

INDIA AND THE RISK OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

Because of the widespread feminine priority that makes it the receptacle of *śakti*, India is definitely “one of the last bastions of the Mother,” as is pointed out in a recent book.¹ If in fact there is a “maternalistic” culture it is certainly that of India, in spite of the legal regime, in which the element of affectionate magic characterizing all life and all organic intimacy is affirmed through the warm symbiosis of mother-child love. A miracle of that absolute love incarnated with a natural serenity by millions of mothers dispensing a felicitous affectionate security, instilled in the Indian soul throughout its entire life. The traits of the Hindu personality and the principle content of its culture are organized

Translated by Jeanne Ferguson.

¹ Sudhir Kakar, *The Inner World, a Psychoanalytic Study of Childhood and Society in India*, Oxford University Press, 1978, (2nd ed. 1982, p. 211; p. 153)

and ordered around this center, characterized by an extraordinary coherence. Since its construction begins with this “dual unity” the Hindu personality has necessarily the popularity of fusion-separation as a pivot.² This is the central theme of S. Kakar, who, basing his conclusions on results of clinical psychoanalyses of Hindu individuals as well as on contributions from the collective imagination (folklore and myths) claims to discern the ontogenetic source of the supreme ideal of deliverance (*mokṣa*) in early childhood and, more specifically, in the strong unconscious desire to find again the benevolent presence of the “good mother”.³

Therefore it is appropriate to ask, from the point of view of the Indianist philosopher interested in psychoanalysis, if it is possible and legitimate to build a bridge between the psychoanalytic method and Indian culture.

A counter-proof of the legitimacy of this interpretation is given us by the supporters of psychoanalytical anthropology, A. Kardiner and R. Linton. Let us consider the inquiry of Kardiner. Analyzing the relationship between infantile experience and models of behavior in the culture of the island of Alor (the Sunda Islands), Kardiner observed that the Alorese child, because of being abandoned by his mother working in the fields and thus deprived of breast-feeding, was driven to project his frustration complex on the entire world. In short, for the Alorese child the concept of mother can have only one specific connotation, that of rejection. The disciplines to which the child was submitted, the rules for eating and early education colored his view of the world to the point that it would have been inconceivable for him, whose nursing time was always deferred, to ever in the future worship a mother-goddess or a Christian madonna.⁴ It is as if the “primary institutions” (the care given or refused the infant, feeding and weaning, basic disciplines, the situation in an expanded family, etc.) were prolonged into the “secondary institutions” (folklore, myths, ritual and religion and even thought processes). S. Kakar suggests in fact that the omnipresence of magical projection and

² *Ibid.*, p. 34.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

⁴ A. Kardiner, *The Psychological Frontiers of Society*, Columbia University Press, 1945, p. 233.

myth-poietic fecundity in India come from the cultural importance of the primary type of thought processes.⁵

THE MOTHER-CHILD SYMBIOSIS

On the contrary, the subconscious imprint of the prolonged mother-child symbiosis is so profound within the Hindu psyche that Hindu religiosity is naturally polarized by the maternal image, so much so that the aspiration to the divine is expressed in India in numerous forms of worship of the Great Goddess.⁶ It is not surprising then that Vivekananda, whose “conflict of masculine individuation” the author traces with great insight,⁷ was able, according to the account of a disciple, to depose, when he traveled to Europe, flowers at the feet of a statue of the Holy Virgin in a small mountain chapel in Switzerland, saying, “She is also the Mother.” As the *Lalita Sahasranāma* shows, no culture has so magnified the redeeming role recognized for the divine Mother, whose enveloping unity procures the intense and positive feeling of true living nature. It is certainly due to the qualities of the feminine mediators—wives and mothers—that India has conjured the suicidal tendencies that threaten modern Western culture and resisted their perils for such a long time. However, the fact that the Hindu psycho-social identity is structured in depth by the mother-child relationship does not authorize S. Kakar to maintain that the aspiration to deliverance is nourished by the revival of an infantile desire of regressive fusion with the “good mother.” First of all, as W. James has shown, the psychological explanation of a religious experience does not weaken its metaphysical content. It is not because I have discovered what mechanism links me to a truth that this truth is false.

Far from betraying a diffuse aspiration to return to the milky palpitation of the maternal breast and its warm contentment, the aspiration to deliverance expresses the quest for a state of

⁵ Kakar, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-107.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 160 *et seq.*

crystalline integration of consciousness, an integration obtained by intensification, concentration and acquisition of a superior density.

No doubt, “the child is father to the man,” as Wordsworth wrote and as was later repeated by Freud. No doubt, that marvelous paradise of the intra-uterine well-being, located out of time and space, has been registered in our subconscious. But it does not follow that the fact of having been a child before being a man is a necessity in the form of destiny from which no one ever completely escapes. In fact, the quest for deliverance essentially conveys the aspiration to *not* be reborn in a new maternal womb. Between the intra-uterine state and deliverance there is a fundamental asymmetry that prohibits any reduction of the second to the first.

REGRESSUS AD UTERUM?

When we seek to *not* be reborn and when the goal is access to the total Being, how can we assimilate the aspiration to deliverance and its postulation of an augmented consciousness to a *regressus ad uterum*? The image of immersion in the ocean⁸ does not indicate a fusional regressive illusion. The way to deliverance does not return passively to indifferentiation and primordial indistinction. On the contrary, it completes the trajectory of humanization and its prodigious work of differentiation, organization brought about in early childhood, by a conscious process of de-differentiation. Is it not significant that S. Kakar tends to confuse⁹ the intemporality of unconscious psychic processes occurring on this side of time¹⁰ with that on the other side of time that is eternity defined as *tota simul* and *aeternum nunc*?

As to the obsession contained in the idea itself of *saṃsāra*¹¹ that is, to be dedicated to the indefinite of repetition that deliverance should precisely put an end to, we must be careful not to confuse it with the compulsion for repetition (*Wiederholungszwang*) which

⁸ *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad*, VI, 10, 1-2; *Muṇḍaka-Up.* III, 2, 8.

⁹ Kakar, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

¹⁰ According to Freud, the subconscious keeps its objects like an Egyptian tomb.

¹¹ Kakar, *op. cit.*, p. 45 *et seq.*

expresses, on the one hand, the inertia of living matter in the form of a tendency to preserve and repeat experiences, and on the other, the resistance to change resulting from a regulating mechanism with a regressive aim.

INDIAN CULTURE AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

It seems to us that Indian culture lends itself very well to a psychoanalytical investigation, because the Indian “psyche” has been able to conserve the living traces of the most ancient traditional values, as well as myths and rites. All this latent material tends to manifest itself in daily life.

But before undertaking such an investigation, it is necessary to have at our disposal a series of ideas that would allow a better understanding of the representations of the subconscious in Indian texts.¹² First of all, it is especially necessary to say that to compare is not to assimilate.

The impressions gathered from the clinical psychotherapy of Hindu “patients” clearly show, if only at the level of vocabulary,¹³ how infused the element of a learned culture derived from ancient sanskrit texts, philosophical or other, are in the profound Indian nature. A specificity of these texts is the elaboration of psychological theories of a soteriological inclination without which there could not be a serious anthropological study. Let us note in addition that in practicing the psychoanalysis of Indian culture, the author presents us with not only the “interior world” of “an elite, within a heterogeneous population”,¹⁴ namely, “Hindus of caste,”¹⁵ duly transmitted through generations, but that he at the same time exposes his own “interior world.”¹⁶

As for the Indianist reader, however desirous he may be to give credit to an author who is more psychoanalyst than Indianist, or philosopher, however open he may be with regard to an analytical

¹² L. Kapani is at present elaborating these ideas for later publication.

¹³ Kakar, *op. cit.* See for example p. 49.

¹⁴ *Idem* p.4.

¹⁵ *Idem* p. 8.

¹⁶ *Idem* pp. 12 and 34.

method whose fecundity is shown in some remarkable pages by means of the truths of detail that it brings in the following two chapters, this Indianist reader cannot help feeling uneasy throughout the second chapter, “The Hindu Conception of the World,” because of errors due to haste and assimilations. To reveal the profound “Indianism” of the Indians, S. Kakar is induced to treat the fundamental notions of Indian philosophies: *mokṣa*, *dharma*, *karman*, and others, as well as to compare yoga and psychoanalysis.

THE TRUE NATURE OF DELIVERANCE IN THE VEDIC UPANISHADS.

While saying, “I am not speaking of the Hindu philosophy that uses abstract and intellectual concepts that are accessible only to an elite of priests and exegetes,”¹⁷ the author relies upon the key text of the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka-upaniṣad* IV, 3, 21, to define “the supreme goal of man” (*parama-puruṣārtha*). This text suggests, using a famous comparison, what a state without duality is.¹⁸ The interpretation¹⁹ of this passage proposed by S. Kakar is very far from the sanskrit text. Furthermore, in the final part there is an addition that is not in the text: “For (man in deep sleep) it is the state beyond desire, freed from evil, without fear. As in the arms of a beloved woman one knows nothing more of the outside, nothing of the inside, so this personage, embraced by the Self of knowledge, knows nothing more of the outside, nothing more of the inside. For him, it is the state without suffering in which there is no desire but Self, in which there is no longer desire.”²⁰ In fact, this text occurs at a moment in which the Upanishad describes the “states” of waking, sleep with dreams, profound sleep or dreamless sleep.²¹ The latter is a state in which a perfect serenity (*samprasāda*) reigns.²²

All this teaching is imparted by Yājñavalkya “with the view of

¹⁷ *Idem* p. 15.

¹⁸ BĀU, IV, 3, 23-30; cf. II, 4, 14.

¹⁹ Kakar, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

²⁰ Trans. L. Renou, *Prolégomènes au Vedānta*, Paris, Imprimerie nationale, Maisonneuve, 1951, p. 54, no. 1.

²¹ BĀU, IV, 3, 9-14 *et seq.*

²² *Idem* IV, 3, 15.

deliverance" (*vimokṣaya*)²³ whose savor is "supreme felicity" (*parama-ānanda*).²⁴

Deliverance as it is described in the Vedic Upanishads, being essentially a matter of gnosis or pure knowledge (*jñāna*), cannot be assimilated to a poetic²⁵ or artistic experience in which the affective dimension of our nature is expressed. It is rather an indescribable mystic experience, since it is beyond thought and speech. It is the immediate intuition of Being, in its original silence and transience.

Moreover, the "fusional" interpretation alone of the *mokṣa* ideal cannot account for the diversity of schools and doctrines represented by the Vedānta.²⁶ Thoroughly examining the meaning of the "great statements" (*mahā-vākya*): "I am the brahman" (*aham brahmāsmi*),²⁷ "you are That" (*Tat tvam asi*),²⁸ Sāṅkara defines deliverance as a realization of non-duality (*advaita*). He continually quotes: "The one who knows the supreme brahman becomes himself the brahman."²⁹ Even for Rāmānuja, who makes room for fervent devotion and divine grace, a fusional interpretation is too simple, considering that, once deliverance is achieved, the personality of the worshipper persists eternally in union, without however being annihilated.

THE OTHER POLE: SĀṂKHYA YOGA

Likewise, to give too much privilege to the images of immersion or absorption, S. Kakar is compelled to ignore the other pole of Indian reflection, that of the Sāṅkhya-Yoga that defines deliverance in terms of "isolation" (*kaivalya*)³⁰ and not of union or fusion. The adept of *rāja-yoga* takes for his model the *puruṣa*

²³ *Ibid.*, IV, 3, 15-16; 33.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, IV, 3, 32.

²⁵ Kakar, *op. cit.*. See p. 16, where the author quotes W. Blake.

²⁶ This *darśana* which, with the Sāṅkhya-Yoga, has most shown its influence on Indian thought up until today, has its source in the first Vedic Upanishads whose five great commentators are Sankara, Ramanuja, Nimbarka, Madhva, Vallabha.

²⁷ BAU, I, 4, 10.

²⁸ Ch. U., VI, 8, 7 *et seq.*

²⁹ *Muṇḍaka-Ipaniṣad*, III, 2, 9.

³⁰ *Sāṅkhya-kārika*, 68, *Yoga-sūtra*, III, 50 and 55; IV, 34.

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(man), the autonomous, inactive, unproductive male principle (*puruṣa*):³¹ pure conscience, pure presence.³² On the contrary, naturizing Nature (*prakṛti*), evolutive and productive, the feminine entity *par excellence*, is unconscious (*acetana*).³³ Its role is to present the spectacle of the world to the *puruṣa*, pure spectator.³⁴ The final goal of the classical Sāṃkhya is to operate, by means of the exhaustive knowledge of the twenty-five principles (*pañcaviṃśatitattva-jñāna*),³⁵ the disjunction between the *puruṣa* and the *prakṛti*. The *Yoga-sūtra* of Patañjali do nothing other than activate the practical, moral, psychosomatic and intellectual means to achieve this disjunction. Thus “fusion” is another thing, as is “isolation,” which reestablishes the spirit, in appearance servile, in its autonomy. This “isolation” in which deliverance is consummated, according to the Sāṃkhya-Yoga: does it not mean that vitality is called to surmount itself in spiritual autonomy, in which the denial of self to self is changed into a perfect coinciding of self to self?

THE “CITTA” AND THE ID

Since it is a matter of drawing a parallel, instituted by the author of psychology of yoga and psychoanalysis,³⁶ we must deplore the constant distortions resulting from arbitrary *rapprochements* attesting to an approximative knowledge of the considered doctrines. Nothing is more distressful than to compare *citta* and *id*, for example, without being very cautious.³⁷ In spite of the preliminary reserve shown by the author,³⁸ we run the risk of identifying the two notions of *citta* and the Freudian *id*. Actually, *citta* comprises psychic activities, clear or obscure, conscious and

³¹ S.k. 11.

³² S.k. 19; Y.s. I, 3 IV, 34.

³³ S.k. 11.

³⁴ See S.k. 59, 65-66.

³⁵ Commentary by Gauḍapāda on S.k. 44.

³⁶ P. 21 *et seq.* Must we specify that the finality of yoga, from the beginning is radically different from psychoanalysis? Yoga does not treat an invalid. It assumes that one is first of all in good health.

³⁷ Kakar, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-25.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

unconscious. In the vocabulary of the *Yoga-sūtra* of Patañjari, *citta* corresponds to the “internal organ” (*antaḥ-karaṇa*) composed of *buddhi*, *ahaṃkāra*, *manas*. Now, *buddhi* is the intellectual function of decision and discernment. *Ahaṃkāra* being manifestation of ego and *manas* being the *sensorium commune*, we see that *citta* englobes the three instances of the Freudian “Psyche”: id, superego and ego. Or, to speak in terms of *guṇa*, it is not only the “cauldron”³⁹ in which the two forms of *rayas* and *tamas* simmer, it is also in its superior part, conformity to being, transparent light, *sattva*. Likewise, *citta*, receptacle of the *saṃskāra* and *vāsanā* of former lives as of present life and determining the lives to come, covers a much more extended field than the Freudian *id*.

Still within the cadre of the *Yoga-sūtra*, the author outlines a parallel between the technique of *pratyāhāra* and that of the free association of psychoanalytical therapies.⁴⁰ The *pratyāhāra*, which he freely translates as “congregating toward” more exactly designates the “contraction of feeling.” We can admit with him, in fact, that a flux of images occurs in a man who is provisorily disconnected from the exterior environment, since at this stage in yogic techniques, the spirit is not yet concentrated. It should be pointed out, however, that the finality of the two exercises is totally different. For the apprentice yogi, this disconnection is the antichamber of concentration; for the analyzed, it is a means of allowing his flux of images or his obsessions to come to the surface.

The author also strongly insists on the subsequent phase of the *rāja-yoga* intended to make the *citta* “one-directional”.⁴¹ This phase is characterized by fixing the mind (*dhāraṇā*) on one sole point (*ekāgratā*). However, as is shown by the famous definition of yoga, “yoga is the suspension of the modifications of thought”⁴² or “yoga is the perfectly stable positioning of thought”⁴³, the ultimate end is not only to transform the *citta*⁴⁴ but to make it silent, since it is on the side of Nature (*prakṛti*). Here, the contrast with psychoanalysis is striking: the “*id*” speaks! The “isolation” is only

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

⁴² *Yoga-sūtra*, I, 2.

⁴³ *Yoga-bhāṣya*, I, 1.

⁴⁴ Kakar, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

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obtained by the sterilization and burning of the unconscious virtualities, “germs,” (*bīja*) of new incarnations. From this comes the importance of the *asamprajñāta-samādhi*, in which the yogi attains the unconscious *through* the unconscious. This unconscious *samādhi*, literally, “without knowledge of the object,” is also called *samādhi* “without germ” (*nirbīja samādhi*).

KUNḌALINĪ YOGA

Treating the subtle physiology of *kunḍalinī-yoga*, the author commits the flagrant though indicative error of locating the *citta* in the *mūlādhāra-cakra*,⁴⁵ which is the seat of the *kunḍalinī* and which controls sex; while the *citta*, in the form of the trilogy *buddhi*, *ahaṃkāra*, *manas*, is seated in the sixth *cakra*, the *ājñā-cakra*. We cannot reduce the *citta* to the libido, although it contains it.

Furthermore, where could we find in the context of yoga that atmosphere of tragedy and romanticism discussed on page 63?

To analyze means, of course, “to un-tie”, to give back its flexibility to what was fixed by the ascent towards the origin, so that the symbolic web of the religious significant becomes more transparent. In this regard, and beginning with the Kleinian discovery of a first cleavage between the good and the bad object, S. Kakar restores the ambivalence in pursuance of which the image of the “good mother” is doomed in India to be changed into that of the terrible “bad mother” (Kali, for example). In India, the sacred cosmo-vital takes on a character of *proximity* that renders it at times beneficent and at times menacing, according to the oscillation governing the illusory vision brought to light by Klein.

LIṄGA, SACRED TREE AND PILLAR

But just as the Kleinian interpretation relative to the childhoods of Krishna and the myth of Putanā⁴⁶ is convincing (with the

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 147-148.

exception of the contestable assimilation of Krishna to Dionysus),⁴⁷ that of the Shivaite *liṅga* as restoration of self-confidence after the “traumatic event of early childhood”⁴⁸ seems singularly hazardous. It simplifies the facts, since it disregards the sentiment of the sacred and the numinous charge that invests the worshipper in the presence of the *liṅga*. Besides, it could be that originally this erected stone did not at all symbolize the phallus, as superficial Freudians have long believed, but the sacred tree worshipped in the form of a sacred pillar, a sort of metaphysical axis that is found in the most diverse cultures, the origin of “knotting” or again the organic navel by which the visible being is formed from the invisible being. This upright stone, that bears an elementary corporal symbolism, would be secondarily charged with a sexual symbolism. In a general way, the method employed, if it is appropriate to the Krishnaite gest, is revealed to be vulnerable and deceiving in the case of Shiva, who is at the same time the god of Eros and of asceticism. Although the author notes “the contradiction between (...) the asceticism of the god and the eroticism of his symbol”⁴⁹ he does not really resolve it, if not on the verbal level.⁵⁰

THE NURSING CHILD AND ITS MOTHER

A striking and faithful picture of the relationships that are established between the nursing child and the mother is thus proposed. As we know, the child is singularized by the absence of pre-established mechanisms of adaptation and by the long dependence on the adult imposed by his neothenia, and specific prematuration. Now, Hindu culture and Western culture bring ways of satisfaction and types of response to his fundamental needs that are radically opposed. There is a striking contrast between the Hindu infantile experience and the image of the child given by the West, from St. Augustine to Freud. To the happy organic

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 142-143.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 156-158.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, see p. 155.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

innocence of the Hindu child, whose prolonged dependence allows his pampering up until his entry into the paternal universe, is opposed the sobre image of an unhappy and miserable creature, unable to be self-sufficient, entirely surrendered to the needs and distresses of organic life (cf. the Freudian *Hilflosigkeit*), to the pangs of growth, lamenting and choleric at the same time and already bearing a load of frightful impulses within himself. In the eyes of St. Augustine, the child, immature and thus fated to dereliction, is above all the prey of a malice fed by concupiscence and resentment. This Augustinian position is no doubt not exclusive and must be tempered by the traditional image of the child—invested with “grace” in the Christian meaning, as the child Christ was, traditionally. But while an Augustine exclaims in the *Confessions*, “Who will remind me of the sins of my childhood?”⁵¹ the nostalgia for an early fulfilled childhood is always felt by the adult Hindu.

To the Hindu obligation to make the child happy at any price by surrounding him with an extreme solicitude⁵² is opposed the inexorable necessity, to which Freud was resigned, of an education whose essential axis is raising the threshold of tolerance to frustration: displeasure is the only educative method, Freud realizes bitterly, so true is it that the forbidden takes on a civilizing value in his eyes, the edifice of civilization resting precisely on the principle of renunciation of impulses (*Triebverzicht*).⁵³

All his life, the Hindu will retain the benefit of a symbiosis. No loss of soul, through exhaustion of the senses, accompanied by fatigue and disorientation, will be able to threaten the adult Hindu. If “in the final analysis neurosis is the suffering of the soul that has not found its meaning,”⁵⁴ according to Jung’s excellent formula, the fact of having been fulfilled by the “good mother” protects the adult Hindu from such a spiritual indigence. The intimacy of the heart that he has enjoyed preserves him from suffering, whatever the vicissitudes of his destiny may be, from this “deprivation of

⁵¹ I, VII, 11.

⁵² Kakar, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

⁵³ On the theme of “cultural renouncement” (*Kulturversagung*) see *Das Unbehagen der Kultur*, ch. I.

⁵⁴ C.G. Jung, *La Guérison psychologique*, 1953, 3rd ed. 1976, Librairie de l’Université, Geneva, pp. 281-282.

meaning,” from this undefined wreck of significations that Nietzsche, in the last century, saw dawning in Western man, sick with “nihilism, the most disquieting of all guests.”

We measure then how much the psychoanalytical testing of intelligibility, which closes in on itself, remains the accomplice of a pan-sexualism in which the libido is narrowly and dogmatically sexualized. It is as though the author, arrived at maturity, hoped to exorcise the methodological imperialism that presided over his formative years in the West. However, if the slightest suspicion of a certain dogmatism in interpretation rises to the surface of his mind, S. Kakar immediately discards it.⁵⁵ The author’s interpretation, most often anchored in the tantric texts,⁵⁶ effects what we must call a “tantric reduction.”

As subtle as certain analyses that inspire him may be, the test of intelligibility furnished S. Kakar by psychoanalysis or by Erikson’s psychology⁵⁷ is revealed as definitively too peremptory and reductive for attempting an approach to the absolute. It is unable to recover the elan of a metaphysical initiative separated from all naturalness and removing the bases of the human condition, with the view of realizing the motionless “passage” from the relative to the absolute, by a fervent asceticism, liberating gnosis or magnetizing devotion. Assuredly, the description of the infantile experience alone cannot elucidate the “meaning” of human destiny, if we understand by that the synthesis itself of the ontological magnetization and value. It is naive to think that the determination of raw “facts” can ever found the validity of an interpretation of man’s final destination. Not only does the observer choose the significative traits in terms of certain principles, but he can only appreciate the affective constellations elaborated during childhood on the condition that he determines their function in the total arrangement of human destiny. Now,

⁵⁵ Kakar, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, see for example pp. 23-24, 16.

⁵⁷ See p. 81, the Erikson schema (*Childhood and Society*, New York, 1950) and the Hindu schema. The *samnyasa* is not the realization of *dharma*, but tends to the realization of *mokṣa*. At this stage, no tasks or virtues are required. In the cadre of *varṇa-āśrama-dharma*, the *samnyāsa* is effectively the last “stage” of life, thus linked to old age. However, we must note that in practice some young sons of Brahmins directly embrace the *samnyāsa*. For example, Sankara.

how may we recover this latter in its escatological dimension if not by raising it to a height at which it can finally know an indestructible unity and meaning? Because man is always struggling with himself as with the world, because it is the vocation of man to liberate himself from his childhood as he adapts himself to his adult condition, man can assume his past without necessarily being its slave: the traces of his childhood give a form to his personality but without obsessing and fettering it. Consequently, infantile experience does not explain everything, and no one can escape the necessity for an ethico-metaphysical choice that testifies to a decision on the subject of the meaning of Being.

A light is also thrown on “the communitary dimension of Hindu identity,”⁵⁸ elucidated in the perspective of Erikson. In particular, “the mutual re-enforcement of the individual psyche and of culture”⁵⁹ makes it possible to retrace the “ontogenesis of *Homo hierarchicus*.”⁶⁰ Given that psychic reality has two faces, impulsive and cultural, it is impossible to imagine a human impulse without including in its definition the direction that at different stages in psychism are inscribed sediments of cultural significations and references whose vectors are myths. Because myths are revealed as the animating meanings of the psychic makeup of the individual as well as the ideological one of social organization. Inasmuch as it is strongly anchored in the preconscious system and is an integrating part of all individual experience, the constellation of beliefs, attitudes and values associated with the concepts of *mokṣa dharma* and *karman* presents a “meta-reality.”⁶¹ It would no doubt be more pertinent, with the view of defining a cultural configuration that serves as common denominator in Hindu personalities and in which is located the focal point of cultural integration, to speak of a “projective reality system,” to use the apt expression of A. Kardiner and the American culturists. It is to this “projective reality system,” perhaps irreducible to any objectivation but which none the less determines an unconscious logic of social life, that the individual psyche and cultural institutions must form one and the

⁵⁸ Kakar, *op. cit.*, note 1, p. 214.

⁵⁹ *Idem*, p. 182.

⁶⁰ p. 133.

⁶¹ *Idem*, p. 50.

same continuum within which the field of individual psyche and that of culture thus rendered homogeneous, are exchangeable, with no empirical causality but through the most secret phenomena of osmosis. The fact remains that the idea of basic personality, to the degree in which it succeeds in disengaging that ambience of socialization represented by the common denominator imposed by belonging to a cultural unity, may have only an operatory value.

Although it takes note of value systems, the culturalist approach is seen to be unable to make its genesis understood and fails to totally coincide with concrete reality. Like the strictly Freudian approach, it appears in its turn somewhat reductionist, since it refers, in the last resort, to "primary institutions." Furthermore, it is appropriate to vary slightly certain sociocentric interpretations that the idea of basic personality governs. The Indianist, psychologist or philosopher, who has the task of doing justice to the well-integrated configuration of Hindu culture, should perhaps resist any attempt at objective resolution.

MODERN CHANGE AND INDIAN CULTURE

Now, contemporary India is constantly in ferment by the disruptive and corrosive forces of modern civilization. Not that the phenomena of cultural change would cause India to founder in a convulsive anarchy. But it is to be feared that certain transformations brought about today by technical evolution, the process of acculturation and the mixing of populations, may abolish that circular and harmonious process of mutual re-enforcement of the psyche and culture and would have the effect of dialecticizing the relationship of the Hindu individual to existing social institutions, thus critically upsetting the psychodynamics of the social organization. It is not uncertain that the new models of behavior imposed by the process of social change are compatible with the already established personality structure in Hindu society. If it is true Vivekánanda was able to find in his role as charismatic leader if not a solution at least a way out of the contradiction brought about by the "psychological dilemma of modernization," the contemporary Hindu individual, traditionally dispensed of all individual responsibility when faced

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with action but at present confronted with the necessity of a readjustment of his existing behavior models, feels insecure because he is deprived of the emotional margin of security that traditional culture provided him. As resistance to change is one of the essential attributes of subconscious formations, the problem of the resistances that accompany, prohibit or limit the necessary structural reordering of the Hindu personality is sharply posed. Its constitutional aptitude to change prohibiting reinterpretation and adjustment of existing models would thus explain certain defensive reactions of political radicalization occurring today in India.

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