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SCIENCE AND SUBJECTIVITY*

R. C. DAS

Both the denotation and the connotation of the term 'Science' have been changing rapidly. At one time by science we meant only the physical sciences like physics and chemistry which are believed to be characterised by their strict objectivity. Then appeared the so-called biological sciences like zoology, botany, physiology, medicine and psychology which have in them wide scope for individual variation and subjective estimation and which, therefore, perhaps cannot claim cent per cent (?) objectivity like chemistry and physics. Some other new entrants in the family of sciences are those known as social sciences like geography, economics, political science and sociology. Thus the periphery of the world of sciences is gradually widening. But unfortunately the attitude of the orthodox exponents of the traditional sciences towards the other sciences developed in later times has remained very much closed and exclusive. As a result, we find some kind of caste-mindedness in the sphere of sciences although we boastfully talk of our '*scientific outlook*' and take pride in being free from narrowness and bias in our approach to disciplines other than our own.

This attitude of caste-mindedness in the sphere of sciences gets reflected in our characterising some of the sciences as subjective or speculative, as more personal and therefore less dependable, compared with some others which we describe as objective and

* Delivered as the 1987 Girindrasekhar Memorial Lecture at the Indian Psycho-analytical Society on 19. 12. 87.

accurate, as free from personal bias and, therefore, much more or even cent per cent dependable in certain cases. The social status of a science appears to be determined by the degree of objectivity it can command.

Thus subjectivity and objectivity appear to be mutually exclusive terms meaning, as it were, that what is subjective cannot be objective and vice-versa. It seems to be further believed that in a 'true' science there is no room for subjectivity at all.

One may, however, quite reasonably wonder as to how far the above contentions are correct. As the physiologist points out, the human world—the world as it appears to man—is not identical with the objective world, that is the world as it really is. The human world is, on the other hand, the *resultant* of the interaction between the human brain and the properties of matter. According to philosopher Kant, phenomenon (appearance) and noumenon (reality) are not the same thing and noumenon always remains unknowable to man. As stated by Brodov, "the Kantian phenomenal world is the world of the subject's sensations and experiences." Thus the entire world as perceived by man is both objective and subjective at the same time—objective in the sense that it has an objective basis in reality which exists no matter whether man perceives it or not, and subjective in the sense that it is *transformed* by the human system.

This fact has been nicely expressed by Tagore (Brodov) in many of his excellent works. In his work *Personality* he says "the world is what we perceive it to be." In *Sadhana: The Realisation of Life* he writes—"Things are what they are ...the knowledge is one of the channels of our relation with the things outside us." In the latter work Tagore's observations about our aesthetic feelings are also noteworthy. In the words of Brodov, Tagore holds that "Nature knocks at the door of the 'secret chamber' of the artist's heart, penetrates it, and is transformed in the crucible of the creative genius." Tagore says—"There the fire of her workshop is transformed into lamps of a festival, the noise of her factory is heard like music. The iron chain of cause and effect sounds heavily outside in nature, but in the human heart its unalloyed delight seems to sound, as it were, like the golden strings of a harp."

The great scientific truth that this world as man perceives it

would never have existed had there been no man on earth has been very excellently expressed by Tagore (Bose) in his poem 'I'. Here are two quotations* from this marvellous work—

"In my consciousness
Emerald is coloured green, ruby red
I opened my eyes to the sky
And light was kindled in East and West
I turned to the rose and said 'Beautiful':
And it was beautiful
You will say:
This is philosophy and the poet's voice'.
I reply
'It is truth, therefore poetry'.
This is my pride on behalf of all men".

★ ★ ★

"The mind of Man, departing,
Shall wipe the universe's colours all away;
The mind of Man, departing,
Shall wither all Rasa dry.
The shadow of violence will shake the heavens,
No light shall burn any more,
The player's fingers will play
But no melody arise."

Thus what the physicist and the chemist deal with are not entirely or exclusively objective as they are often claimed to be; they are both subjective and objective at the same time.

Subjectivity is true not only of man but also of all other animals, for the world as it is perceived by man is different from what it is perceived like by birds, beasts, and insects. There are also differences in subjectivity among genera and species, besides individual differences in each species under each genus.

As everything what goes for objective is equally subjective, depending upon the perceiving organism, so also every phenomenon

* Translated by Aurobindo Bose.

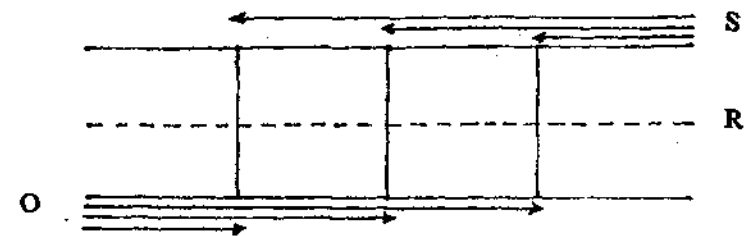
which goes for subjective, in other words every mental phenomenon, is also equally objective because of the fact that the natural laws of causality and uniformity, which form the basis of a science, are as much true of the world of mind as of the world of objects. Mind, like matter, is a natural product and, therefore, it is also subjected to the fundamental laws of Nature. This being so, whatever be the extent of individual differences between any two men in respect of their experiences in the same or identical situation there must be much more in common because their minds are governed by the same laws, and herein lies the objectivity of the so-called subjective phenomena which mainly, though in varying degrees, constitute the subject-matter of the social and biological sciences. Introspective reports given by subjects in the same situation reveal striking commonness in their experience and it is this truth that provided the foundation for development of introspective psychology.

Secondly, by subjectivity we often mean error in estimation of an object, event, or situation caused by personal bias or defects of the perceiver himself. When individuals are structurally and functionally not perfectly identical, and also not so in respect of their total perspective, it is very natural that there shall be differences in their approach to the same stimulus and in their estimation thereof. This gets reflected in estimations not only of inner experiences but also of outer objects, that is, in respect of subject-matter of all sciences irrespective of the fact whether they are characterised as objective or subjective. Even the physical scientists who claim almost cent per cent objectivity of their subject-matter also admit the possibility of their estimations being affected by what is called *personal equation* mainly attributed to the shift of attention of the observer from the object of priority to something of secondary importance (Drever).

As Collins and Drever remark—"there is *always*, in perception, something that may be described as a "subjective perversion". There is *always* at least a subjective addition to the sensational content." Geometrical optical illusions are clear examples of subjective elements in visual perception.

Garrett points out that the Weber-Fechner Law (meaning that sensations increase in arithmetical progression as a consequence of geometrical progression of stimulus) holds good only "over the middle range of stimuli". He further states that "there is no such thing as

'just noticeable differences' since even very small differences will occasionally be recorded, while large differences will sometimes not be perceived." As has been pointed out by the present writer (Das) the Weber-Fechner Law is more applicable over the middle range of stimuli—that is, the subject's response (R) is most consistent with the law here—because it is in this range that the correspondence between the degrees of preparedness of the subject or observer (O) and the intensities of the stimulus (S) is closest as shown in the following diagram :



Reaction Time investigations reveal that the sensory type people respond more slowly than the motor type people because the former *concentrate more on the stimulus*, while the latter on the response.

Perception of a stimulus is, therefore, largely determined by subjective factors like readiness, expectation, interest, focus of concentration and so on. Hence even in those sciences where exactitude is held to be the key criterion, *repeated observation* of the same or similar objects by many or more than one observer is thought essential before any generalisation is made, with the belief that the bias of one observer will be cancelled out by that of another.

As a matter of fact, there can be no such word as bias or error in science, for what is termed as such is also the effect of a sufficient cause. Thus what is called an erroneous estimation is as much accurate as an estimation which is held to be correct, because both result from natural causes. The two estimations are different because the causes underlying them are different. None-the-less, both are accurate viewed from their specific causal perspectives.

Then, again, *absolute correctness* can never be conceived of. All estimations are bound to be relative. The same material object weighs differently at different altitudes. The length of a material

object cannot remain constant because of constant changes in atmospheric temperature. Slightest changes escape our notice as we are unable to detect them even with the help of our finest instruments. No two instruments can also be claimed to be strictly identical. Besides, the efficiency of the same instrument also changes under changing conditions.

Relativity also plays an important role here. The self-same quantum of lukewarm water will be simultaneously felt as hot in the palm dipped in cold water a while ago, and as cold in the second palm dipped in hot water a moment before. Einstein's theory of relativity testifies to the material world. The point of relativity has been excellently put forward by Tagore (Brodov) in his work 'Personality' in the following words: "The degree of precision in knowledge is therefore largely dependent on our position in space and time" For instance, the more distant we are from a moving object, the slower its motion will appear so that in the end it will seem motionless. If the naked eye could see the molecules of a bit of iron, we would observe them move." Relativity is equally true of estimations of our inner experiences. For example, joy of success after sorrow of failure is felt as more intense than joy of success preceded by another success.

The term subjectivity has still another meaning. It also means the uniqueness of a person. Each person has a frame of mind peculiar to himself and this makes him unique, original, and creative. This has great scientific value, for what escapes one's thinking is focussed in another's and thus our idea about a thing is enriched. Integration of the experiences of different observers about a particular object gives us a more comprehensive grasp over the whole truth as has been nicely depicted in the story of perception of an elephant by seven blind men each perceiving a separate organ of the animal. A scientist's task is to analyse and synthesise the subjective experiences of different observers in respect of the common object of their investigation and thereby to arrive at a general conclusion about the object.

Individual uniqueness, that is, subjectivity is, again, the basis of all original contributions made by individual scientists in different areas of science.

Subjectivity, thus, is not opposed to science. On the other hand, it has a significant role to play in scientific enquiries. Each human

experience, no matter whether it relates to material, living or mental phenomena, is both subjective and objective at the same time. Hence differentiation among sciences on the basis of objectivity is untenable.

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PSYCHOANALYSIS AND WORLD PEACE*

AMARENDRANATH BASU

Today, we have assembled here to commemorate this year, 1986, as the International Year Of Peace. Here, we would like to discuss the problem of world peace from the psychoanalytic point of view.

Let us begin with a Vedic prayer for peace :

"The peace that is in heaven, the peace that is in eternal space, the peace that is on the earth, peace of the water, of the medicinal plants, of the big trees, peace of the Divinities, peace that is in Brahman, peace of the whole universe, and the Absolute which is peace Itself, let that peace be bestowed upon us."***

Man has been craving for peace since the time of his advent on this earth because since then he has been feeling disturbed with the problem of violence, cruelty and war. Leaders, thinkers, saints and prophets have been trying from time immemorial to bring about a solution to this problem in various ways. But alas! the goal has been receding farther and farther away. Once Buddha propounded the four noble truths and eight-fold paths for the amelioration of human sufferings which imperil peace; thereby he was called the Great Physician of mankind. Christ embraced suffering out of love for mankind and became the model of all-embracing love the corner-stone of peace. Mohammad propagated the gospel of brotherhood and tried to circumscribe the instinctual life of a people torn by violence by making them take to a new mode of life and thus bring peace to that race. Since then many noble souls have

been following their foot-prints to reach the goal of peace. But tragically enough, men are still indulging in violence, war and cruelty only to blemish those noble paths with their own blood. Social thinkers recommend the paths of democracy, socialism, communism and government by philosophers, and lately a U. N. O. has been evolved for the cure of human conflict; but the goal still eludes us from the same distance as it did thousands of years ago. Even today men settle their conflicts by argumentum ad baculum, and government law and justice are maintained by force and coercion. Yet, in spite of all these human shortcomings and failures in man's travel on the broad way of peace, it is sure that the road has been gradually illuminated by the lights of the thoughts of the different path-finders—saints, prophets, philosophers and scientists.

In the recent past two world wars shook human existence at its root. At the background of that social calamity and peril men of different walks of life have again come forward with their deliberations to the solution of the problem of violence.

Psychoanalysis as a science of mind cannot keep mum regarding the problem of peace, as, fundamentally, it is a problem of human psyche. War is waged first of all on the battle ground of human mind, then it comes out on the external world. Bertrand Russell (1929) says: "...people wish to fight, and they therefore persuade themselves that is to their interest to do so. The important question then is the psychological one—'why do people wish to fight?' And this leads on from war to a host of other questions concerning impulses to cruelty and oppression in general. These questions in their turn involve a study of the origins of the malevolent passions, and thence of psychoanalysis and the theory of education...". Now, let us examine how psychoanalysis can contribute to the understanding of the problem and finding out a solution for it.

Psychoanalytic thought on war and peace was a historical necessity—both from the point of view of its developmental history and the history of the peace movement.

First, let us trace the path of the peace movement that took place during this century as the science of psychoanalysis through the person of Freud—the discoverer of the science—contributed to the endeavour for peace. Freud was requested to guide the soldiers of the peace movement of the post-World War I

* Read in a seminar at the Society held on 12-7-86 in observance of the International Year of Peace (1986).

** Yjurveda; 36—17.

with his psychoanalytic thoughts. Freud himself became an associate with them along with Einstein (Dickson, 1964).

Around 1931-32 Einstein wrote a private letter to Freud suggesting a proposal to form 'an intellectual association..... formed of persons each highly esteemed in his own line,' to fight against war. According to Einstein (1979), "political leaders or governments . . . cannot be regarded as representative of the best elements, morally or intellectually, in their respective nations." Therefore, he was of the opinion that intellectual elites should form an association and exert their influence upon the governments of the countries and give valuable "moral support to those elements in the League of Nations which are really working towards the great objective for which that institution exists" (Einstein, 1979). This letter of Einstein was a prelude to another letter which he wrote to Freud on July 30, 1932, on behalf of the League of Nations. In 1931 the Permanent Committee for Literature and the Arts of the League of Nations instructed the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation to arrange for exchange of letters between representative intellectuals 'on subjects calculated to serve the common interests of the League of Nations and of intellectual life'. Einstein was approached by the Institute in this regard and thereupon he suggested the name of Freud to the Secretary of the Institute for the same purpose. The Secretary invited Freud for his active participation in the movement for peace to which Freud agreed readily. (Dickson, 1964 ; Encyclo. Britannica, 1979 ; Encyclo Americana, 1984).

Einstein in his letter raised the problem thus : 'Is there any way of delivering mankind from the menace of war?' He requested Freud to "present the problem of world peace" in the light of "your most recent discoveries," for such a presentation well might blaze the trail for new and fruitful modes of action" (Einstein, 1932). Thus we see that no less a person than Einstein initiated a discussion on the contribution of psychoanalysis to the problem of war and peace, and it was the discoverer of psychoanalysis himself who presented the views of psychoanalysis to the community of peace lovers.

Prior to this, and it was natural, Freud along with the development of the science of psychoanalysis had been putting forward, when the occasion came, the psychoanalytic views on the problems of war and peace (Ref. Freud, 1964).

That there is an antagonism between civilization and our instinctual life, and that this antagonism leads us many a time towards aggressive outbursts and other sorts of aberrations with the resultant discontents in human mind were stressed by Freud as early as 1897 in his correspondences with Fliess (Jones, 1974). Then, afterwards, throughout the course of development of psychoanalysis he gradually elaborated his thoughts on the subject, which ultimately helped in the analysis of the problem of war and peace. His thoughts on the problem under our discussion came to a maturity through his 'Civilized sexual morality and modern nervous illness' (1908), 'Thoughts for the time on war and death' (1915), 'The future of an illusion' (1927), 'Civilization and its discontents' (1930). Then, actually, he summarized his psychoanalytic thoughts on war and peace in his letter to Einstein in 1932, which we mentioned earlier.

Proper understanding of human nature is a precondition for the correct perception of the problem of war and peace, because craving for both of them is generated in the depth of the human mind. And psychoanalysis as the science of the unconscious gives us an opportunity for that understanding.

As Buddha propounded four noble truths, psychoanalysis also offers us several noble truths about human psyche which we are to comprehend for the understanding of human nature vis-a-vis the problem of peace and war.

The psychoanalytic 'noble' truths are :

1. The nature of the human mind is both conscious and unconscious.
2. The human mind seeks for pleasure as well as it has a strong sense of reality.
3. The unconscious is the store-house of the two kinds of instincts. Eros and Death ; every human action is a compound effect of the two.
4. There are natural inclinations in human nature towards Eros as well as Death—creation and destruction. Hence there are reasons for both war and opposition to it.
5. The process of civilization is at the service of Eros ; hence it works against Death. Therefore, there are ways by which we can avoid war and proceed towards peace.
6. The human mind has a natural or inherent faculty of conscience which works against destructive urges.

7. The human mind has an inherent tendency for identification which works against separatism.

8. The instincts can undergo the vicissitude of sublimation.

However, all these noble truths are altogether reducible to one Great Noble Truth: the phenomenon of human nature develops on the basis of the law of dialectics. It is a struggle of the opposites for a passage from the lower to the higher, i. e., towards sublimation.

Now let us see how this Noble Truth operates. According to the theory of psychoanalysis human life is governed by two opposite kinds of instincts: one group is composed of those which seek to preserve and unite, and the other group includes those which are after destruction and killing. The former group is called erotic instinct or Eros, and the second one is named destructive instinct or Death. The process of civilization is always at the service of Eros, "... whose purpose is to combine single human individuals, and after that families, then races, peoples and nations, into one great unity, the unity of mankind" (Freud, 1930). That is, the process of civilization is leading man to the realization of 'Universal Man; to use the words of Tagore.

Thus it is found that civilization is anti-war, anti-selfishness and anti-impulsive in nature. Therefore, there is a natural conflict between civilization and war or destructiveness. This conflict is nothing but a derivative of the primary opposition between Eros and Death.

In spite of their inherent opposition or antagonism, it is a mysterious phenomenon, according to psychoanalysis, that neither of these two instincts—Eros and Death—can scarcely be found to operate in human life in isolation. Again, neither of these two is less essential than the other in the act of carrying the fact of life towards progress. They have a mutuality in their opposing actions in the preservation of life phenomenon. Sometimes it is found that Death dominates over Eros, and sometimes vice versa. The destructive instinct strives to bring a living organism to ruin, and the erotic one make efforts for preservation of life in a unity. The Death instinct when thrown towards the external world is manifested in aggressiveness and destruction. Another peculiar fact about it is that when it remains operative within the organism in excess it leads to pathological manifestations. Therefore, the externalization of

this instinct relieves the organism from tension and brings satisfaction to it.

In consequence of the inherent aggressiveness in human beings, we find that man is not a very docile and peaceful creature who seeks only love and friendship. On the contrary his instinctual storehouse is shared by violent impulses to a great extent. Freud (1930) says about human beings: "... their neighbour is for them not only a potential helper or sexual object, but also someone who tempts them to satisfy their aggressiveness on him, to exploit his capacity for work without compensation, to use him sexually without his consent, to cause him pain, to torture and to kill him." This fact comes to the open during war and social chaos when a Hitler rises to the summit of society with his band of Nazis. Then all our expectations for human values and goodness of man are belied, even by the behaviour of common people, in the name of nationalism. Thus, civilization is in constant threat of disintegration by way of hostility in various forms, caste and racial riots, terrorism, civil war and world war. And when this aggressive instinct is set free, human cruelty knows no bounds; the blind fury tramples everything good and beautiful; ethics and aesthetics suffer most; the world is 'wild with the delirium of hatred'!

When such is the state of affairs in the human mind, when there is a constant antagonism between Eros and Death, and there is occasional molestation of Eros by the powerful Death drive, where is the hope for peace? Has the work for peace got any value or would it be worth doing? Wherefrom the process of civilization would gather its strength to fight out our inclination towards aggressive urges which stand in opposition to peace?

We need not get frightened. Psychoanalysis does not present us any gloomy picture of our future. It asks us only to be realistic. Freud shows us the golden ray of hope in the midst of human violence and threatened holocaust due to enormous stock-piling of nuclear weapons in the arsenals of different countries.

Now, let us find out where the points of hope lie in human nature. If we think Eros to be an ordinary soldier who would be easily put to rest, then we would be undervaluing the part played by Eros. According to psychoanalysis the process of civilization or culture in the course of its development and manifestation, gradually

attains mastery "over the individual's dangerous desire for aggression by weakening and disarming it and by setting up an agency within him to watch over it....." (Freud, 1930). This is the agency of super-ego, a derivative of the Oedipus Complex. It subdues the aggressiveness of the organism, though at times at the cost of the individual's happiness. It serves as the aggression absorber and helps Eros to move forward. In the case of society this conscience, which Freud (1930) names social conscience or cultural super-ego, functions by its religio-ethical commandments: such as "love thy neighbour as thyself" of the Bible or the Buddhist commandment: "As a mother protects her child by sacrificing her own life, so you protect all creatures with thy infinite mentality of love". Ethical commandments help civilization to achieve its goal of unity. At this stage a point may be raised that though the ethical commandments are, as Freud (1930) says, "the strongest defence against human aggressiveness", yet they are the most "unpsychological proceedings of the cultural super-ego". Every act of instinctual renunciation of aggression becomes a source of conscience and for fresh renunciation which again makes the conscience harder. Freud (1930) says: "Since civilization obeys an internal erotic impulsion which causes human beings to unite in a closely-knit group, it can only achieve this aim through an ever-increasing reinforcement of the sense of guilt". But society may find it hard to tolerate this immeasurable increase in the sense of guilt. It is very hard for common men to rise to the height of these ethical dicta and to comprehend such enormous inflation of love. At this juncture religion comes to be of great help. Freud (1930) says: "Religions, at any rate, have never overlooked the part played in civilization by a sense of guilt. Furthermore—a point which I failed to appreciate elsewhere—they claim to redeem mankind from this sense of guilt, which they call sin. But religion may also fail in those cases where it depends on the reward in the after-life." Freud (1930) then speaks of "socialism or communism where a real change in the relations of human beings to possessions would be of more help in this direction than any ethical commands". However, that would also fail if we try to proceed with the "idealistic misconception of human nature". Therefore, Freud, in his final analysis, believes that the lives of great men and saints will inspire the common men to march forward on the way of

civilization and help to get redeemed from the sense of guilt. These noble souls "feel immediately what is high and noble and what is low and mean" (Freud, 1930). They act as the Super-ego of society and we are to follow their dicta by way of an identification with them. According to Freud (1930), "... community, too, evolves a super-ego under whose influence cultural development proceeds". And in this way there is gradual diminution of aggressiveness.

Again, Eros is not only supported by conscience, but also it is instigated by Ananke—the sense of reality (Freud, 1930). The ego of man knows very well what would be the consequences of a nuclear war. Though many a time this sense of reality fails to work due to pressure of impulsiveness, yet it is a reality that it works along with Eros in its struggle against Death. "... eternal Eros will make an effort to assert itself in the struggle with his equally immortal adversary. But who can foresee with what success and with what result", says Freud (1931). Though in the last sentence, here, we find that the mind of Freud was overcast with a shadow of despair as by the time he wrote it (in 1930) the menace of Hitler had already started to be apparent. Yet the science of psychoanalysis impelled him to be ever-optimistic. Therefore, in 1932 he wrote to Einstein: "But it may not be Utopian to hope that two factors, the cultural attitude and the justified dread of the consequences of a future war, may result within a measurable time in putting an end to the waging of war".

But it is a fact that in spite of our sense of reality and our ethical sense we have not yet been successful 'in putting an end to the waging of war'. Why? Further psychoanalytic analysis of human nature would enable us to realise the situation and also would dispel despair from our mind.

Mere intellectual understanding of the consequences of war and the necessity to follow the rule of ethics are not sufficient to bind the whole of humanity into one nation. The bond of libido is more permanent than the bonds of necessity and intellect. "These collections of men are to be libidinally bound to one another", says Freud (1930). Here our inherent capacity for identification plays its role." Identification is man's earliest expression of an emotional tie with another person" (Freud, 1921). Eros draws energy from this source also. Thus Eros is on the march to encompass all humanity, nay,

the whole universe, into a unity through identification, through love. Hence there is the dissolution of egotism. The ethical dicta are implemented in life through the mechanism of identification. This is the process of civilization and therefore, the road to peace. At this place I cannot check my temptation to quote an Eastern mind regarding identification and peace. Sri Aurobindo says: "So long as war does not become psychologically impossible, it will remain, or, if banished for a while, return . . . only when man has developed not merely a fellow-feeling with all men, but a dominant sense of unity and commonalty, only when he is aware of them not merely as brothers, (that is a fragile bond), but as parts of himself, only when he has learned to live, not in his separate personal and communal ego-sense, but in a large universal consciousness, can the phenomenon of war, with whatever weapons, pass out of his life without the possibility of return" (From Gregg's book, 1938).

Another factor of great importance regarding the mutual antagonism of Eros and Death are to be mentioned here, because it counts for the victory of Eros. In some instances it may so happen that the death instinct penetrates into the work of Eros: for example, when someone invites suffering upon his own self for the love of humanity, as in the case of great men and saints like Socrates, Moses, Jesus, Chaitanya, Gandhi and many others. These are not in any way cases of victory of Death over Eros. On the contrary it is victory of Eros over Death; because by their sacrifices civilization is enriched and carried towards progress and unity. This is complete fusion of the two instincts and Death is made to serve Eros. This is, in the poet's language, the Victory of Life in Death. Why? Because, "Life sits in the chariot crowned by Death." Death transformed in Eros: "In sweet death I will make my life full and sacrifice it to your feet" (Tagore). And we will find in every age a band of persons with a "constitutional intolerance of war, an idiosyncrasy, magnified, as it were, to the highest degree, (Freud, 1931), i.e., with an urge for aesthetics or Beauty—Sundaram—and they would sacrifice their own lives for love for humanity. To Freud (1932) it appeared that "the lowering of aesthetic standards in war plays a scarcely smaller part in our rebellion than do its cruelties". But when will all or the majority of the people rise to that height? —'there is no telling'.

Lastly, the hope for unfurling the victory-flag of Eros atop the

high tower of culture and peace lies in the fact, as psychoanalysis reveals, that the instincts can undergo the vicissitude of sublimation. Hate can be transformed into love, aggression into affection. 'Chandashoka' changes into 'Priyadarshi Ashoka'.

At this stage of our discussion, I think, we are aptly in a position to say something positive about the peace struggle on behalf of psychoanalysis.

Aggression is not going to be extinguished from human nature in the near future. Therefore, we cannot expect that there would be no violence on earth. But in spite of this fact, we can surely work to minimise violence and try for its diversion to some other field so that that does not get expressed in war. Let us put it in the words of Freud (1932): "For our immediate purpose . . . there is no use in trying to get rid of men's aggressive inclinations . . . there is no question of getting rid entirely of human aggressive impulses; it is enough to try to divert them to such an extent that they need not find expression in war".

With this knowledge of psychoanalysis, now, I think, it becomes easy for us to find out methods for combating war. In this regard let us quote, again, Freud (1932): "If willingness to engage in war is an effect of the destructive instinct, the most obvious plan will be to bring Eros, its antagonist, into play against it. Anything that encourages the growth of emotional ties between men must operate against war."

Like the Buddhist eight-fold path for going beyond sufferings, psychoanalysis also prescribes many-fold paths, although they are reducible to two, for the attainment of peace—both individual and social. These are, first, the development of rationality along with the implementation of ethical dicta in personal and social life, and secondly, developing the sense of identification with all human beings. That is, the aim of the programme for peace activity, according to psychoanalysis, would be to strengthen our intellectual-cum-ethical life and renunciation of aggressive impulses, and develop love for others. Naturally, within the purview of such a catalogue would come all the activities connected with arts, literature, science, games and sports. Different nations would contribute to this plan according to their national tradition and culture.

Apart from these peace activities, I would like to draw the

attention of the peace-soldiers to another peace struggle which may be designated as war against war, and which is in agreement with psychoanalysis. I have in mind the idea of nonviolent resistance or Satyagraha against violence evolved by Mahatma Gandhi.

As man has a natural inclination to destruction, he cannot avoid aggressiveness and, consequently, war, at this moment. Therefore, William James, the great psychologist and philanthropist, sought for a 'moral equivalent of war', which would be a substitute for war. Through this substitute, war would be shorn of its violence, cruelty and ugliness. But at the same time, instead of making war a taboo, it would lift it up or change the direction of war to a higher plane (Bose, 1947). The method of Satyagraha steps in as a substitute for war. "It does not propose to do away with human conflicts; but raises the quality of those very conflicts by bringing into operation a spirit of love and a sense of human brotherhood. Satyagraha is not a substitute for war, it is war itself shorn of many of its ugly features and guided by a purpose nobler than we associate with destruction. It is an intensely heroic and chivalrous form of war" (Bose, 1947). War aims at coercion, but Satyagraha aims at conversion. The aggressor inflicts destruction upon the adversary; but a volunteer in Satyagraha invites all sufferings upon himself, even death, without a trace of malice towards the opponent (Bose, 1947). In Satyagraha Eros rides upon, Tagore, said, 'chariot crowned by Death'. It is a perfect case of psychoanalytic fusion of Eros and Death, and 'Victory to Life in Death'.

In times of crises, as during war, the human society becomes neurotic as an individual sometimes behaves so a moment in the moment of crisis in his life. Lifting the levels of reality and ethical senses by way of therapeutic re-education is regarded as an attempt to cure individual. It is the authority of the therapist that fulfils the task of therapy. But who possesses the authority to impose therapy upon a neurotic society or nation for its cure? Who would diagnose its maladies? Freud (1930) declares with high optimism: "... We may expect that one day someone will venture to embark upon a pathology of cultural communities". Freud himself was a victim of both the World Wars. In 1938 the Nazis looted his private safe and humiliated him. One day when they entered his house, he stood before them at the doorway with his frail figure, but with blazing

eyes; the Nazis momentarily stood in awe. Afterwards when Jones persuaded him to leave Vienna by saying that he was not alone in this world, Freud said, "Alone—ah, if I were alone I should long ago have done with life" (Jones, 1974); Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1973; Vol-13; 15th Edn.) It reminds us of another personality of the East. Seeing the advancing dark clouds of the second World War, Tagore declared on the last birthday of his life: "And yet I shall not commit the grievous sin of losing faith in Man". Scientist Freud's psychoanalytic conviction and artist Tagore's poetic intuition coincide.

Flow of events after Freud's death validates the psychoanalytic contention that human effort will succeed "within a measurable time in putting an end to the waging of war" (Freud, 1932). Although even today "The war drums are sounded. Men force their features into frightfulness and gnash their teeth" (Tagore), yet, it is also a reality that some idiosyncratic persons with a high aesthetic sense work for peace. In this age of violence, not only saintly persons like Tagore, Gandhi, Mother Teresa and many others, but also scientists, like Einstein, Joliot Curie, Russell and many others, carried the banner of peace and have handed over that banner to a host of soldiers of peace. The Pugwash conference, which stands for international understanding of scientists supporting peace, disarmament and international security and the prevention of nuclear war, was held in 1957 (Soviet Encyclopedia). Russell himself launched a non-violent march—Satyagraha—in front of a British nuclear weapon plant in 1961. Though the League of Nations has fallen into ruin, yet the U. N. O. has taken its place. Common people in different countries have become more vocal against war. All over the world people are observing this year as the Year of Peace under the auspices of the U. N. O. Amnesty International is struggling hard against oppression and torture all over the world. Political leaders and the Heads of governments of different countries are being compelled to sit together to discuss peace. Thus the peace struggle is gaining momentum day by day. The psychoanalytic point of view impels us to recognise this reality. This is the onward march of Eros for unity and peace. This is 'Victory to Life in Death'.

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ETHICAL ISSUES IN PSYCHOTHERAPY

D. N. NANDI & GAURANGA BANERJEE

It is a cliché to say that psychotherapy is closely linked with ethics. What needs reiteration, however, is that ethical behaviour changes with the ever-changing frame of time and space. The application of the principles of ethics was never and can never be static. It must be sufficiently plastic so that it may respond to the needs of the social evolution brought about as a result of the scientific and technological development taking place all around us.

In modern times, the conflict between the exclusive protection of the right of the individual and the collective right of the group is considered by many as an alarming trend; while others consider it a necessary consequence of and precondition for progress. Without prejudice to the merits of these divergent viewpoints, we may suggest that the task before us is to strike a balance between these conflicting standpoints.

The heat and dust raised by the controversy over medical ethics in the areas of transplantation surgery and research in reproductive biology has blurred our vision to such an extent that we are oblivious of the special problems of ethics in psychiatry.

Ethics is the systematic study of the ultimate problems of human conduct (*Encyclopaedia Britannica* 1974). As students of human conduct, we should consider ethics as part of our everyday practice.

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The ethical principles involved in psychiatric treatment and research are varied in their character and ramifications. The issues involved in psychotherapy are the subject of our present communication. These issues are related to such areas as therapist-patient relationship, treatment techniques, professional competence, psychiatric records and confidentiality.

The therapist-patient relationship is at the centre of most of the ethical issues in medicine in general and psychiatry in particular. The medical profession has provided codes specifically applicable to this relationship. "The health of my patient will be my primary occupation." This is a time-honoured oath of a physician. The changing times are now eroding its sanctity. The ethical code enjoins on the physician to render services to his patient with full respect for the dignity of man. Physicians should merit the confidence of patients entrusted to their care, rendering to each a full measure of service and devotion (AMA 1957). This principle has an additional dimension when it concerns the psychiatrist engaged in rendering psychotherapy.

The one-to-one relationship, with its theoretical formulation of transference, counter transference, resistance and reaction formation, tends to develop a situation where the patient is emotionally captive to his therapist. This situation may tax the therapist's capacity to adhere to his ethical code. The necessary intensity of the therapeutic relationship may tend to activate sexual and other fantasies on the part of both the patient and the psychiatrist. The unequivocal code in this context is: "Sexual activities with a patient are unethical". Ethical principles, however, are not laws, but standards by which a physician may determine the propriety of his conduct in his relationship with patients, public and colleagues. The courts of law, mercifully, do not accept the proposition that fornicotherapy is treatment when the motive of the therapist is to help the patient grow and learn. Insurance rules do not cover liability imposed for sexual intimacy with a patient as that is not deemed treatment. In fact, the first time that a member of the American Psychiatric Association (APA) was suspended was in a case in which sexual relation with a patient were involved (Kaplan et al 1980).

The ethical aspects of the doctor-patient relationship are complicated by the professional duty of exercising reasonable care and

caution in a patient who is a suicidal risk or dangerous to others. These problems get complicated when questions of hospitalization arise. The evaluation of the result of such decision is made by taking into consideration the social, legal and clinical complexities. The psychosocial trauma to the individual and his family and the question of deprivation of civil rights are often left in the background. One must not forget that these issues are real and too intense to be brushed aside by a psychiatrist who has a respect for the dignity of a fellow citizen. From a practical point of view, Halbck's (1974) advice is relevant here. As he puts it, coercive treatment must be ordered by a court of law when the patient is dangerous to himself or to others. There must be reasonable ground to believe that the treatment will be beneficial to the patient or to others. And the patient must be incompetent to judge the effect of treatment. Related to this issue is the prevention of misuse and overuse of psychiatric services. In psychotherapy patients often become dependent on the therapist. This dependency should never be utilised to prolong treatment interminably. The therapist should never take advantage of this dependency to exploit the patient by accepting valuables from him. Aggression of the patient should never incite counteraggression in the therapist. This is true for all settings of treatment.

Some ethical pronouncements have undergone rapid changes with the advent of newer techniques of treatment. Some of these modifications were necessary and beneficial to the patient. They helped the progress of the science and art of the practitioners. But one must not be carried away by the mind of change that is blowing over some parts of psychotherapy. With our natural bent on experimentation, we are prone to forget which methods are still in the investigatory phase and which ones have become parts of the therapeutic armamentarium. This piece of forgetfulness may cost our patients dearly. We are likely to infringe on the precincts of a fundamental tenet of ethics, viz. *Primum non nocere* (First, do not harm). We know that a large number of innovations have been made in the techniques of group therapy in the recent past. The spectrum of change has become complicated by encounter groups, sensitivity groups, marathon groups and so on. Usually, the training of practitioners in these modalities is meagre or non-existent, therapeutic indications and contra-indications are not established

and no evaluation of results is made. Some think that such group techniques should be creatively practised by as many people as possible while others believe that such practices with dubious results should be controlled. Group therapies are likely to bring new problems to confidentiality. The history of controversial treatment modalities is long and varied. The modern methods of behaviour modifications, if used indiscriminately, are likely to raise conflicts in ethical standards. Cruelty to patients in the garb of scientific study and treatment can hardly be condoned on ethical grounds.

It can hardly be overstated that psychotherapy is a highly technical and specialized method of treatment. To be a psychotherapist one must go through adequate training.

The cornerstone of medical ethics is the protection of confidentiality of the communication between the doctor and his patients. The Hippocratic oath states: "Whatsoever things I shall see or hear concerning the life of men in my attendance on the sick or even apart therefrom, which ought not to be noised abroad, I shall keep silence thereon, counting such things to be as holy secrets." (Adams, 1939)

The necessity to be silent on the holy secrets of the patient is particularly important in the professional relationship of a psychiatrist. In the dynamics of psychotherapy the patient is called upon to discuss in a candid and frank manner personal material of the most intimate and disturbing nature. He is expected to bring up all kinds of socially unacceptable instincts and urges, immature wishes, perverse sexual thoughts - in short, the unspeakable, the unthinkable and the repressed.

Hence it is obvious that the psychotherapist has every right to refuse disclosure of confidential communication within the constraints of the law. The threat to confidentiality often comes from the court of law. It is stated that the duty of the doctor overreaches his patient. It pervades the professional fraternity and society at large. Conflict may arise when the therapist's responsibility to an individual must override his responsibility to the community. He must remember that "protective privilege ends where public peril begins." The therapist-patient relationship makes it obligatory for the therapist to take preventive steps for the protection and safety of others. This issue was clearly settled in a case tried in the California Supreme Court in 1976. Briefly the fact of the case is this:

Prosenjit Poddar, a student and a voluntary outpatient at the mental health clinic of the University of California related to his therapist that he intended to kill his girl-friend who betrayed him. The therapist notified the campus police that Poddar was dangerous and was suffering from Paranoid Schizophrenia. He should be committed to custody. The Campus Police detained him temporarily but released him on his assurance that he would "stay away from that girl". Two months later he shot the girl dead. The girl's parents brought the suit against the University.

The California Supreme Court ruled that a physician or psychotherapist who had reason to believe that a patient might kill or injure another must notify either the potential victim, relatives, friends or the authorities, or take whatever other steps might be reasonably necessary under the circumstances. This judgement aroused the psychiatric community and gave rise to numerous questions regarding the therapist-patient relationship and confidentiality. The American Psychiatric Association took up the matter and after careful consideration came to the following conclusions. Confidentiality may be broken under the following circumstances (a) A patient will probably commit murder. The act can be stopped only by the intervention of the psychiatrist. (b) A patient will probably commit suicide. The act can be stopped only by the intervention of the psychiatrist. (c) A patient such as a busdriver or air-line pilot, who was charged with serious responsibilities shows marked impairment at judgement. There may be infringement of confidentiality when research work requires disclosure of identity of the patient. Such disclosure is not permitted if it is likely to harm the interest of the patient.

But one must point out that a professional has multiple loyalties - loyalty to his patient, to his society and to his profession. To share acquired knowledge and experience with other members of the profession is one of those loyalties. Professional ethics, however, enjoins upon the psychiatrist that he must take the prior consent of the patient to disclose any fact which may reveal his personal identity. This obligation of confidentiality should prevail under all circumstances except when the publication is a major contribution to scientific knowledge.

Another threat to confidentiality is getting stronger every day. The third party payment of health care (e.g. Insurance Co. and

employer) and the computer technology are likely to impinge on the confidentiality of patients' records. It is now established that the third party cannot compel disclosure but can withhold a benefit without it. The computer may lay bare secrets of individuals to people who are not concerned with the treatment but may use the facts against the victim. Our suggestion in this respect is to enact laws to prevent breach of confidentiality in the line of the Privacy Act of 1974 of the USA.

The preservation of privacy of communication between the doctor and his patients has become a real and burning problem in our complex society. This can well be the prayer of all psychiatrists: "Make me moderate in everything, O Almighty, except in my faith in ethical professional practice."

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PSYCHIATRY IN PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

In view of the adoption of a national mental policy by the Government of India, the need for proper psychiatric orientation of primary health care physicians is being acutely felt by all concerned. Unfortunately printed matter containing adequate information on psychiatric disorders for the use of these physicians is scarce in our country. Dr. Shridhar Sharma's book titled *Towards Psychiatry in Primary Health Care* goes a long way towards meeting their need. The material for the book was developed after identifying the need of primary health care physicians during two workshops conducted at the Central Institute of Psychiatry, Ranchi.

The author has discussed relevant material in a lucid and non-technical language. Apart from physicians and medical students, psychologists, social workers and the intelligent lay readers who are involved or interested in mental health activity will find this book immensely useful. The book has been divided into 25 chapters and an appendix has been added to it. The chapters include such useful practical issues as concept of illness, interview techniques, history-taking and mental status examination and classification of mental disorders. The major mental disorders have been discussed under the headings of neuroses, depression, personality disorders, alcohol and drug dependence, psychosexual disorders, acute psychotic illnesses etc. Psychiatric emergencies and psychopharmacology have got adequate attention of the authors. In the appendix the author has given the meaning of commonly used psychiatric terms and the names of common psychiatric drugs. These will be highly useful for the readers whether they be physicians, psychiatrists, psychotherapists or psychologists.

The book, which will surely find a place in the shelves of all libraries connected with mental health service, has 150 pages and has been published by the D. G. H. S., New Delhi.

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