hero is endowed with an enormously large penis which he keeps tied round his waste or shoots to great distance at will. Very often also the seminal discharge is compared to a flooding river. The fantasy figure is also recognizable as an undisguised father image as he is a Sadhu who is generally addressed as father.

Genesis, Organization and Mechanism of Operation :

A very large number of cases have been noticed in which the precipitation of overt schizophrenic attack is preceded by a frantic attempt on the part of the subject to develop his body physique through intensive physical culture. Conscious motives are often given as an attempt 'to improve health' or 'to improve appearance'. On deeper probing however we see defence against an anxiety of impending ruin which the patient feels as something inevitable in consequence of his loss of semen either through nocturnal emissions or masturbation. Though in my cases most of them belonged to middle class Bengali Hindus or Upper Indian Hindus, examples from other sociocultural backgrounds like Muslims, Anglo-Indians, Christians, Sikhs and Jains were also not infrequent. In psychoneurotics too similar cases are frequently seen and since such cases are more accessible to psychoanalytical investigation much light is thrown upon this question by their psychoanalytical study. In all these cases I noticed a tendency to set up an ego ideal in the instructor who is a veteran physical culturist. Curiously enough the ambivalent feelings of oedipus complex also start getting re-enacted in this plane also. Analysis further shows that side by side with conscious body image there are several other body images which seem to operate actively from within the unconscious whose existence can be inferred from behaviour peculiarities. Thus in one case the patient was over-cautious while taking meals lest some hard object like a stone in rice, presence of hard bones or even the use

of spoon while taking dinner in an Western style hurts his teeth. On analysis it was seen to be linked up with his dread of 'toothless mouth' which was associated with strongly repressed feminine erotic feelings and fear of superego's sexual assaults was looked upon as a body destroying punishing design. Body image of toothless mouth and the accompanying feeling of horror came to conscious mind only after prolonged analysis.

Psychoneurotic anxiety 'break downs' are commonly seen when a marriage negotiation has been completed and the question of fixing a date for marriage has become imperative. Such patients begin to feel increasing doubts and anxiety lest they fail to consummate marriage, lest they produce abnormal children even a hijra i.e. intersex or hermaphrodite, even absurd ideas, such as frog or rat may be born also plague their minds. On deeper analysis such cases not only show castration fantasies but also present corresponding body images along with two types of effects (one despair with feelings of hopelessness, shame and suicidal ideas the other retaliatory aggressive feelings, culminating in ideas of killing). In psychoneurotics the role of wish to be females among males lies at the bottom of castration complex is invariably demonstrated as pointed out by Bose, G. while its counterpart in schizophrenics is demonstrated by the formation of delusion of possessing a full-fledged female genital in complete denial of his actual reality of physically palpable male genital organ. In psychoneurotics the fantasy is powerfully masked.

Thus we see side by side of an actual reality image there are several fantasy images of the genital region in a person. Various grades of mixing of images both from actual reality and fantasy are possible. It may sometime so happen that a fantasy image completely ousts the reality images from the consciousness and instead, itself occupies the consciousness as a fixed delusion as in the case of schizophrenic mentioned above.

I have cited the above findings from my observations as a clinician; but from cursory examination of everyday life what has been said about the genital area of body images to be true of other areas, in fact of the entire body image also. It is quite common to see that people often fail to assess their body abilities with advancement of age. Reluctance to give up a body image experienced in youth while one becomes older is everyday observation.

Role of Sensations, Ego and Superego Attitudes

Seymour Fisher and Sydney, E. Cleveland in a book entitled *Body Image and Personality*, (2nd Edition, 1968,) have given an excellent account of ego development along Freudian concepts. Freud conceived of the earliest ego developments as proceeding in terms of the child's learning to integrate sensations from his body surface and using them as a basis for discriminating between the outer world and own body. Body image is basic to the development of the total ego structure and becomes a substantial nucleus of later ego elaborations. Freud's theory of libido and of erogenous zones is stated almost entirely in terms of body zones and areas of body sensitivity. How perceptions of one's own body has been organized is reflected in ego behaviour.

Direct sensations received through the body surface begins to form the nucleus of ego and this lays the foundation of reality body image. Introspective psychology gives us a very important information in that as soon as a pure sensation is transformed into a perception two things have already modified it, one is the addition of an image derived from our store of memory and the other is an action-attitude which gives it a meaning. Thus the ego starts coming under the influence of some internal forces in addition to the sensations received from the outerworld in so far as its development of body image is concerned.

Body image attributable to the superego seems to be mainly the work of ego and is built up with its processes of identifications with objects on whose model the superego develops, together with the projections of its own attitudes.

Ego-Superego conflicts and the resultant effect on body image with compromise formations

Briefly speaking ego-superego relationship may develop along two pathways along a path of conflict beset with defiance, punishment and unstable compromises and also along a path in the conflict free sphere where the two agencies develop through mutually cooperative bonds and the body images of both ego and superego remain powerfully reality based. Body images finally formed along these different paths of development may undergo grades of intermixture and the resultant

image may be responsible in affecting our overt behaviour.

Role of Anxiety, Excitement and Inhibitions

As already pointed out in this paper, there may be reluctance on one's part to give up a body image, once developed as actual reality in one's youth. It can also be observed that such phenomena are determined by anxiety or excitement at the given circumstance. An example to the point is the old man who tries to catch a public vehicle in motion or to get down from such a running vehicle. Urgency of some kind may excite him to deny the immediate reality and adopt an action more appropriate of his younger days.

Conclusion

In this paper I have tried to show that the concept of 'body image' cannot be restricted to ego only; it has a counterpart with reference to superego as well. Further the body image cannot be considered as something constant and unchangeable. The body images of both ego and superego show interaction of several factors in their genesis, maintenance and behaviour.

THE FREUDIAN MODEL OF MAN AND ITS RELEVANCE TODAY

K. CYRIAC

Ever since Sigmund Freud started out his career as a psychoanalyst, there had been mixed reactions to him and to his theories from all possible corners. Criticism of Freudian psychoanalysis ranged from 'pansexualistic' perversion of the sublime in man to 'denigrative devaluation of modern civilization'. During Freud's own lifetime some of his closest associates and disciples became explosive defectors. Some critics in the past three quarters of this century have written off Freud and psychoanalysis.

Yet psychoanalysis survives, Freud lives on. Along with Charles Darwin, Karl Marx and Albert Einstein, he is considered an important architect of Modern man and his cultural assets. Many of his speculations and suggestions, conclusions and warnings, once viewed with suspicion and partly rejected in arrogance, have recently found recognition and public support.

Freud remains what he was almost a century ago—a freedom fighter, a liberator. He had a deep-seated love for mankind. Hence he identified himself with Hannibal the liberator, and with Moses the restorer. He fought against and discarded everything that was compulsive and repressive. For him there was only one way of liberation: becoming aware of one's own servitude to the bondage inside and to the fetters outside. Relentlessly he worked for liberation, a fight he continued to the last moment, in spite of all criticisms, dissensions and even personal threats.

Freud the Philosopher

Sigmund Freud was basically an empirical scientist, who started his career as a medical practitioner, more precisely, as a neurologist. But for the major part of his life, he was an analytical therapist. However, the philosopher in Freud emerged very clearly all through his writings particularly during the latter half of his career.

"I was myself a disciple of the love of mankind, not on sentimental motives or in pursuit of an ideal, but for sober, economic reasons, because, our instincts and the world around us being what they are, I could not but regard that love as no less essential for the survival of the human race than such things as technology....." (1)

Freud developed what is generally called a psychoanalytic *Weltanschauung*, which he summarized in the 'New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis' (2). A *Weltanschauung* simply means a philosophy of life, a mental picture of the universe, a kind of world-atlas, the way in which one looks at world and life.

Thus the psychoanalysis discovered and developed by Freud is not merely a psychological system containing essentially a theory of personality or purely a therapeutic method, but it is above all a tool of interpretation by which one may analyse human life and its intricacies on all levels.

As a 'depth Psychology, a theory of mental unconscious, it can become indispensable to all the sciences which are concerned with the evolution of human civilization and its major institutions such as art, religion and the social order. It has already in my opinion, afforded these sciences considerable help in solving their problems. But these are only small contributions compared with what might be achieved if historians of civilization, psychologists of religion, philologists and so on would agree themselves to handle the new instrument of research which is at their service" (3)

1. S. Freud, Letter to R. Rolland, Standard Edition Vol. XX 279.

2. Standard Edition XXII,

3. Freud, The Question of Lay Analysis, SE XX 248.

Partly influenced by then current philosophical trends of humanism and enlightenment, Freud emerged as a severe critic of the bourgeois society and its cultural dividends. The following words are clear in themselves :

"In the first place (civilization) has set up a high ideal of morality—morality being the restriction of instincts—and insists that all its members shall fulfil that ideal without troubling itself with the possibility that obedience may bear heavily upon the individual. Nor is it sufficiently wealthy or well organized to be able to compensate the individual for the amount of his instinctual renunciation. It is consequently left to the individual to decide how he can obtain, for the sacrifice he has made, enough compensation to enable him to preserve his mental balance. On the whole, however, he is obliged to live psychologically beyond his means, while the unsatisfied claims of his instincts make him feel the demands of civilization as a constant pressure upon him. Thus society maintains a condition of *cultural hypocrisy* which is bound to be accompanied by a sense of insecurity". (4)

Thus modern civilization turned out to be a "gigantic hypocrisy". It should be remembered that such a severe criticism was envisaged by Freud not to reduce man to the level of a beast, but by freeing him from his bondage, to raise him to the highest possible level of sublimity. Freud's appeal should be understood and interpreted in the totality of its context.

The model of man

Freud spoke of human beings not only in terms of individual manifestations in different cultures and situations; he constructed also a model of human nature as such. Based on such a construct of a 'universal man' he ventured many speculations and deduced many more conclusions. At an early stage he summarized them in a short essay "Formulations on the Two Principles of mental Functioning" (1911). Later on he formulated what is

4. S. Freud, Resistances to Psycho-analysis SE XIX 219.

called "Metapsychology" which explains any mental process from a dynamic, topographic and economic point of view.

Originally Freud saw man as an independent system driven by two forces, often in conflict with each other namely, the self preservative and the sexual drives. The primary interest of any human being is an optimal satisfaction of these ego and libidinous needs. Often he has to compromise and strike a balance. Thus man is literally driven or pushed forward for the satisfaction of his libidinal impulses provided it does not endanger his self-preservation. All human relations to the outside world are steered by these original drives. Thus, according to Freud, human being is primarily an individual, by far self-centred, and secondarily a social being, relating himself to others out of a basic need.

"The core of our being", Freud stated, "is formed by the obscure id" which comprises the sum total of all instinctual forces mostly inherited, it remains "the dark inaccessible part of our personality", while it obeys "the inexorable pleasure principle". Thus the oedipus complex, the ambivalent emotional tie to one's parents, sunk deep in the unconscious was considered by Freud "a phenomenon determined and laid down by heredity" (5). Such an oedipal tie as it affects almost all individual relations can be said to be a fundamental assumption of psychoanalysis and by far an original contribution of Freud.

The superego which entertains the higher assets of this civilization is the inheritor of oedipus complex, "the legitimate heir of the parental agency". Freud wrote in *Totem and Taboo*.

"At the conclusion, then, of this exceedingly condensed enquiry, I should like to insist that its outcome shows that the beginnings of religions, morals, society and art converge in the Oedipus complex. This is in complete agreement with the psycho-analytic findings that the same complex constitutes the nucleus of all neuroses, so far as our present knowledge goes. It seems to me a most surprising discovery that the problems of social psychology, too, should prove soluble on the basis of one single concrete

5. Freud, The Dissolution of Oedpus Complex, SE XIX 174.

point — man's relation to his father the emotional ambivalence in the proper sense of the term—that is, the simultaneous existence of love and hate towards the same subject — lies at the root of many important cultural institutions" (6)

There was a radical change in the metapsychological outlook of Freud after the 1920s which mark yet another phase of Freud's thinking. By this time the ego and sex drives were clubbed together as life instincts or eros and were placed in contrast to aggressiveness or death instinct. Human destructiveness was thus brought to the forefront. It is no more subject to the libido or the ego drives but it has become a rival force.

Freud gave the dialectic of rationality and irrationality a central position in his theory. One may safely infer that the enlightenment thinkers made Freud a rationalist with full trust in the power of reason and in the strength of human will. This dialectic however had baffled philosophers for centuries. Freud's answer to the inevitable swings of life due to the polarization of rationality and irrationality was the concept of the unconscious but the conscious cannot fully step out of its unconscious roots in most of its dealings. Hence every human experience lacks of full logical explanation. A rational being is bound to act irrationally too. In every individual the ego, the so-called rational self, tries to bring about a balance between the blind forces of the id and the higher assets of the superego. Parallely one can understand also the irrationality of group phenomenon. The external symptoms of a patient conceal an inner conflict, calling for a symbolic interpretation. Human behaviour too, in general, must be interpreted symbolically. A wise approach to life would be to try not to overcome the irrational emotional and unconscious part of the mind, but to understand it in view of an optimal equilibrium of the inner life. The psychoanalytic theory and practice are rooted in a possible synthesis of the rational and the irrational in man, a fruitful blend of rationalism and romanticism. Whoever has tried to affirm and extol one at the expense of the other has finally cut life into half. An understanding

6. S. Freud, Totem and Taboo, SE XII 156—7.

of the irrational ultimately aims at weakening and controlling it and not at letting the passions loose.

To sum up, the model of man developed by Freud is that of a "suffering servant," suffering from an internal war and an external oppression.

"We are warned by a proverb against serving two masters at the same time. The poor ego has things even worse: it serves three severe masters and does what it can to bring their claims and demands into harmony with one another. These claims are always divergent and often seem incompatible. No wonder that the ego so often fails its task. Its three tyrannical masters are external world, the super-ego and the id" (7)

Hence the self, the ego has to be freed from its bondage and strengthened for its affirmation. Therefore regarding the objective of his therapy Freud made the following historic statement. "where the id was, there ego shall be" (8)

Here I venture to make some applications:

1. Priority of Reason

Hitting hard against the religion-based cultural aspirations of his time, Freud advised man to withdraw his ambitions from all unreasonable extraterrestrial expectations. Leaving the heavens to the angels and sparrows, one should honestly admit "the purely human origin of all our regulations and precepts of civilization" (9). Primacy should be granted not to illusions but to realities, not to sentiments but to reason. What we need is a thorough education to reality, recognition of the power of reason.

"Men cannot remain children for ever; they must in the end go out into 'hostile life'; we may call this *education* to reality. Need I confess to you that the sole purpose of my book is to point out the necessity for this forward step" (10)

7. Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, SE XXI 77

8. *Ibid.* 80

9. Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* SE XXI 41.

10. Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* SE XXI 49.

What Freud proposed is not a total anarchic dictatorship of reason but a rational synthesis. He believed in the possibility of an inner liberation through the creative use of reason. Hence, he gladly welcomed the age-old dictum:

"Tout par raison—raison par tout"

Everything for reason and reason for everything.

Very convincingly he wrote:

"Our best hope for the future is that intellect—the scientific spirit, reason—may in process of time establish a dictatorship in the mental life of man. The nature of reason is a guarantee that afterwards it will not fail to give man's emotional impulses and what is determined by them the position they deserve" (11)

Thrown back upon himself each one has to work for his own existence. Happiness is thus a function of achievement through a creative use of reason. This is in fact the philosophy of economics popularised by the novelist Ayn Rand and the Nobel Laureate economist Milton Friedman.

At this juncture one may ask some relevant questions with regard to the very foundations of our Indian culture. Does our Indian ethos want us to remain eternally children? Do we feel comfortable in breaking the psycho-cultural umbilical cord in the process of our growth or are we still priding ourselves upon "the good old days"? The time has come for us to shed all the illusions and to face life squarely. The institutionalized father-figures around us are losing their omnipotence slowly but steadily. Instead of passing the buck to others each one shall cash in on his own creativity. We shall not pray for happiness nor dream about it, but work hard for it.

2. Interpersonal Effectiveness

From the time when Eve tried to impress Adam by offering him "the forbidden Apple" in the Garden of Eden, there had been hundreds of techniques developed by man to relate himself to his fellow beings. Most of such techniques, nevertheless, remain even today quite unsuccessful. The Freudian conclusions may be a

11. Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, SE XXI 171.

help to pursue the matter further. In any human relations the subconscious transference of feelings is equally important as the conscious transactions. The best human relations shall be hooked on the feelings.

Today in almost all the social subsystems human relations is the catchword. In industry for example, theories of motivation have mushroomed in view of a better work ethic and increased productivity. The need-based theories of David McClelland and Abraham Maslow which dominated the Management sciences for the last three decades have not yet succeeded in fully explaining the dynamics of human motivation nor in really motivating people to do their work effectively. Freud's concept of "Trieb" drive is being integrated into this field for a better understanding. For any human being is not only *pulled* forward by the expectant results but is primarily *pushed* by his interior forces often on account of an emotional involvement of which the individual is often little aware.

Freud's analytic exploration can be successfully applied in a deeper understanding of the dynamics of human motivation and in the search for the sources of superior-subordinate relations. The phenomenon of emotional spillover due to job stress and family commitments also can be better understood in the light of analytic findings.

3. Oedipus Complex as a Social Determinant

The idea of Oedipus complex offers a better understanding of the intricacies of many of the interpersonal conflicts. As it portrays the symbiotic mother-child relationship, it can be considered the prototype of all interpersonal relationships.

We are living in a predominantly masculinized culture. Consequently traits like toughness, strength, selfsufficiency and ability to succeed are considered male prerogatives, while dependence is shunned as weakness. There is a tendency to interpret almost every relatedness in terms of dependency. There is on the other hand, an ingrained urge for intimacy in every human being. Consequently, a conflict between intimacy and initiative is often perpetuated as a result of the original Oedipal conflict. The individual is caught on the horns of an existential dilemma, between a regressive pull

backwards and a progressive push forwards. A good number of interpersonal conflicts at home and on the job find explanation at this juncture. The cultural values and beliefs are often the primary source of inhibitions. Feelings repressed, assertiveness blocked, aggression regressed the emotional spillover takes place, from home to job, and from job to home!

Frustrated individuals often try to look for substitute satisfactions elsewhere. In favourable circumstances some try to dominate and control others by way of impulsiveness or compulsiveness while some others try their luck through masochistic and/or withdrawn patterns of behaviour. When the whole society gets embedded within a collective unconscious of the latter kind, father-figures become idols and a positive transference takes place.

Politics has always understood the inner dynamism of mass psychology in India. A minority of leaders have been successful in exploiting this situation for their maximum benefit. They have successfully capitalized to this day on the so called cultural i.e. parental values.

We in India have developed comparatively more mothering systems against the atrocities of the fathering structures. The so called generation gap on different levels of life also is very perceptible. The same traditional values which we uphold enthusiastically in public become the object of severe criticism and curse in private—a reflection of the infantile ambivalence. The majority of Indians feel compulsively victimized by the bureaucratic power. We have not yet been able to differentiate an ego-ideal developed by the individual in a process of social homeostasis from a superego that is merely the precipitate of the Oedipal tie.

4. Cultural Conditioning

We are living at a decisive point in history. Experts predict that a superstruggle is in the offing, a struggle that has grown out of the conflicts in the subcultures, as class conflicts, racial conflicts, conflicts among regions, sexes, religions and the like. The security offered by the father substitutes seems to be shattering. It is a time of crisis not only because of the problems of the nuclear

proliferation or world wide economic injustices or ecological imbalance but primarily because of the frustrations of modern man. The repressions within our social unconscious have already taken an explosive turn. But any crisis need not necessarily be a breakdown or a dead end, it can also be a breakthrough or an opportunity.

Freud maintained that our contemporary civilization favours production of hypocrisy to an extraordinary extent ; it is built upon hypocrisy. It would have to submit to far-reaching modifications if people were to undertake to live in accordance with psychological truth.

The first step for us Indians in this direction of a total change is to become aware of the foundations of our civilization. Instead of taking a radically critical view of the traditionally inherited value systems, we in India have always preferred to accept them unconditionally. Various institutions and structures often refer back to the age-old sacred traditions of this nation in an attempt to conserve the *status quo*. The majority of Indians are today simply but cunningly hooked on their emotions, fears and anxieties which operate from a subconscious terrain.

A critical evaluation and a creative application of the traditional values are almost impossible on account of the severity with which we Indians internalize authority in the process of social conditioning. Those in power dictate the moral code and decide what is right and wrong, good and bad for the individual. Existing social structures tried to sanctify conventional morality as long as it helps them to remain in power. Thus in a predominantly patriarchal society the males produce ideologies in order to explain their domination as being natural, and hence necessary and justified. In a class society the uppermost section invokes divine incantation in an attempt to keep the lower sections under subjugation. Consequently poverty becomes a virtue, ignorance bliss.

Let me conclude with the following note. The basic question before us is whether we want to remain children for ever in a state of unhappiness, although enjoying all the fatherly comforts and motherly protection provided by our sacrosanct value system or should we grow into adult maturity.

My feeling is that the time has come for us to shift our roles from passive recipients of illusory comforts to active producers of goods for ourselves and others. It is a long way for us as a nation to grow from an infantile intimacy and dependency to adult initiatives and mature assertion. However arduous it is, it is the only way to happiness. For, "where the id was there shall the ego be".

ADJUSTMENT OF OEDIPUS COMPLEX

SARADINDU BANERJI

In his 'Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality' (1905) Freud drew attention to certain peculiarities in the development of the infantile libido. According to him, sexual object-choice is established in early childhood so that all sexual trends become directed towards one single person in whom they try to seek fulfilment. The child libido therefore resembles the adult libido very closely. The only difference that Freud could notice was that in childhood the libido was more or less uniformly distributed over the different erogenous zones so that any special sexual significance of the genital organ was wanting. The primacy of the genital organ is not effected in childhood.

Later findings have led Freud to change this view. In an article entitled "The Infantile Genital Organisation of the Libido" which appeared in the 1924 April number of *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* Freud says: "I am today no longer satisfied with the statement that the primacy of the genitals is not effected in the early period of childhood or only very imperfectly. The approximation of sexuality to that of the adult goes much farther and is not limited solely to establishment of an object attachment. Even if perfect concentration of the component impulses under the primacy of the genitals is not attained, at any rate at the height of the development of childhood-sexuality the functioning of the genitals and the interest in them reaches predominant significance, which comes little short of that reached

in maturity. The difference between these two—the 'infantile genital organization' and the final genital organization' of the adult—constitutes also the main characteristic of the infantile form, namely that for both sexes in childhood only one kind of genital organ comes into account—the male. The primacy reached is not therefore a primacy of the genitals but of the phallus".

Freud says: "The little boy at first believes that the girl is endowed with a penis like himself. The accidental sight of the genitalia of a little girl first gives the information to the boy that the girl is differently constituted. The boy tries to believe that the penis is there, that it is small and it will grow and so on. If at this period the boy has been admonished with threats of castration for improprieties in connection with his penis the absence of the little girl is thought to be the result of a castration and his own fears are aroused resulting in the development of what is called the castration complex. The castration threat becomes significant only when the primacy of the genital phase has been attained. The absence of the penis in girls causes a sexual depreciation in the eyes of the little boy and is one of the factors in the genesis of homosexuality. Since the castration can only come as a punishment the little boy comes to think that only wicked females lose their penis but respectable females such as the mother retain their penis intact. Later when the boy comes to learn that only women can bear children the mother is considered to have been deprived of her penis as a substitute for which she gets a child. A knowledge of the true state of things is acquired much later".

In the childhood during the phallic primacy period, an emotional situation is created which is called Oedipus Complex. Very simply, it consists in the child's sexual attachment towards the parent of the opposite sex and a rivalry and hostility directed to the parent of the same sex. This emotional formation applies both to the male child and the female child.

That Oedipal wish is a universal phenomenon is acknowledged even by the great Indian ethical thinker, Manu. In the Institutes of Manu (*Manusamhita*) there is a distinct injunction against a male's sitting on the same seat with his mother, daughter or sister unless a third party was present, for it is said that human passions

and cravings are very strong and may upset even the most cultured person.

S. Freud

In a paper entitled, "The passing of the Oedipus Complex" (1924), Freud had discussed the factors which cause the disappearance of the Oedipus Complex. The Oedipus complex forms the central phenomenon of the sexual period in early childhood but later on repression sets in and causes its disappearance. This is followed by what is known as the latency period.

The phallic primacy phase is contemporaneous with the Oedipus complex. The phallic phase does not uninterruptedly lead to adult development, but becomes submerged during the latency period. According to Freud, the phallic stage of the genital organization succumbs to the threat of castration helped by other factors. The child has been already prepared for the loss of a valued part of the body by the withdrawal of the mother's breast and the evacuation of the bowels. The final blow comes when the child sees the female genitalia perhaps necessarily in a little girl. The loss of his own penis becomes a dangerous possibility and the castration threat becomes effective. The Oedipus complex offers the child two possibilities of satisfaction, an active or a passive one. It can either put itself in its father's place and can have intercourse with the mother or it can put itself in the place of the mother. In the former case, the father becomes a rival and the possibility of castration in his hands becomes acute and in the second case to play the part of the female a pre-requisite would be to give up the penis. So that in either case the boy comes to lose his valuable organ. A conflict thus arises between the narcissistic interest in the penis and the libidinal cathexis of the parent-objects. The narcissistic wish triumphs over the other and the child's ego turns away from the Oedipus Complex. As Freud says: "The Oedipus complex succumbs to the threat of castration".¹ By a process of identification with the parents their authority is introjected in the child's ego and forms the nucleus

1. Freud, S. The Passing of the Oedipus Complex, Collected Papers, Vol. 2, P. 273.

of the superego which by imposing restrictions like the father keeps the oedipus wishes in check. The oedipus sexual feeling is desexualized and sublimated into tender feelings. This process introduces the latency period. The result is the destruction and abrogation of the complex in most successful cases. It is something more than repression, If the results are not so satisfactory then the Oedipus Complex persists unconsciously and expresses itself later on in some pathogenic effect. As Freud says: "If the ego has really not achieved much more than a repression of the complex, then this latter persists in the id, and will express itself later on in some pathogenic effect".²

The female sex develops an Oedipus Complex too, a superego and a latency period. In the case of the female child the castration is an established fact and the dread of castration is powerless in her case and thus the motive for formation of the superego and the breaking up of the infantile organisation loses much of its force. Educational influences and the threat of loss of love bring about the adult modification of sexuality in her case. In the case of the girls, the Oedipus Complex seldom goes beyond the wish to take the mother's place, the feminine attitude towards the father. The girl finds in the child a compensation for the loss of penis. She expects a child to be given to her by her father which hope is never fulfilled and the little girl gradually abandons Oedipus Complex. The comparative weakness of the sadistic element of the libido in the female—which is attributed according to Freud, to the absence of penis—makes it possible for an easy transmutation of the directly sexual trends into tenderness and affectionate ones. Freud says: "Variations in the sequence and the linking up of these processes must be very significant in the development of the individual".³

Melanie Klein

Whereas Freud contends that the Oedipus wishes are given up through the threat of castration, Klein holds that it is not only anxieties—fear of castration or aphanasis and even death—that

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid. P. 275

makes the child give up his Oedipal wishes, but also his love for the parents and his wish not to damage them. This change in attitude occurs in the *depressive position* which starts at the end of the first half of the first year of child's life. The reparative wishes stirred by his depressive anxieties make him long to restore the parents, to overcome his wish to make their intercourse into a destructive act, and to restore it into an act of love and mutual creativity. The child's sexual wishes then become carriers of reparative phantasies. In the Oedipal situation, the boy wishes to identify with the potent father in order to restore the mother and give her babies in sexual intercourse.

The little girl in her desire for a good intercourse, seeks not only her own satisfaction, but also the restoration of her internal mother.

Thus according to Klein, both in case of male child and female child reparative and restitutive functions actuated by love play their crucial roles in Oedipus adjustment.

G. Bose

According to G. Bose, the Oedipus wish succumbs neither to the threat of castration nor to the dictates of the super-ego. The castration trait is originally a wish and is traceable to the desire to be a woman. The threat becomes effective only when the struggle between the male and the female tendencies becomes prominent in the child's mind leading to a repression of the feminine wish. Bose says: "I do not agree with Freud when he says that the Oedipus wish ultimately succumbs to the authority of the super-ego.

Quite reverse is the case. The super-ego must be conquered and the ability to castrate the father and make him into a woman is an essential requisite for the adjustment of the Oedipus wish. The Oedipus is resolved not by the threat of castration, but by the ability to castrate".*

G. Bose in support of his view has presented three case histories, one of which is cited here. The case is serially numbered, 334. It runs thus :

* G. Bose. The Genesis and Adjustment of the Oedipus Wish. Samiksa, Vol. 3, No. 4, P. 237

An European male—young, unmarried. Suffers from periodic fits of intense *depression*. Patient's sexual potency is impaired and the patient looks down upon sexual love but has a strong hankering for love of the spiritual type. The patient is religiously inclined.

Analysis reveals a strong resistance to normal sexual love and a flight to *homosexuality and spirituality*. Castration situation in the presence of the father comes up early during analysis and this is coupled with an *unconscious hatred for father*. A male friend of the patient is seen to stand for mother also. Later on this friend is also found to be a father substitute. Much later another *composite image* comes up in the person of a governess who because of her severity stands for the father and as female for the mother. Oedipus wishes are present with reference to this composite image. The Oedipus mother is sometimes conceived of as a willing partner in the sexual act and sometimes as a harsh and forbidding mother. Hostile and friendly images of the father come up both in active and passive homosexual situations. Incest fear is present and is traceable to the hostile father on the one hand and the unwilling mother on the other. When the adjustment comes both father and mother turn out to be friendly and willing and the desire to have a child by the mother appears in the associations. Images of complete sexual intercourse which were impossible to conjure up before now become easy and the patient has a phantasy of coitus with a mother image who has an impotent husband. Ideas of gross sexuality and disrespect for father become prominent associated with the desire to have a child by the mother. Next comes up the idea of forcing the father to give birth to a child and of *castrating the father*. Sadism coupled with exhibitionism are the next to appear associated with the ideas of potency. Efforts to combine spirituality with sexuality are present and a desire for unrestricted sexual life. Sympathy both for a strict father and for a disobedient, as well as, an obedient son develops. The flight from sexuality is found to be linked to this desire to be a woman.

Bose explains the fact of Oedipus wish adjustment by his theory of opposite wishes, developed in his book, *Concept of Repression*.

According to this theory, every wish has two aspects—active and passive; one has a wish to strike others and also a wish to be struck by others. In a case like this however, the passive aspect of the wish usually remains unconscious due to accompanying fear. Accordingly, in the situation of castration an individual harbours a wish to castrate, as well as, a wish to be castrated. This wish to be castrated is finally found to be linked with the desire to be a woman. Now the parental castration threat gratifies the child's unconscious wish to be castrated. Hence the child yields to the parental threat of punishment. Freud says this much. But Bose goes further and holds that Oedipus wish is not adjusted until the child is capable of castrating the father as indicated in the above case history.

It is found that the child gets something from the father, viz. unconscious gratification of his wish to be castrated through such threat and in return of this he foregoes something, namely, the Oedipus wish. But the story extends further. When the wish to be castrated is gratified through the parental threat, its counterpart, the wish to castrate the father becomes dominant. This wish is gratified in the child's phantasy, as mentioned in the above case history. It is in this way that the Oedipal wish circle is completed. Thus according to Bose, it is not castration threat by itself which adjusts the Oedipus complex, but the gratification of the active counterpart of the castration wish that finally adjusts the Oedipus Complex.

It is found in the above case that a stage comes in Oedipal adjustment by analysis when the castration wish directed to the father emerges in consciousness. As has been stated in the case history, "Next comes the idea of forcing the father to give birth to a child and of castrating the father".

In other words, the stabilization of the ego is attained by resolving the activity-passivity conflict linked with Oedipus situation.

Concluding Remark

The above three Views may appear to be indifferent or even opposed to each other at first look. But closer study of them will indicate that they are not so; on the contrary, they are complemen-

taries. Let us see how. Freud's view is correct in the sense that punishment or threat of punishment is undeniably a great deterrent force. Hence it is reasonable to say that the child's Oedipus wish succumbs to the castration threat. But the question may be asked: What is it in the castration threat that induces the child to give up his Oedipal longing? Is it sheer fear of punishment? Here Bose's view gives the answer. The child yields to the castration threat because his castration wish or the unconscious feminine wish is gratified to some extent by that threat. The inner dynamics of castration threat lies in passive castration wish. Therefore Freud's View is supplemented by Bose's views. Now Klein's view about the role of love factor in Oedipal adjustment may be considered. During the first half of the first year of child's life, he is extremely self-centred. He seeks unmitigated gratification of his wish and his approach to the object is dominantly aggressive. This is corroborated, according to Klein, by child's phantasies of that period. But during the second half of the first year, his approach to the object changes. He becomes concerned for his love-objects, feels guilty for destroying the parents in phantasy and seeks to restore them and preserve them by love. The dominant appearance of love in the latter half of the first year in the arena of child's emotional life helps the child to give up his aggressive Oedipal approach. Gradually love factor and reality factor come to the aid of Oedipal adjustment of the child. Hence the role of child's love in Oedipal adjustment as pointed out by Klein, is to be taken seriously. Thus the Views of Freud, Bose and Klein on the adjustment of Oedipus wish are complementaries. In other words, the three Views taken together constitute the whole truth about Oedipus adjustment, according to my reading of them.

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