

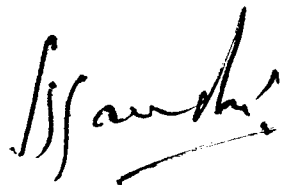
**FREUD, SOCIETY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS :
A SOCIOLOGICAL CRITIQUE OF SOME
OF HIS WRITINGS**

Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
award of the Degree of
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

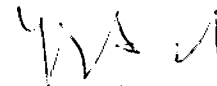
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Certified that the M.Phil Dissertation
entitled "FREUD, SOCIETY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS :
A SOCIOLOGICAL CRITIQUE OF SOME OF HIS WRITINGS"
submitted by Avijit Pathak has not been previously
submitted for any degree of this or any other
University. We recommend that the Dissertation
be placed before the examiner for evaluation.



Dr. J.S. Gandhi
Supervisor



Dr. Y. Singh
Chairman



A BRIEF NOTE

To express gratitude through words is what I dislike from the core of my heart. Those who have helped me know me well. I am sure that they are quite capable of realizing what my silence intends to communicate.

Avijit Pathak; 17.8.83
Avijit Pathak

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INTRODUCTION

(WHY FREUD?)

My reasons for writing a thesis of this kind are diverse and many. To begin with, it is my firm conviction that without an inter-disciplinary approach it is simply impossible to have a total understanding of man and his crisis. This tremendous urge to go beyond the boundaries of academic sociology is chiefly responsible for my encounter with Freud. I really do not know how sociologists can be indifferent to Freud who like Karl Marx revolutionized our understanding of man. It is indeed very unfortunate that even in a university like ours Freud remains almost unknown to the students of sociology. A kind of false consciousness that sociology ends with Durkheim, Pareto and Weber is precluding the possibility of expanding our horizon.

To what extent Freud is still relevant today is certainly an important question. But what is immediately important to remember is that many recent social theories, although differ considerably from Freudian psychoanalysis, have nevertheless their roots in Freud. In a rapidly changing world like ours so many new theories have come that he may be considered completely outdated. But the way thinkers like Marcuse, Fromm, Sartre and Laing are remembering and arguing with Freud makes him alive. Herein lies the importance of a great thinker. He may

be outdated. But what makes him alive is the very attempt that intends to prove his backwardness.

What I wish to suggest is that it is of utmost importance for sociologists to go on conducting a dialogue with Freud. He was not merely a clinical therapist. He had a world-view. His 'Civilization and Its Discontents' and 'The Future of an Illusion' are works which can hardly escape the attention of sociologists. These works, as one can easily infer, do not generate hope. Freud, it seems, has talked about man's ultimate fate. He tends to destroy the hope generated by the philosophers of Enlightenment. Man with his sorrows and tragedies occupies the central place in Freud's framework. Since he talks about human essence, no sensitive person, irrespective of his or her social origin, can be indifferent to him.

I believe that it is possible for one to be enlightened by a thinker, even when one does not agree with all his ideas. For instance, one may refuse to accept the Freudian doctrine, especially in the context of modern consumer society, that sexual repression is the fundamental problem man is suffering from. But this difference with Freud should not prevent one from accepting that

repression, although its form may differ, does exist in the kind of civilisation we are living in. Indeed, it is possible to say that without the notion of repression, our understanding of human crisis is bound to be incomplete.

Erich Fromm, for instance, widens the meaning of repression. In advanced industrialized countries of the west man, despite his sexual freedom, cannot be said to be free from repression. As Fromm says, man's need for 'productive Love' has been repressed by the kind of consumer society he belongs to. In other words, the notion of repression makes it clear that man in contemporary society does not appear to be what he potentially is. Herein lies the revolutionary promise of psychoanalysis that immediately draws the attention of the sociologist. Psychoanalysis, because of its emphasis on repression, makes one aware that man is not content with the kind of 'role' society imposes on him. It can be said that the work of radical psychoanalysts suggest that a society, in order to be sane, must adjust to the needs of the individual.

For Durkheim - one of the founding fathers of 'functionalism' - societal role is so important that he refuses to listen to the voice of the individual qua individual. As a result, man with his likes and dislikes, sorrows and

tragedies, joys and fears is lost; functionalism becomes a justification for the status quo. But critical theorists like Adorno, Marcuse and Fromm challenge this functionalism. They made an attempt to give primacy to man's human needs which were almost overlooked by the followers of Durkheim and Talcott Parsons. To give a critique of functionalism, Marxism alone seems to be insufficient. In fact, Marxism, in its crude form, may give birth to another form of functionalism, especially after socialist revolution. The kind of sociology that emerges out of a synthesis of Marxism and psychoanalysis of Marxism and psychoanalysis seems to be sufficiently critical; it is based on the assumption that no society, irrespective of its economy, can be said to be sane, if man remains repressed, alienated and fragmented.

To what extent sociologists can utilize the notion of 'unconscious' remains to be examined. The content of unconscious may differ from what Freud talks about. But it is of utmost importance to remember that human action cannot be properly understood, unless man's unconscious is explored. To make our position clear, let us start with a simple illustration. An average Indian is extraordinarily attached to his caste. To know why it is so, sociologists can immediately gain insights from psychoanalysis. As Sudhir Kakar¹ observes, in an extended family

1. Sudhir Kakar, The Inner World, Oxford University Press, 1982.

it becomes almost impossible for the little boy to develop a strong super-ego. The reason is that in the extended family the roll of the father is not so dominant. Although he cannot develop a strong superego, his unconscious desire to submit himself to a powerful authority remains. This unconscious crave for authority reflects itself in the act of his almost complete surrender to the authorities of caste. We are not suggesting that the phschoanalytical explanation is the only explanation possible. Our purpose is to make sociologists aware that psychoanalysis, if properly utilized, is not necessarily an antithesis of sociological way of locking at human phenomena.

Psychoanalysis becomes all the more meaningful, especially when one concentrates on the 'fragmented' personality of modern man. As Erving Goffman observed, modern man is bound to be a hypocrite. To give the impression that he is what his society has taught him to be, man has been acting ceaselessly. His purpose is not to allow others to penetrate his inner world. What Goffman intends to say is that man's real or authentic self hardly coincides with what he presents as a powerful social altar. This fragmentation of human personality, as Peter L Berger² argues, gives birth to a new kind of need. There are moments when man wants to escape from his 'public self'

2. Peter L. Berger, 'Towards a Sociological Understanding of Psychoanalysis' in Facing up to Modernity, Penguin, 1977.

he wants to conduct a dialogue with his real self. Needless to say, psychoanalysis fulfills this need. It promises that through self-analysis man can come closer to his inner world. It is important to remember that this awareness of one's inner world is the first step towards liberation. That man can be different from the what his society has taught him to be is an important psychoanalytical discovery to which, we feel, no radical sociologist can be indifferent. Without psychoanalysis sociology, it seems, is insufficiently equipped to answer the most fundamental question: Does man have any hope? Can a completely new kind of man ^{be} emerged whose freedom is never a threat to social cohesion? Auguste Comte's positivism reduced man to the level of an object. In the process of evolution of society man is merely a tool governed by some inexorable laws on which he does not have any control. The question of individual freedom does not seem to have bothered Emile Durkheim. Man must fulfil his social role. Even when Durkheim talks about 'organic solidarity', man's capacity to transcend social facts which are 'coercive' and 'external' to him - is almost denied. Although Talcott Parsons talks about 'voluntarism' it becomes immediately clear that in the Parsonian framework the degree of voluntarism is indeed very limited. Max Weber gives a meaning to human action. But Weber talks about conscious purposiveness. There are actions which

are governed by passions man may not be immediately aware of. For instance, Weber analyzes the origin of capitalism in terms of Protestant ethic. A psychoanalyst would argue that this conscious religious ideals alone are not sufficient to explain the origin of capitalism. The very desire to earn money, as the psychoanalyst would argue, is the product of 'anal character' of which man may not be conscious.

All these suggest that man as what he is cannot be understood by sociology alone. One may sharply react to Freud because he gave a pessimistic view of the future of man. But psychoanalysis does not end with Freud. The way radical psychoanalysts are in a process of giving a completely new meaning to psychoanalysis is indeed worth considering. They argue that it is possible for man to enjoy freedom without creating disorder. They believe that order and freedom can go together, because a free man, as they argue, is capable of relating himself meaningfully to humanity. This 'relatedness' is not an imposition. It is man's free choice. Man, after being aware of his unconscious and the societal reasons for repression, begins to alter his fate. He makes his own destiny. He becomes his own master. In other words, psychoanalysis when mingled with Marxism, becomes a new

religion. It promises a better world. A new kind of man free from repression is its aim. Given the kind of repressive society we are living in, the promise of radical psychoanalysis may sound to be a utopia. But utopias are tremendously meaningful in the sense that they do influence people to revolt against repression. How can sociologists be indifferent to utopias, when man's restlessness for becoming perfect is never stopped?

As I have already implied, my growing dissatisfaction with orthodox Marxism leads me to take special interest in Freud. I am not suggesting that Marx has to be replaced by Freud. The point I wish to emphasize is that Marxism probably remains inadequate, if the nature of man is not properly understood. I feel that to analyze every social phenomena^{on} in terms of man's 'class character' is not always right. It is extremely important to know the way one's childhood experiences shape one's character. If one's character is not sufficiently revolutionary, one cannot take part in the class struggle, even when 'objective conditions' demand it. The necessity of expanding the scope of Marxism was felt by Wilhelm Reich and Jean Paul Sartre. Reich's The Mass Psychology of Fascism and Sartre's The Problem of Method are attempts to include the so-called 'subjective' factors - one's childhood experiences in the family - in the domain of Marxism. To

study the way one's character is formed in the family, one cannot be indifferent to psychoanalysis. To make both Marxism and psychoanalysis alive, what is needed is not blind orthodoxy, but a kind of openness that allows Marxism to incorporate the findings of psychoanalysis.

Marxists have to take man's unconscious into account. To change man's unconscious, it is not sufficient to change the political and economic structure of society. What is needed is a kind of re-education that allows man to know what he is. Unless man knows himself, it is impossible for him to transform himself. I am not saying that political consciousness has to be replaced by Freudian psychotherapy. My intention is quite different. I believe that there is hardly any gap between political consciousness and radical psychotherapy. The process of knowing oneself cannot be different from the process of knowing the system. Radical psychotherapy, as I feel, opens our eyes. It is a kind of 'sociological imagination'³. It helps one relating one's biography to the context of history. And I feel that psychoanalysis, especially after Fromm and Laing, helps us knowing how man's psychical structure and history are interacting with each other.

3. C. Wright Mills, The Sociological Imagination, Penguin, 1978.

Psychoanalysis teaches us that it is not enough to change the infrastructure of society. Unless man's psychological structure is changed, no institution, however revolutionary it may seem at first sight, can alter our fate. This realization or this process of changing man's 'unconscious' leads us to think about cultural revolution. Although Freud failed to accomplish this task, many neo-lefts have worked in this direction. Herein, I believe, lies an attempt to bridge the gap between Freud and Marx. This attempt may not be appealing to all; but what is important to remember is that the questions they have raised are so important that no one can possibly be indifferent to them.

Another important question, I feel, deserves to be answered. Especially at a time when Indian sociology is facing so many problems - the problems of caste, family, modernization and national integration - , why I am working on Freud. My answer is simple enough. The problems of death, sex, love and hate go beyond regions. Freud is so frightening and yet so appealing that even an Indian sociologist, despite his preoccupation with varieties of indigenous problems, cannot but remain extraordinarily interested in his theory.

In fact, the question why Freud should be studied

by an Indian sociologist does not make any sense. So long as man is alive, it would be absolutely ridiculous to ask the relevance of some fundamental questions of life: What is death? Is repression man's destiny? Does he have any hope? Can war be abolished? Can women gain freedom? Can man be sane? These are questions Freud tried to answer. One may not agree with him. But the importance of these questions can hardly be doubted. To deny these questions is to deny life itself. I am afraid that in the name of immediately relevant problems, a tendency is emerging among social scientists to deny questions that man, irrespective of his class, race and nation, has been asking from the very beginning of civilization. This work may not be of paramount importance. But it is an effort, although limited in its scope, to go beyond what Indian sociologists have considered relevant.

My first chapter deals with sexuality, the second with the death-instinct, the third with feminism and the fourth with liberation. These four chapters, I hope, would cover almost all important writings of Sigmund Freud which are important for the sociologist.

To understand Freud more meaningfully, it is necessary to read Marx, Nietzsche, Sartre, Lakan, Kafka and Thomas

Mann: It goes without saying that especially at the stage of M. Phil, any work on Freud is bound to be incomplete. I am not satisfied with the kind of work I have done. But this sense of dissatisfaction carries a promise. At the stage of Ph.D. my encounter with Freud may prove to be more exciting.

CHAPTER - I

FREUD ON SEXUALITY AND REPRESSION

(A SOCIOLOGICAL APPRAISAL)

I

SEXUALITY AND REPRESSION : BASIC RATIONALE FOR ITS
SOCIOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING

For a sociologist, especially when he is interested in the question of sexual repression, it is almost impossible to avoid Sigmund Freud. Although Freud was by no means a 'Sociologist' in the way professionals use the term, one cannot deny the sociological relevance of his works. As we see, there are five reasons that can be put forward to establish the importance of Freudian notion of sexuality.

a. It is very clear from Freudian psychoanalysis that it exposes the inherent hypocrisy of modern civilization. A 'civilized' man, if he is not a 'neurotic' or 'pervert', is bound to be a hypocrite. Despite the fact that through 'sublimation' and 'reaction-formation' he succeeds in repressing his sexual urges, it is undeniable that in his unconscious he lives with passions which civilized morality hardly approves of. This seems to be a fundamental discovery of Freudian psychoanalysis.

Freud said:

"Anyone thus compelled to act continually in the sense of precepts which are not the expression of instinctual inclinations, is living, psychologically speaking,

beyond his means, and might objectively be designated as a hypocrite, whether this difference be clearly known to him or not. It is undeniable that contemporary civilization is extraordinarily favourable to the production of this form of hypocrisy...., Thus there are very many more hypocrites than truly civilized persons - indeed it is a debatable point whether a certain degree of civilized hypocrisy be not indispensable for the maintenance of civilization.¹

A 'normal' man hates ^{perverts} perverts, although he himself has passed through the same stages. A 'normal' man dislikes neuratics, although his unconscious wishes are by no means different from that of a neurotic. It goes to the credit of Freud that he made it clear that a 'normal' man is by no means qualitatively different from that of a 'neurotic' or 'pervert'.

Although Freud did not talk about any authentic rebellion against the kind of civilization he lived in, the point to remember is that neurotics and perverts prove beyond doubt that the kind of civilization they live in

1. Sigmund Freud, 'Thoughts for the Times of war and and Death' in Collected Papers (Vol. IV), Hograth Press, London 1971, pp. 299-300.

does by no means make them happy and contented. And herein, we believe, lies a potential critique of modern civilization.

b. Secondly, the meaning of sexuality has become wider, as far as psychoanalysis is concerned. Although there is a tendency to believe that man becomes sexual only at the onset of puberty, Freud showed that the moment man is born he starts his sexual life. This notion of infantile sexuality is a major discovery of psychoanalysis. What we call 'normal' sexuality is in fact the final stage which man reaches after passing through a number of stages in his infantile life. To quote from Freud's Introductory Lectures:

"To suppose that children have no sexual life - sexual expectations and needs and a kind of satisfaction - but suddenly acquire it between the ages of twelve and fourteen (quite apart from any observation) be as improbable and indeed senseless, biologically as to suppose that they have brought no genitals with them into the world and only grow them at the time of puberty. What does awaken them at this stage is the reproductive function, which makes use for its purposes of physical and mental material already present. You are committing the error of confusing sexuality and reproduction and by

doing so you are blocking your path to an understanding of sexuality, the perversions and the neuroses".²

This discovery is bound to pose some important questions. Can a society be sexually free, if it allows its members to gratify their normal sexual aim without any inhibition? As far as Freud is concerned, the answer is obviously 'no'. As Freud says, man becomes neurotic not at the cost of normal sexuality. What makes him discontented is the morality of civilization which deprives him of the pleasure he once got through his erotogenic organs.

"It (psychoanalysis) shows that it is by no means at the cost of the so-called normal sexual instinct that these symptoms originate - at any rate such as not exclusively are mainly the case, they also give expression (by conversion) to instincts which would be described as perverse in the widest sense of the word...." Thus symptoms are formed in part at the cost of abnormal sexuality; neuroses are, so to say, the negative of perversions."³

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2. Sigmund Freud, 'The Sexual Life of Human Beings' in Introductory Lectures, Penguin, 1981, p.353
 3. Sigmund Freud, Three Essays on Sexuality in On Sexuality, ed. Angela Richards, Penguin, 1981, p. 80.

The question arises. If sex is so dominant in human life that even a child cannot avoid it, is it possible to give man the fullest opportunity to enjoy it? In other words, is it possible for us to become 'polymorphously perverse' ?

Another important question related to infantile sexuality is what attitude we should develop towards children. Even if we do not allow them to become another Oedipus, is it right on our part to threaten them consistently that their penis would be castrated? Even if we dislike 'thumb-sucking' - which is indeed a sexual activity - , or the kind of pleasure which children attach to defecating, isn't right on our part to become more tolerable? When children begin to ask questions about the origin of life, can we afford to tell them lies? Freud said:

"If children are not given the explanations for which they turn to their elders, they go on tormenting themselves with the problem in secret and produce attempts at solution in which the truth they have guessed is mingled with most extraordinary way with grotesque untruths, or they whisper information to one another in which, because of the young enquirer's sense of guilt, everything sexual is stamped as being horrible and

disgusting From this time on, children usually lose the only proper attitude to sexual questions, and many of them never regain it."⁴

This obviously makes us aware that the nature of family socialization has to be changed drastically, as far as the question of sexual enlightenment^{en} of children is concerned.

c. Thirdly, when one begins to show interest in the destiny of mankind, Freud automatically comes to the limelight. As Freud argues, the history of civilization means the imposition of the 'reality principle' over the 'pleasure principle'. And this reality principle, as he says, is essentially repressive. In this way, he intends to show that man's civilized existence presupposes repression. To quote from his Introductory Lectures:

"Society believes that no greater threat to its civilization could arise than if the sexual instincts were to be liberated and retained to their original aims . . . It has no interest in the recognition of the strength of the sexual instincts or in the demonstration of sexual

4. Sigmund Freud, 'The Sexual Enlightenment of Children' in On Sexuality, p 197.

life to the individual. On the contrary, with an educational aim in view, it has set about diverting attention from that whole field of ideal^s.

This shows that for Freud, sexual repression is fundamental. To what extent this is a valid thesis, especially in the context of contemporary 'consumer' society, is certainly an important issue we would discuss subsequently. But what strikes us immediately is that the notion of 'repression' itself is of tremendous importance to the sociologist, especially when he focuses his attention on the inherent conflict between individual and society.

d. It is necessary to ask whether Freud himself would want anything like ~~sexual freedom~~. Although he gave a bold critique of civilized sexual morality, he again and again reminded us that the sexual instincts, if allowed to discharge without any inhibition, would not make man happy.

✓ "It is interesting to see that it is precisely these sexual impulses that are inhibited in their aims

5. Sigmund Freud, Introductory Lectures, p. 48



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which achieve such lasting ties between people. But this can easily be understood from the fact that they are not capable of complete satisfaction, while sexual impulses which are uninhibited in their aims suffer an extraordinary reduction through the discharge of energy every time the sexual aim is attained. It is the fate of sensual love to become extinguished when it is satisfied; for it to be able to last it must from the very beginning be mixed with purely affectionate components - with such that is, as are inhibited in their aims - it must itself undergo a transformation of this kind".⁶

It is quite clear that Freud is unwilling to argue in favour of complete sexual freedom. This seems to be a paradox, because Freud, although a theoretician of the 'pleasure principle', accepts man's almost unconditional surrender to the repressive 'reality principle'. This riddle can be resolved only when we would study the politics of psychoanalysis.

c. And finally, we would ask whether orthodox psychoanalysis is helpful to understand the crisis of modern man. Freud's theory of sexual repression seems to have

6. Sigmund Freud, Group Psychology And the Analysis of the ego, Hogarth Press, London, 1967, p 47.

lost much of its relevance, especially in modern consumer society where, as Erich Fromm says, man consumes everything including sex. Yet, as all neo-Freudians argue, man cannot be said to be free from neurosis, anxiety and tensions. A kind of nihilism which gives birth to the feeling of meaninglessness of existence itself seems to have disrupted the modern mind. To understand or explain this typical crisis of contemporary society, Freudian theory of sexual repression is not sufficient. In fact, it can be said that the reasons for our existential crisis are so diverse that Freud's one-sided emphasis on sexuality may prove to be a kind of false consciousness.

II

FREUDIAN CONCEPTUALIZATION OF SEXUALITY AND REPRESSION

Although normal sexual aim is confined to sexual intercourse with the member of the opposite sex, Freud argues that the meaning of sexuality is much more wider. For instance, there are 'inverts' who select members of the same sex for sexual gratification. There are 'perverts' who, instead of employing the genital, applies erotogenic parts of the body for sexual gratification. Moreover, there are 'neurotics' whose symptoms appear to be the

substitute for what preverts do in real life. All these deviations have to be taken into account, if one wants to understand the meaning of sexuality. It is now necessary to ask why man becomes sexually abnormal. Freud says that the ^{roots} rests of perversions have to be sought in infantile sexuality.

"This postulated constitution, containing the items of all the perversions, will only be demonstrable in children, even though in them it is with modest degrees of intensity that any of the instincts can emerge. A formula begins to take shape which lays down that the sexuality of neur^otics has remained in or been brought back to, an infantile^e state".⁷

What Freud intends to imply is that man, because of the nature of sexuality, is potentially a prevert, although he may succeed in becoming 'normal'. What we call 'normal' sexuality is the final stage that man reaches after passing through a number of stages. What are these stages?

(1) Oral stage:

At first sight it appears to be a great surprise when Freud says that the infant, when it sucks its mother's

7 Sigmund Freud, Three Essays on Sexuality in On Sexuality, p. 87.

breast, is in fact performing a sexual act. One can object that the infant, at the time of sucking, is fulfilling its need for self-preservation. While Freud accepts this, he, however, reminds us that the infant soon learns to separate its sexual need from that of self-preservation. Even after being completely nourished, the infant continues to suck. And the way it behaves at the time of sucking does not fail to give the impression that it is performing a sexual act with full pleasure.

" No one who has seen a baby sinking back satiated from the breast and falling asleep with flushed cheeks and a blisful smile can escape the reflection that this picture persists as a prototype of the expression of sexual satisfaction in later life".⁸

But this phase does not continue for ever. It is not possible for the infant to get its mother's breast everytime it wants. Because of this difficulty, the infant takes up a new policy. It begins to suck its own thumb. This is what Freud calls Oral sexuality.

8. Ibid, p. 98.

ii. Anal stage:

✓ At this stage anus as an organ becomes a source of enormous pleasure for the child. He begins to show special interest in his own feces. He tries to touch them, and indeed, if he is not prevented, will even put them into his mouth. The child obstinately refuses to empty his bowels when is put on the pot and holds away that function till he chooses to exercise it. It may be said that it is sheer nonsense to regard defaecating as a source of sexual satisfaction. But Freud in his Introductory Lectures gave a reply to this allegation.

"You have merely forgotten that I have been trying to introduce the facts of infantile sexual life in connections with the facts of sexual perversions. Why should you not be aware that for a large number of adults homosexual and heterosexual alike the anus does really take over the roll of vagina in sexual intercourse? And that there are many people who retain a voluptuous feelings in defaecating all through their lives and describe it as being far from small?"⁹

9. Sigmund Freud, 'The Sexual Life of Human Beings', in Introductory Lectures, p. 358.

iii. Phallic stage:

✓ At this stage the child begins to take interest in his genital.

"The anatomical situation of this region, the secretion in which it is bathed, the washing and rubbing to which it is subjected in the course of a child's toilet, as well as accidental stimulations make it inevitable that the pleasurable feelings which this part of the body is capable of producing should be noticed by children, even during their earliest infancy, and should give rise to a need for its repetition."¹⁰

This stage is the closest approximation possible in childhood to the final form taken by sexual life after puberty. To quote from Freud:

"This phase, which already deserves to be regarded as genital, present a sexual object and some degree of convergence of the sexual impulses upon the object; but it is differentiated from the final organization of sexual maturity in one essential respect. For it knows only one

10. Sigmund Freud, Three Essays on Sexuality in On Sexuality, p 105

kind of genital; the male one. For that reason I have named it the phallic stage of organisation."¹¹

At this stage the child selects the sexual object. And here lies the roots of the oedipus complex about which we would discuss latter.

iv. Latency period:

At this stage many important things occur in the child's life. Through reaction-formations he suppresses his sexuality. After the dissolution of the oedipus complex the super-ego is formed. This stage enables the child to become a normal and civilized member of society.

v. Genital stage:

At this stage the individual once again begins to show interest in sex. But this time all 'Component instincts' and erotogenic zones lose their relevance. What emerges is the supremacy of the genital. Instead of gaining pleasure through auto-erotism, the individual begins to show interest in the normal sexual aim. And his earlier sexual objects are replaced by new ones. As a matter of fact, after a long journey the individual at last becomes 'normal'.

11. Ibid, p 118.

Repression and Consequences:

(1) Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex:

It is at this juncture that one can ask whether man is destined to reach the final stages of sexuality without making any effort on his part. There seems to be good reasons to argue that the journey towards normalcy is not an easy affair. To what extent one becomes 'normal' depends to a large extent on one's capacity to repress one's infantile sexual aims. Here comes the notion of 'repression', the notion which seems to have occupied the central place in psychoanalysis. As we have already mentioned, at the phallic stage the child selects his first sexual object. For a boy his first sexual object is invariably his mother. This leads him to regard his father as a rival. These are two components of the Oedipus complex - sexual attachment to the mother and corresponding hostility towards the father. Needless to add, to become 'normal' one has to repress this Oedipus complex. Although 'normal' people are quite successful in suppressing the Oedipus complex, neurotics remain fixated to the first sexual object they select for sexual gratification.

*It has justly been said that the Oedipus complex

is the nuclear complex of the neuroses and constitutes the essential part of their component. It represents the peak of infantile sexuality, which through its after effects, exercises a decisive influence on the sexuality of adults. Every new arrival on the planet is faced by the task of mastering this Oedipus complex; anyone who fails to do so falls a victim of neurosis.¹²

But what leads the child to dissolve the Oedipus complex? It is, as Freud says, the fear of castration. At the phallic stage when the child plays with the genital, he is often threatened that his penis will be castrated. Although at the beginning he does not give much importance to this warning, he becomes really afraid of castration when during the game with little girls he discovers their clitoris which is invariably smaller than the penis. Since the child does not know the anatomical distinction between the sexes, he cannot but conclude that the little girl has been castrated. This fear of castration keeps him away from his mother.

After this the child begins to identify himself with the father. Because of this identification the super-ego is formed. The child internalizes the authority of the

12. Ibid, p 149.

father. His super-ego becomes the source of conscience. The point to remember is that when man ultimately reaches the stage of normal sexuality, he is already burdened with the conscience of the super-ego. To become sexually normal is by no means an easy affair!

(ii) Anxiety: the fate of mankind:

Everybody is not like Little Hans. For Little Hans, castration anxiety was unbearable. Most of us, however, react normally to the fear of castration. Instead of developing neurotic trends, we develop a strong super-ego. This, however, does not mean that the super ego will protect us from anxiety. In fact the formation of the super-ego creates another kind of anxiety - moral anxiety. No matter whether one is neurotic or normal, one can hardly escape moral anxiety. The formation of the super-ego does not guarantee that the ego will never be tempted to do what the id demands. The moment the id begins to disturb the ego, the super-ego becomes active. This anxious-expectation leads the ego to take some protective measures so that it can safely avoid the situation which generates tension. Freud says that the roots of all religious practices lie in the fear of being governed by the demands of the id. So religious ceremonials, like

the symptoms of obsessional neuroses, are in fact protective measures.

"... One might venture to regard the obsessional ^uneurosis as a pathological counterpart to the formation of a religion; to describe this neurosis as a private religious system and religion as a universal obsessional neurosis. The essential renunciation would lie in the fundamental renunciation of the satisfaction of the satisfaction of inherent instincts."¹³ The fact that man suffers from moral anxiety proves the strength of the id which the ego, even after being protected by the powerful super-ego, is not always able to cope with. Although moralists may argue that by nature man is good and the goal of life is spiritual salvation, Freud would say that any attempt to become spiritual causes enormous anxiety. Freud tends to give the final verdict on mankind. Since repression is a continual process man cannot avoid anxiety.

(iii) Impact of sexual repression on the formation of characters:

As Freud says, sexual repression makes man absolutely

13. Sigmund Freud, 'Obsessive Acts and Religious Practices' in Collected Papers (Vol. II), Hogarth Press, London, 1971, p 34.

submissive. To what extent one becomes confident depends to a large extent on how one meets the demands of the libido. If everytime the individual is forced to repress his libido, he is bound to become timid, coward and submissive. He loses confidence in himself. Sexual repression, especially when it crosses the limits, makes men believe that his he is destined to suffer. Although perverts may rebel against repression, most of the people - whom we call ^{U.}normal and civilized tend to believe that repression is their destiny. In his essay 'Civilized Sexual Morality and Modern Nervousness' Freud wrote:

" On the whole I have not gained the impression that sexual repression helps to shape energetic, self-reliant men of action, nor original thinkers, bold pioneers and reformers; far more often it produces good workings who later become lost in the crowd that tends to follow the initiative of strong characters".¹⁴

Especially at a time when the libido is extremely powerful, civilized sexual morality forces it to remain discontented. As a result, unless he is very much successful in transforming the libido from direct sexual activities to creative activities like art and music, the individual

14. Sigmund Freud, 'Civilized Sexual Morality and Modern Nervousness' in Collected Papers (Vol. II) p 92.

By arguing in this manner Freud, it seems, wants to convey a message. Whenever man denies his narcissism, he tends to become dependent. And this kind of personality is conducive to the growth of authoritarian leadership. As a result of the repression of anal eroticism, another important kind of personality may emerge. As we have already mentioned, during the anal stage of sexual development, the child begins to show special interest in faeces. During the latency period he is taught to regard faeces as something ditty and filthy. Instead of showing interest in faeces, he begins to develop special interest in money. He becomes parsimonious. Money begins to govern his life. All his activities are then directed to earning more and more money. It goes without saying that this kind of personality is extremely favourable for the development of early capitalism.

All these probably prove that the consequences of sexual repression are so harmful to the development of a new society based on free, creative and independent personalities that no revolutionary can afford to be indifferent to the findings of psychoanalysis.

(iv) Repression and children:

✓ The impact of sexual repression on children needs to

be studied. Freud says that sexual repression may destroy the child's instinct for research. At the age of ~~three~~ the child begins to ask a very very important question: Where do babies come from? He needs the answer, because the arrival of a new baby may deprive him of the amount of love he used to get from his parents. So, as Freud says, curiosity or the instinct for knowledge develops only when the child realizes that his potential rival is coming to the picture. It is surely obvious that the child asks this question to his parents whom, quite naturally, he considers the source of all knowledge. Freud says that the way ^{parents respond} ~~the~~ child's enquiry is dangerous. Because of their conservative moral values parents generally love to think that their children are so innocent that they should not be given the right answer, to their sexual question. Even if they do not rebuke, the answer they give (the stork brings the babies; it fetches them out of the water) does not satisfy the children. It is at this juncture that they begin to suspect their parents. What we call 'generation gap' starts at this stage.

"From the time of this first deception and rebuff they nourish a distrust of adults and have a suspicion of their being something forbidden which is being withheld ^{held} from them by the 'grown ups' and they ^{at} consequently hide their

further resources under a cloak of secrecy".¹⁷

But his curiosity does not yet cease to exist. The child after seeing his mother at the time of her pregnancy, comes to the conclusion that babies must have come from the mother's body. This utter failure of his research may have a life long impact on him. He may lose the capacity to ask questions. As a result, he may become dull and stupid; it is possible for him to accept ignorance as an unavoidable destiny.

"It is not hard to guess that the lack of success of his intellectual efforts makes it easier for him to reject and forget them. This brooding and doubting, however, becomes the prototype of all later intellectual work directed towards the solution of problems and the first failure has the crippling effect on the child's whole future."¹⁸

(v) Repression and Neurosis:

✓ To study neurosis it has to be kept in mind that repression may fail to serve the purpose it intends to

17. Sigmund Freud, 'The Sexual Theories of Children' in On Sexuality, p 191.

18. Ibid, p 196.

carry out. Whereas normal people ~~w~~are quite capable of obeying to the demands of the super-ego, neurotics may not succeed in doing so for reasons we would like to discuss here.

One can become neurotic if external frustration deprives one of the minimum amount of sexual gratification which civilization generally permits. But this external frustration by itself is not a sufficient condition. If the individual remains fixated to some earlier stage of sexual development, external frustration may then lead the individual to regress to this stage. But civilized sexual morality does not permit sexual gratification through infantile stages. As a result, the ego, governed by the super-ego, represses the idea of infantile sexuality. What emerges is a psychical conflict that leads to the formation of symptoms. Through symptoms neurotics intend to convey a message to the moralist: 'Although our attempt to revolt against your values is not a total success, we warn you that the damage you have done to man's instinctual gratification is so unbearable that rebellion against your values is almost undeniable.'

All these tend to indicate that a repressive civilization cannot make man happy and contented. But

Whether Freud, despite his critique

the question arises, of civilized morality, helps us to create completely new values so that the degrees of repression reduces to a considerable extent. Moreover, it is equally important to ask whether the kind of crisis man in our age is suffering from can be grasped by Freudian psychoanalysis?

III

CULTURAL AND STRUCTURAL CRITIQUE OF SEXUALITY AND REPRESSION

✓ (1) Bronislaw Malinowski refutes one of the fundamental assumptions of Freudian psychoanalysis. As he argues, to claim that the ^eOldipus complex is universal does not make any sense. Since the Freudian drama takes place in the family, it is necessary to study the nature of the family. The fact that the nature of the family varies from society to society is sufficient to prove that the nature of the family complex may not necessarily coincide with that of the oldipus complex.

What Freud forgets is that the Oldipus complex may not originate in a completely different kinship organization which by no means resembles the nuclear family of the west. As Malinowski says, it is hardly possible for

Trobriand Islanders to have oedipus complex. Two sociological reasons which Malinowski has put forward to establish his thesis deserve to be noted.

Firstly, Melanesia is a matrilineal society. The father, not being the guardian, remains friendly to his children. As a result, children do not have any hostile attitude towards their father. One of the major components of the oedipus complex - hostility towards the father - is bound to be absent in a matrilineal society like Melanesia where fathers, being deprived of authority and power, remain friendly to their children.

Secondly, in Melanesia children are allowed to stay with their mother for a relatively longer period of time. They separate themselves from their mother, only when they were capable of becoming independent. As a result, the separation from mother is not a trauma to them. This naturally precludes the possibility of any kind of fixation to the mother. So the second component of the Oedipus complex - fixation to the mother is also absent in Melanesia.

Malinowski's study proves an important fact that the Oedipus complex cannot claim to have universal applicability. The problem of the Oedipus complex, far from being universal, is peculiar to the nuclear family of the patriarchal civilization. Malinowski makes it easier for the

sociologist to advance his thesis that psychoanalysis, like all other systems of knowledge, has to be located in a definite historical context.

(ii) Freud explains the origin of civilization in terms of the Oedipus complex. Malinowski refutes this proposition:

"I cannot conceive of the complex (Oedipus) as the first cause of everything, as the unique source of culture, of organization and belief; as the metaphysical entity, creative, but not created prior to all things and not caused by anything else".¹⁹

In Totem and Taboo Freud says that once all the expelled brothers killed their father who, being the chief of the horde, prevented his sons from having sexual intercourse with women of the same horde. But after this crime, all the brothers realized that it would not be possible to live together without certain amount of repression. Moreover, they felt repented for the murder. As a result, they internalized the conscience of the father. And civilisation started its march from that moment.

19. Bronislaw Malinowski, Sex and Repression in Savage Society, Kegan Paul, London, 1957, p 143.

This kind of argument, says Malinowski, is erroneous.^e
 The question is why the brothers who were absolutely uncivilized would suddenly feel guilty for their action. This implies that Freud believes that even uncivilized people may have conscience- To quote from Malinowski:

"We are asked to believe that the parricidal sons had a conscience. But conscience is a most unnatural mental trait imposed upon man by culture. It also implies that they had the possibilities of legislating, of establishing mental values, religious ceremonies and social bonds. All of which again it is impossible to assume or imagine, for the simple reason that events are happening in pre-cultural milieu, and culture, we must remember, cannot be created in one moment and by one act."²⁰

Malinowski tends to imply that 'Totem and Taboo' seems to be a fantasy written by one who finds no distinction between the mentality of the primitive men and that of the civilized man of the west.

"It is easy to p^{re}ceive that the primitive h^{ar}de has been equipped with all the bias, maladjustments and ill tempers of a middle class European family and then let

20. Ibid, p 166

loose in a prehistoric jungle to run riot in a most attractive but fantastic hypothesis".²¹

(iii) Geza Roheim, however, supports the arguments put forward by Freud in 'Totem and Taboo'. Roheim says that to appreciate the arguments of 'Totem and Taboo' one should be aware of the fact that in reality the father represented generations of father and the brother generations of brother. Time and again the horde of brothers would murder the powerful leader and take possession of the women. Only very gradually did a sense of uneasiness begin to inhibit the pleasure of this sexual conquest.

But Roheim argues that Freud made a fundamental mistake by assuming that there were only two actors in the great primeval drama. The father and the brothers. Roheim intends to attach importance to the role of the third actor - the children who, because of their immaturity were merely witnesses to the murder. The child who observed the violent assault on the father and the subsequent sexual violation of the mother could conceivably experience a trauma of sufficient intensity to initiate the process of sexual repression which marked the origin of civilisation.

21. Ibid, p 165.

(iv) Although Freud cannot think of a society free from repression, Wilhelm Reich is confident that the problem of sexual repression, far from being universal is the problem of patriarchal authoritarian civilization. Freud takes patriarchy for granted. As a result, it never occurs to him that a different kind of society is possible where repression can be avoided to a large extent.

A patriarchal authoritarian civilization, as Reich argues, needs 'sex-negating' morality. This (sex-negating) morality is conducive to the growth of 'masochistic' personality. And this is precisely what an authoritarian society needs. So the problem of sexual repression, for Reich, is a sociological problem.

The oedipus complex to which Freud gives so much importance becomes an acute problem only in the authoritarian patriarchal civilization. Reich says that if children are allowed to gratify their sexual urges through other outlets, they would hardly remain fixated to their parents. In a sexually free society, Reich believes, the problem of the Oedipus complex can be solved.

"The historical pathological incestuous attachment to parents and siblings loses its strength when the energy stasis in the immediate situation is eliminated

in other words, when full orgasmic gratification takes place in the immediate present. The pathogenicity of the oedipus complex - therefore, depends on whether or not there is a physiologically adequate discharge of sexual energy".²²

To what extent a sexually free society is within the reach of humanity is a point which we need not discuss in this chapter (in fact, the fourth chapter will be devoted to this problem) what strikes us immediately is that Reich gives a sociological dimension to psychoanalysis. Whereas Freud is interested in the biography of a particular patient, Reich believes that the biography of the patient is largely determined by the kind of social history he belongs to. To cure the patient, as Reich thinks, the psychoanalyst cannot afford to be indifferent to politics. In other words, neurosis becomes a socio-political problem. Without this 'Sociological imagination' no psychoanalyst would be able to situate the patient in a particular historical context.

(v) For Herbert Marcuse also, sexual repression is a sociological problem. He uses the concept 'Surplus

22. Wilhelm Reich, Selected Writings, Vision press London, 1961, pp 52-3.

repression' to imply that in the capitalist civilization repression serves the purpose of the ruling class. This repression has to be differentiated from 'basic repression' which as he says, is needed for any kind of civilization whatsoever. This 'surplus repression' prevents the masses from becoming 'polymorphously perverse' which, as Marcuse would argue, is the fundamental prerequisite for happiness.

This process of desexualization of the body has to be considered as a political strategy used by the ruling class. As a result of this, the masses deny their sexuality and use their body for alienated labour.

That the consequences of sexual repression can go beyond individual neurosis is what Freud does not seem to have considered. A reader of Marcuse becomes immediately aware of the fact that sexual repression is another form of exploitation. It manifests itself not only in the symptoms of neuroses; it is what makes alienation possible. An alienated worker, although not a patient in the Freudian sense, is equally repressed. What Marcuse suggests is that psychoanalysis cannot be confined to the clinical chambers; it has to be considered as a political philosophy that makes us aware how repression as a form of exploitation serves the purpose of the ruling class.

IV

REPRESSION, CIVILIZATION AND POLITICAL PERSONALITY

(i)

That childhood can really be glorious is what Malinowski showed in his 'Sex and Repression in Savage Society'!

Among the Trobriand Islanders children are allowed to have absolute freedom for sexual gratification. To quote from Malinowski:

"At an early age children are initiated by each other, or sometimes by a slightly older companion, into the practices of sex. Naturally, at this stage, they are unable to carry out the act properly, but they content themselves with the all sorts of games in which they are quite left at liberty by their elders, and thus they can easily satisfy their curiosity and sensuality directly and without any disguise".²³

Moreover, the attitudes of the adults towards the sexual activities of children are quite human.

"A very important point about this infantile sexuality is the attitude of the elder generation towards it. As I have said, the parents do not look upon it as an in least

23. Bronislaw Malinowski, Op.cit., p 55.

reprehensible. Generally they take it entirely for granted."²⁴

These two facts are important for the development of the personality. Unlike the child of the west, the child in Melanesia is not ashamed of sex. As a result, sex is never a mystery to him. This normal attitude towards sex prevents the child from developing neurotic trends.

"In the Trobriands, though I know scores of native intimately and had a nodding acquaintance with many more, I could not name a single man or woman who was hysterical or even neurasthenic. Nervous ties, compulsory actions or obsessive ideas were not to be found."²⁵

Malinowski refutes the Freudian fear that repression is unavoidable. After Malinowski it is hardly possible to agree with Freud that without repression children cannot be civilized. It never occurs to Freud that if children are freed from the burden of repressive system of socialization, it does not necessarily mean a regression to barbarism. It may promise a new kind of society free from neurosis hatred and anxiety.

24. Ibid, p 57

25. Ibid, p 87

Freud's inability to evolve a completely new kind of educational policy for children has to be explained by his political indifference. The way Freud escaped from this task manifests itself in the following passage:

"If one is convinced of the defects in our present social arrangements, education with a psychoanalytic alignment cannot justifiably be put at their service as well: it must be given another and higher aim, liberated from the prevailing demands of society. In my opinion however, this argument is out of place here - such a demand goes beyond the legitimate function of psychoanalysis."²

Freud's unwillingness to fight for a more humanitarian social order is largely responsible for his reluctance to take the task of developing revolutionary characters. He may advise parents to be slightly soft towards their children. But he cannot advise them to give absolute freedom to children. A free child may revolt against the kind of civilization Freud took almost for granted.

(ii) For children Reich, demands absolute sexual freedom.

'The Mass Psychology of Fascism' carries an important message to which no social scientist can be indifferent.

26. Sigmund Freud, New Introductory Lectures, Penguin, 1979
p 186

In this book Reich observes that when a child is deprived of what is most vital in his life, he develops a submissive character. His every attempt to gratify his sexual urges is threatened by the family. As a result, he begins to believe that slavery is his fate which he cannot escape. When he becomes adult he faces the world with helplessness. He does not take time to be hypnotized by the charisma of the dictator.

"The moral inhibition of the child's natural sexuality, the last stage of which is the severe impairment of the child's genital sexuality, makes the child afraid, shy, fearful of authority, obedient, good and docile in the authoritarian sense of the words. It has a crippling effect on man's rebellious forces because every vital impulse is now burdened with severe fear, and since sex is a forbidden subject, thought in general and man's critical faculty also become inhibited. In short, morality's aim is to produce acquiescent subjects who, despite distress and humiliation, are adjusted to the authoritarian order..... Man's authoritarian structure - this must be clearly understood - is basically produced by the embedding of sexual inhibitions and fear in the living substance of sexual impulses."²⁷

27. Wilhelm Reich, The Mass Psychology of Fascism, Penguin 1978, p 64.

What Reich suggests is that the impact of sex-negating education on children is so deep-rooted that the reasons for the emergence of fascism have to be sought in the way the child develops his character.

When Freud talked about infantile sexuality, he shocked the world. But this Freudian shock was mitigated because Freud, despite his critique of sexual morality, did not approve of sexual freedom for children. He took sexual repression for granted. As a result, he discovered Little Hans. Reich wants to create conditions in which Little Hans becomes free from neurotic trends. To understand the tragedy of the adult, Freud goes to the painful experiences of childhood. Reich wants to change this tradition. To understand the glory of the adult, Reich would want to see the joyful experiences of childhood.

It is now clear that the Freudian-lefts like Reich give tremendous importance to the family. They think that the child is destroyed (i.e. his revolutionary potentialities are murdered) by the family. To create a new society, as they argue, the family as it exists now has to be attacked. Unless the politics of family is challenged, it is difficult to create revolutionary characters.

However, this extraordinary emphasis on the family

and its impact on children has not been appreciated by Christopher Lasch. In an article in New Left Review he has argued that the family has already lost its relevance in advanced industrial society. In fact, the child is destroyed not by the family, but by the kind of consumer society he lives in.

"By directing so much of its criticism against the patriarchal family, however, the new-Left has confused the issue. It has deflected criticism from the real problem to the pseudo problem from the corporation and the state to the family. The worst feature of our society derives not from the depotism of the authoritarian father, much eroded in any sense, but from the regressive psychology of industrialism, which reduces the citizen to a consumer and bombards him with images of immediate and total gratification".²⁸

(iii) As Freud says, the kind of super-ego the child develops is essentially masculine in nature. As a result, what emerges is a kind of extremely rational character. Sudhir Kakar says that this kind of character is the typical character of the west. He says that in India because of a different kind of childhood experience, man

28. Christopher Lasch, 'The Freudian Left and Cultural Revolution' in New Left Review (129) Sept-Oct, 1981-

develops completely new characteristics. He is not as rational as the man of the west is. Since he is tremendously attached to his mother, in his super-ego he internalizes the conscience of the mother. So man in India, according to Kakar, combine both male and female qualities. Indians, for this reason, are vulnerable, emotional and simple. To quote from Kakar's 'The Inner world':

"Given the experience of his mothers immediacy and utter responsiveness, an Indian generally emerges from infancy into childhood believing that the world is benign and that others can be counted on to act in his behalf. The young child has come to experience his core self as lovable: 'I am lovable, for I am loved'. Infancy has provided him with a secure base from which to explore his environment with confidence.... In other words, Indians are apt to approach others with an unconscious sense of their own lovability and the expectation and demand that trustworthy benefactors will always turn up in times of difficulty."²⁹

To what extent the Indian way of educating children in the extended family is conducive to the development of

29. Sudhir Kakar, The Inner World, Oxford University Press 1982, p 82.

revolutionary characters is ^a point we need not discuss here. What concerns us immediately is the fact that by internalizing the conscience of the mother an Indian becomes more human. Given the kind of cruel world we are living in, this kind of personality seems to have its importance. In fact, Kakar's study shows that Freud's understanding of childhood was conditioned by the nuclear family of the west. Kakar's sociological insight enables him to conclude that in, India, because of different kind of family experience, children may become what Freud never thought of.

V

THE SHIFT OF EMPHASIS FROM SEXUALITY TO EXISTENTIAL NEEDS

It is hard to deny the importance of Freud. Especially in a society where sex is still a taboo, the relevance of Freudian psychoanalysis needs to be reemphasized. Freud gave a message to mankind, the price one has to pay to follow conservative sexual morality sometimes becomes too heavy to bear.

Today in the advanced countries of the west, something like sexual revolution seems to have taken place. Even if one says that absolute sexual freedom is still an

utopia, there is no denying the fact that sexual repression is no longer the fundamental problem man in the west is suffering from.

But despite this sexual freedom man in the west cannot be said to be sane. To explain this sickness, Freud has proved to be insufficiently radical. Keeping this fact in mind, Karen Horney, Erich Fromm and R.D. Laing have tried to shift the focus of psychoanalysis from physiological needs to the existential needs like 'love' 'care' and 'relatedness'. They argue that in today's civilization, because of increasing alienation, man is no longer able to relate himself meaningfully to the world. This emptiness, rootlessness and meaninglessness cannot be explained by orthodox psychoanalysis. They argue that the reasons behind neurosis have to be sought in culture. As Karen Horney writes in her 'The Neurotic Personality of our Time':

"Freud's disregard of cultural factors not only leads to false generalizations, but to a large extent blocks an understanding of the real forces which motivate our attitudes and actions."³⁰

30: Karen Horney, The Neurotic Personality of Our Time, W.W.Norton, & Company, New York, 1937, OO 20-1.

In the kind of society Freud lived in sex was a taboo. But in today's consumer society not sex, but love is denied. This seems to be the reason why they argue that psychoanalysis, if it does not change its focus of attention, would be no more than a kind of false consciousness. To quote from Fromm's 'The Art of Loving':

"Indeed, in his time, Freud's theory had a challenging and revolutionary character. But what was true around 1900 is not true any more fifty years later. The sexual mores have changed so much that Freud's theories are not any longer shocking to the Western middle classes, and it is a quixotic kind of radicalism when orthodox analysts today still think they are courageous and radical in defending Freud's sexual theory. In fact, their brand of psychoanalysis is conformist and does not try to raise psychological questions which would lead to a criticism of contemporary society".³¹

To make psychoanalysis more meaningful, they try to make a synthesis of Freud, Marx and Sartre. For them, man is more alienated than sexually crippled. And unlike orthodox Marxists, they argue that alienation is not simply the question of political economy; it is a problem deep

31. Erich Fromm, The Art of Loving, Unwin Paperbacks, London, 1980, p 37.

rooted in man's inmost psychology. The way they understand human crisis makes it easier for young Marx to conduct a dialogue with Sigmund Freud.

CHAPTER II

HUMAN HOPE AND THE DEATH — INSTINCT : A DIALOGUE WITH

SIGMUND FREUD

I

FREUDIAN NOTION OF THE DEATH - INSTINCT; ORIGIN AND
IMPLICATIONS;

Sigmund Freud's 'Beyond the pleasure principle' is a controversial work through which he sent his most frightening message to mankind: "the aim of all life is death".¹ Those who consider Freud as the theoretician of the pleasure principle would find it difficult to welcome his arguing in favour of the death-instinct.

But what led Freud to give the theory of the death-instinct? This^e discovery of narcissism raised some important questions. The fact that the narcissistic person is himself his own sexual-object made it difficult to clearly distinguish between the sexual-instincts and the ego-instincts.

This narcissistic libido was of course also a manifestation of the force of the sexual-instinct in the analytical sense of those words and it had necessarily to be identified with the self-preservative instincts' whose existence had been recognised from the first. Thus

¹ Sigmund Freud, "Beyond the pleasure Principle", The Hograth Press, London, 1971, p 32.

the original opposition between the ego-instincts and the sexual-instincts proved to be inadequate."²

Besides this, Freud faced some other problems which forced him to reformulate his earlier theory of instincts. For instance, the recurrent dreams of war neurotics in which the original trauma is revived again and again; the pattern of self-inquiring behaviour that can be traced through the lives of certain people; the tendency of many patients during psychoanalysis to act out over and again unpleasant experiences of their childhood - all these led Freud to talk about 'repetition compulsion'. In this way he succeeded in maintain^{ing} his theory of dualism which, in fact, was challenged after the discovery of narcissism. To quote from Freud:

"Our views have from the very first been dualistic, and today they are even more definitely dualistic than before - now that we describe the opposition as being not between ego-instincts and sexual-instincts but between life instincts and death instincts. Jung's libido theory is, on the contrary, monistic; the fact that he has called his one instinctual force 'libido' is bound to cause confusion, but need not affect us otherwise."³

2. Ibid, p 46

3. Ibid, p 47

But how can this 'compulsion to repeat' be identified with the death-instinct? Freud said:

"At this point we cannot escape a suspicion that we may come upon the track of a universal attribute of instincts and perhaps of organic life in general which has not hitherto been clearly recognized or at least not explicitly stressed. It seems, then, that an instinct is an urge inherent in organic life to restore an earlier state of things which the living entity has been obliged to abandon under the pressure of external disturbing forces; that is, it is a kind of organic elasticity, or, to put it another way, the expression of the inertia inherent in organic life."⁴

The way Freud gave importance to the conservative nature of instincts posed an important question: Can ~~the~~ pleasure principle be identified with the Nirvana principle? Since both these principles aim at reducing tensions, it may be seen at first sight that the aim of both these principles is to restore the tensionless inorganic stage. Freud, however, maintained the distinction. About the nature of the life-instincts his comment merits attention:

4. Ibid, p 30.

"They are conservative in the same sense as the other instincts in that they bring back earlier states of living substance; but they are conservative to a higher degree in that they are peculiarly resistant to external influences; and they are conservative too in another sense in that they preserve life itself for a comparatively long period. They are the true life-instincts. (They operate against the purpose of the other instincts which leads, by reason of their function to death;)... It is as though the life of the organism moved with a vacillating rhythm. One group of instincts rushes forward so as to reach the final aim of life as swiftly as possible; but when a particular stage in the advance has been reached, the other group jerks back to a certain point to make a fresh start and so prolong the journey."⁵

Freud talked about two important ways to manipulate the death-instinct for the purpose of life. Firstly, instead of killing himself, man may kill others. As he writes in 'The Economic Problem in Masochism':

"To the libido falls the task of making this destructive instinct harmless, and it manages to dispose of it

5. Ibid, pp 34-35.

by directing it to a great extent and early in life - with the help of a special organic system - the musculature - towards the objects of the outer world. It is then called the instinct of destruction - of mastery, the will to power."⁶

Secondly, by making his super-ego excessively sadistic, he may punish himself. This introversion of the death-instinct creates strong conscience; the super-ego begins to punish the ego for its every mistake.

The notion of the death-instinct is so difficult to tackle with that at times Freud himself expressed his confusion.

"It may be asked whether and how far I am myself convinced of the truth of the hypothesis that have been set out in these pages. My answer would be that I am not convinced myself and I do not seek to persuade other people to believe in them".⁷

Moreover, Freud, despite his scienticism, was a social reformer also. This seems to be the reason why he refuted his own theory of instincts. Freud, as

6. Sigmund Freud, 'The Economic Problem of Masochism' in Collected Papers (Vol. II), The Hogarth Press, London, 1971, p 260

7. Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Op.cit. p 53.

we know, talked about man's innate-historical nature. But he changed his position in order to alleviate his pessimism. In contrast to his own theory of instincts, he said that under changed circumstances man may become completely different. In a letter to Albert Einstein he once wrote:

"The psychic changes which accompany this process of cultural change are striking, and not to be gainsaid. They consist in the progressive rejection of instinctive ends and a scaling down of instinctive reactions. Sensations which delighted our forefathers have become neutral or unbearable to us; and if our ethical and authentic ideals have undergone a change, the cause of this are ultimately organic,..... Now war runs most emphatically counter to the psychic disposition imposed on us by the growth of cultures; we are therefore bound to resort^{en} to war, to find it utterly intolerable. With pacifists like us, it is not merely an intellectual and effective repulsion, but a constitutional intolerance, an idiosyncrasy in its most drastic form."⁸

It should, however, be kept in mind that Freud's theory

8. Sigmund Freud, 'Why War?' in Civilization, War and Death, The Hogarth Press, London, 1939, pp 96-7.

of the death-instinct, although at times appears to be confusing, has a sociological meaning which is extremely important for us to explore. In fact sociologists who are interested in the theory liberation cannot possibly be indifferent to a doctrine that tends to destroy man's hope in life.

II

MARXIST HOPE AND FREUDIAN DESPAIR:

The theory of the death-instinct is what makes Freud sceptical about the Marxist^t dream that a society free from coercion is not beyond the reach of humanity. Freud is not ready to accept that man would begin to prefer peace, if the institution of private property is abolished. To quote from his 'New Introductory Lectures'

"Although practical Marxist^m has mercilessly cleared away all idealistic systems and illusions, it has itself developed illusions which are no less questionable and unprobable than the earlier ones. It hopes in the course of a few generations so to alter human nature that people will live together almost without friction in the new order of society, and that they will undertake the

duties of work without any compulsion.... But a transformation of human nature such as this is highly improbable.... We shall still have ^{to} struggle for an incalculable time with the difficulties which the untameable character of human nature presents to every kind of social community."⁹

If the state does not allow the individual to locate his enemies towards which he can be aggressive, he would begin to torture himself. In other words, if primary masochism is not converted into secondary sadism, the individual is left with no other alternative but to make his super-ego sadistic. The question Freud raises: which alternative is desirable - to allow man to destroy his enemies? or to force him to bear the burden of an almost unbearable conscience that often causes neurosis? Freud says:

"In one of its activities, the death-instinct is operative within the living being and we have sought to trace back a number of normal and pathological phenomena to this introversion of the death-instinct. Obviously when this internal tendency operates on too large a scale, it is no trivial matter, rather a positively morbid state

9. Sigmund Freud, New Introductory Lectures, Penguin, 1979 pp 218-9.

of things, whereas the division of the destructive impulse towards the external world must have beneficial effects."¹⁰

This certainly implies that Freud is not willing to invite the illusion of socialism, because socialism, as he sees it, demands what man, because of his innate selfishness and destructiveness, can never fulfil.

For one more important reason the theory of the death-instinct goes against socialism. Freud would argue that a socialist is not really what he appears to be. He pays too high a price to become a socialist. Because of the eternal conflict between the ^{Eros}~~Eros~~ and the death-instinct, he becomes the victim of 'ambivalence'. Although in the name of love and responsibility, he denies his aggressiveness, he cannot fully succeed. A sense of guilt it seems, disturbs him. In other words, the decision to fight for the welfare of mankind does not seem to be his free choice; it is the outcome of guilt feelings. So, Freud argues that this excessive love for mankind—which in fact socialists demand from themselves — goes against human nature. This is the reason why he writes in his 'Civilization and Its Discontents'.

10. Freud, 'Why War?' in Civilization, War and Death
Op.cit. p 90.

"If civilization is an inevitable course of development from the group of the family to the group of humanity as a whole, then an intensification of the sense of guilt - resulting from the innate conflict of ambivalence, from the eternal struggle between the love and the death trends - will be inextricably bound up with it, until perhaps the sense of guilt may swell to a magnitude that individuals can hardly support."¹¹

Freud's reluctance to argue in favour of socialism is rooted in his fear that man is essentially selfish and aggressive. In his 'Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844' Karl Marx writes:

Assuming man to be man and his relationship to the world to be a human one; then you can exchange love only for love, trust for trust etc. ... If you love without evoking love in return - that is, if your loving as loving does not produce reciprocal love; if through a living expression of yourself as a loving person you do not make yourself a beloved one, then your love is impotent - a misfortune."¹²

11. Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents in Civilization, War and Death, Op.cit. p 67

12. Karl Marx, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, Progress, 1977, p 232.

It seems that the kind of love Marx is talking about is of no importance to Freud. The reason is simple enough. Freud - the theoretician of the death-instinct - regards aggressiveness as an unalterable human character; but Marx raises man's hope for a society that makes love possible. Marxist's can hardly be content with the way Freud tends to seek the reasons of all sorts of violence in man's inherent death-instincts. Freud may not be aware of the political implications of his theory of the death-instincts. But who can deny that the theory of the death-instinct, if taken seriously, makes one completely indifferent to politics? If Freud becomes our intellectual master, one need not study the nature of the state; one need not challenge the system. He permits one to conclude that the state is a coercive machinery precisely because man is violent, aggressive and destructive. One who takes Freud seriously begins to believe that man's fate has been determined for ever. As a result, one finds it absolutely irrational to be enthusiastic about revolution. It would be unreasonable to argue that the follower of Freud finds it very difficult to adjust to the Communist Manifesto. He needs 'Civilization and Its Discontents' to justify his political indifference, his callousness, his unwillingness to fight for a better society.

And what is the philosophical implication of Freud's 'Compulsion to repeat'? This notion implies that man has an inherent tendency to repeat the situation, even when it is painful. In other words, man is not necessarily forward looking. The kind of man Freud discovers in the process of psychoanalytical therapy has lost his faith in history. He is tired of novelty. Although the kind of situation he belongs to does not give him happiness, he nevertheless repeats it ceaselessly. He is not ready to accept that hope may lie in future. A moment's reflection makes it clear that this 'compulsion to repeat' goes against Marxism. A Marxist is always forward-looking. He makes history, because "history is nothing but the activity of man pursuing his aims".¹³ This emphasis on praxis or this tremendous urge to change history distinguishes a Marxist from the Freudian 'normal' man who, because of his compulsion to repeat, remains static. It can be said that Freud's inability to change history reflects itself in his theory of 'compulsion to repeat'.

III

WHEN NIETZSCHE SPEAKS THROUGH FREUD'S MOUTH:

To compare Freud with Nietzsche seems to be necessary.

13. Marx and Engels, The Holy Family, Progress, 1975, p.110.

Nietzsche's favourite 'superman' rebels against christian morality. The superman finds it ridiculous to love mankind. Any doctrine that talks about love and selflessness, Nietzsche argues, makes man weak and coward. To quote from his 'Anti Christ':

"What is good?- All that heightens the feeling of power, the will to power, power itself in man. Not contempt, but more power; not peace at all, but war; not virtue, but proficiency."¹⁴

The superman's strong 'will to power' frees him from 'bad conscience'. He becomes brutal, aggressive and power hungry and this is what Nietzsche approves of. Freud, although not as explicit as Nietzsche is, would, however, find it absolutely 'natural', if man becomes aggressive. As we have already mentioned, Freud allows man to be violent because, as he argues this is one of the fruitful ways through which man can manipulate his death-instinct. This seems to be the reason why he says that life without war is simply impossible. In his essay 'Thoughts for the Times on War and Death' he observes:

° Is it not for us to confess that in our civilized

14. Friedrich Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols, Anti-Christ, Penguin, 1981, pp 115-6.

attitude towards death we are once more living psychologically beyond our means, and must reform and give truth its due? Would it not be better to give death the place in actuality and in our thoughts which properly belongs to it and to yield a little prominence to that unconscious attitude towards death which we have hitherto so carefully suppressed? It would be timely thus to paraphrase it. Si Vis Vitam, para mortem. If you would endure life be prepared for death".¹⁵

The way Freud, like Nietzsche, tends to justify aggressiveness has its political implications. Nietzsche's superman is not only against religion; he as Georg Lukacs¹⁶ has rightly mentioned, is against socialism. A socialist tends to make the impossible possible. His love for humanity makes this earth really worth-living. On the contrary, the superman hates love; his passion for destruction is what Nietzsche sanctions.

"....Evil is man's best strength. Man must grow better and more evil - this do I teach. The most evil is necessary for the superman's best. It may have been good

15. Sigmund Freud, 'Thoughts for the Times on War and Death' in Collected papers (Vol. IV). The Hogreth Press, London, 1971, pp 316-7.

16. Georg Lukacs, The Destruction of Reason. The Martin Press, London, 1980.

for the preacher of the petty people to bear and suffer the sin of man. I, however, rejoice in great sin as my great consolation."¹⁷

The kind of 'normal' man Freud talks about is not as bold as Nietzsche's superman is. He wants to 'adjust' to the community, although this adjust^{ment} by no means makes him happy. Nevertheless, it can be said that Freud's normal man finds himself nearer to Nietzsche's superman rather than the kind of communist Karl Marx for the first time gave to man-kind. Freud's normal man does not have the courage that could have turned him into a superman. But he is fascinated by the superman, because the superman does in reality what he does in fantasy. Whereas Nietzsche attracts Freud, Karl Marx, for him, appears to be extremely utopian. This implies that a capitalist with all his aggressive and brutal impulses is 'natural'—more nearer to the demands of innate instincts. A socialist with his love for mankind is, therefore, merely a neurotic! A socialist is one one who denies life. He is not natural. He is artificial. This seems to be the logical conclusion Freud's theory of the death-instinct leads to.

17. R.J. Hollingdale(ed.) A Nietzsche Reader, Penguin, 1981, pp 243-4.

Nietzsche's idea of 'eternal recurrence' can be compared with the Freudian 'Nirvana principle'. As Nietzsche implies, man, if wants to be happy and contented, should not make history. The process of becoming is not important; it is the sign of unhappiness and misery. But "joy wants itself, wants eternity, wants recurrence, wants everything eternally the same".¹⁸ Similarly, the Nirvana principle implies man's tendency to escape from history. This nostalgia for eternity or this tendency to repeat things ceaselessly goes against the kind of 'historical' role any revolutionary is supposed to perform. Whereas Marxists are governed by their will to change history, the notion of Nirvana principle or eternal recurrence, it seems, denies this tendency. A sociologist can safely conclude that especially at a time when throughout the world men are fighting for social change, the kind of doctrine Nietzsche and Freud put forward is bound to serve the purpose of reactionaries only.

IV

DEATH, AGGRESSIVENESS AND REPRESSION

To argue in favour of the death-instinct implies that

18. Ibid, p 256.

man is not content with the kind of life he leads. The question one would want to ask is: What are the reasons that this life is so unbearable that man cannot but want passionately, although unconsciously, his own death? Freud's answer ² ₁ invites attention. Life is unbearable chiefly because it is full of tensions. These tensions originate in man's instinctual drives. Although the pleasure-principle aims at reducing these tensions, the reality principle for Freud, is so repressive, that life loses its charm. In 'New Introductory Lectures' he observes:

"Thus the ego, driven by the id, confined by the superego, repulsed by reality, struggles to master its economic task of bringing about harmony among the forces and influences working in and upon it; and we can understand how it is that so often we cannot suppress a cry; 'Life is not easy' ! If the ego is obliged to admit its weakness, it breaks out in anxiety realistic anxiety regarding the external world, moral anxiety regarding the superego and neurotic anxiety regarding the strength of the passions of the id".¹⁹

And herein lies the origin of the Nirvana principle. If life is unbearable, isn't it better to go back to

19. Sigmund Freud, New Introductory Lecturers, Op.cit. pp 110-1.

mother's womb - the only place where tensions never enter? The longing for death, it seems, is nothing but man's passionate desire to restore the lost unity with mother. Life means separation from mother and this separation is almost unbearable. This is man's fate. For Freud, this fate seems to be unalterable. If tragedy is man's destiny, the only option left for him is an easy escape. The tendency to destroy oneself seems to be the easiest escape from this life!

This sense of tragedy is of considerable importance to a sociologist. All sociologies would be meaningless, if life itself is meaningless. A sociologist is bound to raise the question; granted that life, as it exists now, has lost its charm, but is the idea of a meaningful life altogether beyond our reach?

Erich Fromm refutes the Freudian theory of the death-instinct. Fromm argues that if man is violent and aggressive, the reason has to be sought in the kind of society we are living in. What makes man aggressive is not his innate instincts. The kind of society he belongs to deprives him of his capacity to lead a meaningful and creative life. For Fromm, the need for relatedness is fundamental. If man does not get this opportunity to fulfill this need, he becomes violent, brutal and

aggressive. In his 'Man For Himself' he observes:

"If life's tendency to grow, to be lived is thwarted, the energy thus blocked undergoes a process of change and is transformed into life destructive energy. Destructiveness is the outcome of un-lived life."²⁰

The way Fromm argues can be compared with Ian D. Suttie's emphasis on love. Suttie refuses to accept the Freudian theory of the death-instinct. He argues that the reasons for hatred have to be sought in social frustration. When man begins to hate he intends to give a message to mankind. I hate because I want love. To quote from Suttie:

"Hate, I regard not as a primal independent instinct ... but as a development of intensification of separation anxiety which in turn is roused by a threat against love ... Its purpose is not death-seeking or death-dealing, but the preservation of the self from the isolation which is death, and the restoration of a love-relationship."²¹

One can argue that man's need for relatedness can be fulfilled only when he remains attached to his mother.

20. Erich Fromm, Man for Himself, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1978, p 216.

21. Ian D. Suttie, The origins of Love and Hate, Penguin 1960, p 25.

Any separation from mother, as it seems at first sight, is bound to frustrate man's need for love and relatedness. Is it then possible to say that birth is the first trauma^e that makes man completely incapable of relating himself to the world? For Freud, this seems to be the case. Anxiety has its roots in man's separation from his mother. Even castration anxiety, as Freud argues, has to be explained in terms of this separation from mother. In his 'Inhibitions, symptoms and Anxiety' he writes:

"The high degree of narcissistic value which the penis possesses can appeal to the fact that ^{the} organ is a guarantee to its owner that he can be once more united to his mother - i.e. to a substitute for her - in the act of copulation. Being deprived of it amounts to a renewed separation from her, and this in its turn means being helplessly exposed to an unpleasurable tension due to instinctual need, as was the case at birth."²²

This unbearable anxiety as Freud implies gives birth to the death-instinct - a passionate desire to return to mother's womb. Fromm admits that this kind of anxiety cannot be ruled out. But he believes that if social relations are conducive to the growth of authentic human

22. Sigmund Freud, Inhibitions, symptoms and Anxiety in On Psychopathology, Angela Richards(ed.) Penguin, 1979, p 296.

relationship, man can overcome this anxiety. If society permits him to unite himself with humanity, his nostalgia for going back to the last paradise would diminish. A society that makes new love possible allows man to take new births. His every new birth makes him forward-looking. Life becomes so charming and meaningful that the question of going back to the inorganic stage does not arise at all. Fromm writes:

"We are never free from two conflicting tendencies: one to emerge from the womb, from the animal form of existence into a more human existence, from bondage to freedom; another to return to the womb, to nature, to certainty and security. In the history of the individual and of the race, the progressive tendency has proved to be stronger, yet the phenomena of mental illness and the regression of the human race to positions apparently relinquished generations ago, show the intense struggle which accompanies each new act of birth."²³

At this juncture, the distinction between Freud and Fromm becomes clear. For Freud, life is static. All instincts, according to him, are essentially conservative. Freud's man finds it very difficult to free himself

23. Erich Fromm, The Sane Society, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1979, p 27.

from the mother. As he says, the Oedipus complex is chiefly responsible for all neurotic phenomena. For Freud, the separation from mother is so traumatic that life loses its charm. But Fromm carries a promise. He is forward-looking. He believes in man's ability to make this life really worth-living. For Fromm, men's destructive impulses are by no means primary; they are secondary and their reasons have to be sought in modern consumer society. This kind of society, as Fromm says, makes man so alienated that he is bound to be brutal, violent and aggressive. Fromm believes that if 'communitarian socialism' is established, man would no longer be destructive. This extraordinary faith in man's ability to change history enables him to go beyond 'Civilization and Its Discontents'.

What we have said so far makes it clear that the urge to die (a kind of escape from life!) or destructiveness is a social fact. In other words, to know why men become destructive or why they want to die, one has to look at social and cultural factors. If this sociological analysis is denied in the name of biological impulses, the result would be a kind of pessimism. This is the reason why Karen Horney finds the theory of the death-instinct extremely harmful. This kind of theory,

as she argues, is sufficient to paralise any effort to change society. In her 'New Ways in Psychoanalysis' she writes:

"Equally harmful are the cultural implications of the theory. It must lead anthropologists to assume that whenever in a culture they find people friendly and peaceful, hostile reactions have been repressed. Such an assumption paralyzes any effort to search in the specific cultural conditions for reasons which make for destructiveness. It must also paralyze efforts to change anything in these conditions. If man is inherently destructive and consequently ^{or} unhappy, why strive for a better future?"²⁴

Likewise, Wilhelm Reich observes:

"The answer given to the question, where does suffering come from? was (one): "from the biological will to suffer, from the death-instinct and the need for punishment". This made one conveniently forget the correct answer which was from the outerworld, from frustrating society. This formulation blocked the avenue of approach to sociology."²⁵

24. Karen Horney, New Ways in Psychoanalysis, Kegan Paul London, 1947, p 170.

25. Wilhelm Reich, Character Analysis, Vision Press, London, 1948, 9. 219.

REBELLION AGAINST REPRESSION GOING BEYOND SIGMUND FREUD

Herbert Marcuse, unlike Fromm, Horney and Reich, accepts the Freudian notion of the death-instinct. He believes that the death instinct can easily be talked with, if the Eros is strengthened.

"Strengthened defence against aggression is necessary; but in order to be ^aeffective the defence against aggression would have to strengthen the sex-instincts, for only a strong Eros can effectively 'bind' the destructive instincts. And this is precisely what the developed civilization is incapable of doing".²⁶

Although Freud believes in the fundamental duality between the pleasure principle and the Nirvana Principle, Marcuse is not ready to accept it. He thinks that like the pleasure principle the Nirvana principle aims at reducing tensions. The fact that the pleasure principle is frustrated by the reality principle forces man to regress to the inorganic stage. If man is lost in the pleasure principle, the unity between life and death would be established. In 'Eros and Civilisation' he observes:

26. Herbert Marcuse, Eros and Civilization, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1956, pp 80-1.

"If the instinct's basic objective is not the termination of life but of pain - the absence of tension - then, paradoxically, in terms of the instinct, the conflict between life and death is more reduced, the closer life approximates the state of gratification. Pleasure principle and Nirvana principle then converge. At the same time, Eros, freed from surplus repression, would be strengthened and the strengthened Eros would, as it were, absorb the objective of the death-instinct. The instinctual value of death would have changed; the instincts pursued and attained their fulfilment in a non-repressive order, the regressive compulsion would lose much of its biological rationale. As suffering and want recede, the Nirvana principle may become reconciled with the reality principle. The unconscious attraction that draws the instincts back to an "earlier state" would be effectively counteracted by the desirability of the attained state of life."²⁷

The question Marcuse raises: Is it ever possible for man to meet the demands of the pleasure principle? He argues that it is 'surplus repression' - the kind of repression that makes exploitation possible. ~~that makes.~~

27: Ibid, pp 234-5

~~exploitation possible~~ - that makes civilization so repressive. Under new historical circumstances, Marcuse hopes, surplus repression can easily be abolished. This would enable man to live with pleasure and happiness. In this way the strengthened Eros would reduce the degree of aggressiveness man has shown hitherto. Marcuse, although a Freudian, gives man the strength to believe that the death-instinct can easily be conquered, if he is given the fullest opportunity to gratify his sexual urges. A sexually contented man, as Marcuse leads us to believe, is not violent and aggressive. He does not want to kill himself. His life is so meaningful and charming that he need not escape from life.

Norman O. Brown is unwilling to accept the Freudian doctrine that death is an antithesis of life. A discontented being, as Brown observes, is forced to distinguish life from death. Brown says that animals are not discontented; they do not make history. And this seems to be the reason why the thesis of duality between life and death is not applicable to them. But man is a neurotic animal. He is discontented. He makes history. And that is his problem. The fact that he is never satisfied makes it impossible to unite life with death. His search for satisfaction makes him a historical animal. As a result,

the pleasure principle becomes different from the Nirvana Principle.

"To identify the pleasure principle with man and the Nirvana principle with life in general is only another way of saying that man, and only man, is the neurotic animal. The neurotic animal is the discontented animal; man's discontent implies the disruption of the balanced equilibrium between tension and release tension which governs the activity of animals. Instinctual repression transforms the static homeostasis principle in animals into the dynamic pleasure principle in man, homeostasis can exist only under conditions of instinctual satisfaction. It is the search for instinctual satisfaction under conditions of instinctual repression that produces in man the restless quest of the pleasure principle for a quality of experience denied to it under conditions of repression."²⁸

A non repressed being, Brown argues, does not make history. He is neither restless nor discontented. He seeks refuge in eternity. His life gives him everything he expects from death—eternity, peace, freedom from tension. In his book 'Life Against Death' he writes:

"If man could put an end to repression and obtain

28: Norman O. Brown, Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical meaning of History, Wesleyan University Press, Middletown, 1970, p 90.

instinctual satisfaction, the restless pleasure principle would return to the Nirvana principle, that is to say, a balanced equilibrium between tension and tension release. If therefore the Nirvana principle belongs to the death instincts and the pleasure principle belongs to Eros, their reunification would be the condition of equilibrium or rest of life that is a full life unrepressed, and therefore satisfied with itself and affirming itself rather than changing "itself".²⁹

Likewise, Brown says that what we call sadism is the outcome of repression. A non-repressed being is not afraid of death. He is strong enough to live; hence strong enough to die. His freedom from the fear of death allows him to love mankind. He says:

"As against Freud, we suggest that this extraversion of the death-instinct is the peculiar human situation to a peculiar human problem. It is the flight from death that leads mankind with the problem of what to do with his own innate biological dying, what to do with his own repressed death. Animals let death be a part of life, and use the death-instinct to die; man aggressively builds history in order to fight death".³⁰

29. Ibid, p90.

30. Ibid, p 101

What Brown intends to suggest is that death is not an antithesis of life. To make death an indispensable part of life he raises his voice against repression. His rebellion against repression raises his hope in life. But this hope in life is never an attempt to escape from death. On the contrary, Brown teaches us how to experience death, even when we are completely lost in the 'pleasure principle'.

CHAPTER III

FREUD ON WOMEN : A SOCIOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

To conduct a dialogue with Sigmund Freud becomes all the more relevant, especially when sociologists begin to raise questions on the destiny of women. Our reasons for arguing with Freud on the question of women are the following:

1. What strikes us immediately is the notion of 'penis-envy'. As Freud argues, the destiny of women - her inferior status in society - cannot be altered, because it is rooted in their anatomical peculiarity. At the phallic phase when the little girl discovers that her clitoris is inferior to the penis of the little boy, she begins to feel penis-envy. This traumatic discovery convinces the little girl that she is destined to be inferior. In other words, as Freud implies, the reasons for their inferior status have to be sought in their anatomy.

For a sociologist it is very difficult to agree with this kind of argument. This biological determinism, as the sociologist would argue, obscures the possibility of knowing socio-cultural factors which are chiefly responsible for the low status of women. This leads us to ask whether the penis - the organ which, according to Freud, is the source of male superiority - is merely 'symbolic' in the sense that it symbolizes power and

authority which men enjoy in the patriarchal society. It is possible to argue that when the little girl feels penis-envy, she, in fact, feels envy for the superior status which her little brother enjoys in the patriarchal family. In other words, what Freud calls penis-envy has nothing to do with anatomical sex-distinction. One immediate advantage of this kind of sociological analysis is that it leads us to go into the depth of a social issue which, if one goes by the Freudian thesis: 'anatomy is destiny', can never be comprehended.

2. It is almost impossible for a thinker to escape the influence of his time and society. Especially when Freud tends to destroy the hope which feminists have generated through their struggle for emancipation, it becomes extremely important for sociologists to show that his verdict on women was largely determined by the kind of society he belonged to. This sociological enquiry into the socio-cultural determinants that shaped Freud's views on women has its importance precisely for the reason that it shows that the destiny of women, under new historical circumstances, can really be altered.

3. As far as psychical attributes are concerned, Freud distinguishes man from women. This dualism, it seems, has its roots in the kind of cruel civilization

he belonged to. In an inhumanly rational world men are taught to deny their own feminine qualities. This taboo on tenderness stems from man's fear that if he becomes a 'whole' being (male and female qualities combined) he may be considered 'unfit' for the system. Man's alienation from his motherhood qualities (which is quite inevitable in an inhuman world) reflects in the way Freud degrades women.

45 It is, however, interesting to note that there are feminists who are not willing to accept Freud as their enemy. They believe that instead of justifying the low status of women, Freud has shown how in their unconscious women accept the 'role' which men in the patriarchal society impose on them. As these feminists argue, this unconscious has to be explored; otherwise our understanding of women is bound to be incomplete. It can be said that for them Freud is not a taboo; on the other hand, their brand of feminism is the outcome of a synthesis of Freud and Marx.

I

FREUDIAN WAY OF LOOKING AT THE DEVELOPMENT OF FEMALE PSYCHOLOGY:

For girls, Freud says, the pre-oedipus phase is

extremely important. Like the little boy, the little girl takes her mother as the sexual object. Moreover, at this stage, the vagina - the female organ proper - remains almost unknown to the little girl. For all practical purposes, the clitoris takes the dominant role in the sexual activities of the girl. It can be said that for the girl the pre-oedipus phase is marked by two remarkable facts - (i) mother as the sexual object and (ii) clitoris as the sexual organ.

The question arises how the little girl goes beyond this phase which, as one can easily infer, goes against the nature of what a woman should be. Freud's answer merits attention. He says that the transition period when the little girl is about to enter the oedipus stage (i.e. when she begins to accept her feminine role) is a remarkable event in her life. At this stage the little girl acquires some psychical characteristics which shape her destiny for the whole life.

At the phallic stage the little girl discovers that her clitoris to which till recently she gave tremendous importance is ridiculously smaller than the penis of the little boy. This traumatic discovery causes tremendous injury to the ego of the little girl. She begins to feel penis-envy.

"They (little girls) notice the penis of a brother or playmate, strikingly visible and of large proportions, at once recognize it as the superior counterpart of their own small and inconspicuous organ, and from that time forward fall a victim to envy for the penis".¹

a. Since the little girl is unaware of the anatomical distinction between the sexes, she begins to believe that her penis has been castrated. And for this castration she blames her mother.

"..... At the end of this first phase of attachment to the mother, there emerges, as the girl's strongest motive for ~~turning~~ away from her, the reproach that her mother did not give her a proper penis - that is to say, brought her into the world of a female".² Besides this, "The child invariably regards castration in the first instance as a misfortune peculiar to herself; only later does she realise that it extends to certain other children and lastly to certain grown-ups. When she comes to understand the general nature of this characteristic, it follows that femaleness- and with its of course her mother-suffers a great depreciation in her eyes".³ Because of

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1. Sigmund Freud 'Some Psychological consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the sexes' in On Sexuality, ed. Angela Richards, Penguin, 1981, p.:
 2. Sigmund Freud, 'Female Sexuality' in On Sexuality! Op.cit. p 381.

this hostility she succeeds in keeping herself away from the mother.

b. Although she accepts castration as an accomplished fact, she seeks for compensation. She begins to desire a baby from her father with the hope that this gift will at least restore her glory which has been damaged by the traumatic discovery we have just talked about. This desire to have a baby from the father is chiefly responsible for her growing inclination towards her father. In other words, the father becomes her second sexual-object. She enters the oedipus stage.

* Renunciation of the penis is not tolerated by the girl without some attempt at compensation. She slips - along the line of a symbolic equation - one might say - from the penis to a baby. Her oedipus complex culminates in a desire, which is long retained, to receive a baby from her father as a gift, to bear him a child.⁴

These two developments - hostility towards mother and inclination towards father - lead the little girl to enter into the oedipus stage. At this stage, the little girl, as Freud says, becomes a little woman. She accepts her feminine role.

4. Sigmund Freud, 'The Dissolution of the oedipus Complex' in On Sexuality, Op.cit. p 321.

But, Freud reminds us, there are occasions when the little girl may refuse to accept the fact that she does not have the penis. She thinks that she will certainly acquire a penis at some stage in her life. This tremendous urge to acquire a penis at any cost creates masculinity complex. This complex prevents the girl from accepting the feminine role. Her desire to be like a man leads her to do things which, as Freud says, 'normal' women generally avoid.

"The girl's recognition of the fact of her being without a penis does not by any means ^{indicate} that she submits to the fact easily. On the contrary, she continues to hold on for a long time to the wish to get something like it herself and she believes in that possibility for im- probably long years; and analysis can show that, at a period when knowledge of reality has long since rejected the fulfilment of the wish as unattainable, it persists in the unconscious and retains a considerable cathexis of energy. The wish to get the longed-for penis eventually in spite of everything may contribute to the motives that drive a mature woman to analysis, and what she may reasonably expect from analysis - a capacity, for instance, to carry on an intellectual profession -

may often be recognized as a sublimated modification of this repressed wish.⁵

There is another path which the little girl may take up. As a result of penis-envy, she may lose interest in sexual activities. This leads to sexual inhibition or to neurosis.

"The little girl has hitherto lived in a masculine way, has been able to get pleasure by the excitation of her clitoris and has brought this activity into relation with her sexual wishes directed towards her mother, which are often active ones; now, owing to the influence of her penis-envy, she loses her enjoyment in her phallic sexuality. Her self-love is mortified by the comparison with the boys far superior equipment and in consequence she renounces her masturbatory satisfaction from her clitoris, repudiates her love for her mother and at the same time not infrequently represses a good part of her sexual trends in general."⁶

As we have already mentioned, the little girl because of her intense feeling of penis-envy, acquires

5. Sigmund Freud, 'Feminity' in New Introductory Lectures, Penguin, 1979, p 159.

6. Ibid, p 160.

certain psychical characteristics which, as Freud says, shape her destiny. To begin with, the roots of her inferiority complex lie in penis-envy. This inferiority complex, Freud says, gives birth to another dominant feature of women i.e., their jealousy. Freud is not suggesting that men are not jealous. What is so particular about his theory is that there is at least no biological reason for men to feel envy or jealous.

"One cannot very well doubt the importance of envy for the penis. You may take it as an instance of male injustice if I assert that envy and jealousy play an even greater part in the mental life of women than of men. It is not that I think these characteristics are absent in men or that I think they have no other roots in women than envy for the penis; but I am inclined to attribute their greater amount in women to this latter influence."⁷

Another dominant characteristic of women is their dullness or irrationality. Freud explains this in terms of the development of the super-ego. For boys the super-ego is extremely powerful, because the need to dissolve the oedipus complex is urgent. For girls, the situation is entirely different. When the girl

7. Ibid, p 159.

enters the oedipus stage, she, in fact, begins to accept her feminine role.⁸ One can say that for girls the oedipus complex is not so harmful, consequently, the necessity of dissolving the oedipus complex is not so urgent.⁸ This means that for girls the super-ego is not so powerful; hence they are bound to be dull, irrational and inferior.⁸

"I cannot evade the notion (though I hesitate to give it expression) that for women the level of what is ethically normal is different from what it is in men.⁸ Their super-ego is never so inexorable, so impersonal, so independent of its emotional origins as we require it to be in men. Character-traits which critics of every epoch have brought up against women—that they show less sense of justice than men, that they are less ready to submit to the great exigencies of life, that they are more often influenced in their judgements by feelings of affection or hostility - all these would be amply accounted for by the modification in the formation of their super-ego which we have inferred above.⁸ We must not allow ourselves to be deflected from such conclusions by the denials of the feminists, who are anxious to force us to regard the two sexes as completely equal in position and worth.⁸"⁸

8. Sigmund Freud, 'Some Psychological consequences of the Anatomical Distinction Between the sexes' in On sexuality, Op.cit. p 342.

II

SOCIO-CULTURAL DETERMINANTS OF THE FREUDIAN IMAGE OF WOMEN

It strikes one immediately why girls should at all be unhappy with their anatomical peculiarity. The simple fact that they do not possess the penis can by no means be the source of their envy. The roots of envy and jealousy lie in inequality. And inequality is a social fact. The Freudian drama takes place in the typical nuclear family of the patriarchal society. So it is understandable that what raises the prestige of the little boy is not his penis; it is rather his total situation - the fact that he is going to enjoy all the privileges of the male-dominated society. What Freud calls the traumatic discovery - the discovery that the clitoris is inferior to the penis - would have been absolutely meaningless, if the little girl had not already experienced injustice, inequality and humiliation. There is nothing wrong with the clitoris or the penis; the problem lies in the kind of society that deprives women of equality, justice and freedom. As Simone de Beauvoir writes in her 'The Second Sex':

"It is not the lack of the penis that causes this complex but rather woman's total situation; if the

little girl feels penis envy it is only as the symbol of privileges enjoyed by the boys. The place the father holds in the family, the universal predominance of males, her own education - everything confirms her in her belief in masculine superiority⁹.

So one can say that the notion of penis-envy stems from a male-dominated society. Freud, it seems, takes this kind of society for granted. As a result, it never occurs to him that to explore the real meaning of penis-envy, one has to study the roots of social inequality. Victorian women had good cause to envy men their privileged status, it was the social benefits they clamoured for, not a penis. Betty Friedan argues that Freud in his person and hence automatically in his science summed up the patriarchal culture of the Victorians. To quote from her 'The Feminine Mystique':

"The fact that to Freud,.... women were a strange inferior, less than human species. He saw them as childlike dolls, who existed in terms only of man's love, to love man and serve his needs... Freud grew up with this attitude built in by his culture-not only the culture of victorian Europe, but that Jewish culture in which men said the

9. Simone de Beavoir, The Second Sex; Penguin, 1981
p 74.

daily prayer: 'I thank thee, Lord that Thou has not wreated me a woman' and women prayed in submission, ' I thank Thee, Lord, that Thou has created me according to Thy will'.¹⁰

"Anatomy is destiny" → this is what Erich Fromm is not ready to accept. He raises an importznt question. True, girls do not have the penis. And this^{is} the reason, Freud believes, why they feel penis-envy. But men cannot bear children, then the question can be asked why then men do not feel envy for their inability to bear children. Interestingly enough Freud maintains silence. But this silence implies Freud's dogmatic belief in values on which the patriarchal society is based. Moreover, it implies his 'technological rationality'. In an industrial world nutral productiveness hardly gets the importance it deserves. To quote from Fromm:

"Women can bear children; men cannot. Characteristically, from his patriarchal view point, Freud assumed that women ^{are} is envious of the male organ but he scarecely noted that men are envious of women's ability to beal^{re} children. This one sided view not only comes from the masculine premise that men are superior to women, but also results

10. Betty Friedan, The Feminine Mystique, Penguin, 1965, p 96^v

from the attitude of highly technical - industrial civilisation in which natural productiveness is not very highly valued."¹¹

What Fromm intends to convey through this illustration is that even if anatomical differences result in characterological differences, they are of no significance unless society elevates them or degrades them.

".....Certain biological differences result in characterological differences; that such differences are blended with those which are directly produced by social factors; that the latter are much more stronger in their effect and can either increase, eliminate or reverse biologically revoted differences; and that eventually characterological differences between the sexes; in as much as they are not directly determined by culture, never constitute differences in value."¹²

8. All these tend to prove that the notion of penis envy shows Freud's extreme indifference to sociology. As Kate Millett writes:

"Confronted with so much concrete evidence of the male's superior status, sensing on all sides the depreciation

11. Erich Fromm, The Dogma of Christ and Other Essays, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1963, p 87.

12. Ibid, p 80.

in which they are held, girls envy not the penis, but only what the penis gives one social pretensions to. Freud appears to have made a major and rather foolish confusion between biology and culture, anatomy and status."¹³

It is now clear that the Freudian image of woman is the product of the kind of patriarchal society he belonged to. Throughout his works one finds a tendency to deny history; Freud is fond of giving universal generalization. But a student of sociology of knowledge hardly takes time to understand that psychoanalysis, like all other systems of knowledge, is the product of particular history and society. As Eva Figes writes: "Freud's whole theory of civilisation is based on the narrow world he lived in..."¹⁴

"A Jew himself, Freud was following a long Hebraic tradition already familiar to us from the old Testament, Genesis in particular Man came first, then women"¹⁵. "Freud was a child of his own times"¹⁶

13. Kate Millett, Sexual Politics, Doubkeay, New York 1970, p 187.

14. Eva Figes, Patriarchal Attitudes, Faber and Faber 1970, p 137.

15. Ibid, p 140

16. Ibid, p 136.

III

FREUD : THE POTENTIAL ENEMY OF WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT?

Today when women are striving for freedom, one finds Freud's ideas extremely harmful. As Eva Fics writes:

"Of all the factors that have served to perpetuate a male-oriented society, that have hindered the free development of women as human beings in the western world today, the emergence of Freudian psychoanalysis has been the most serious."¹⁷

Although feminists believe that they are the maker of their own destiny, Freud refuses to give women their own identity. A woman, as Freud argues, is no more than a castrated man.³ This reflects his strong patriarchal bias. As Erich Fromm points out:

"For Freud only the male is really a full human being. Women is crippled, castrated man... This strange theory, according to which one half of the human race is only a crippled edition of the other, followed victorian ideas that woman's desires was almost entirely directed to the bearing and upbringing children - and to serve the man."¹⁸

17. Ibid, p 148*

18. Erich Fromm, The Crisis of Psychoanalysis, Penguin
n 58.

For Freud, the destiny of women has already been decided for ever. They are inferior, jealous, dull and irrational. He is unwilling to allow women to raise their voice. Women, for Freud, are merely objects which can be manipulated in the manner men want- 'Totem and Taboo' appears to be a drama written by one deeply rooted in patriarchal ideology. In 'Totem and Taboo' men play the important role; women are passive and voiceless. It is upto the chief of the horde or his sons to decide the way they should deal with women. Freud takes women for granted; he considers them so lifeless that in 'Totem and Taboo' he never allows them to decide for themselves. His inability to communicate with women reflects itself in his notion of 'masculinity complex'. The moment a woman refuses to remain content with the role society imposes on her, Freud, instead of understanding the real problem, tends to minimize its importance by arguing that it is simply a manifestation of her masculinity complex.⁶⁶ This shows that man is the model beyond which he is unwilling to move his psychoanalysis. It never occurs to him that the reference model for women may not necessarily coincide with that of men. Women may want to be what men as exploiters and oppressors have never striven for. In Henrik Ibsen's drama,

'A Doll's House' Nora raises her voice against her husband. She declares: 'Now I shall try to learn. I must take up my mind which is right - society or I.' For Freud, Nora's rebellion does not seem to have any identity of its own. It is Nora's masculinity complex - her fruitless attempt to be like a man. What Freud forgets is that Nora is not rebelling in order to become another oppressor; her rebellion is motivated with a noble purpose - her wish to become a real living human being.

One should not overlook the fact that when Freud says that any independent action on the part of women is the reflection of their masculinity complex, it shows his pessimism. It expresses the idea that when slaves begin to rebel, they do it not to ^eabolish slavery, but to replace the old master by the new one. Freud, because of his patriarchal bias, fails to understand what free women intend to communicate through their rebellion. Their rebellion is neither a neuratic symptom nor a manifestation of masculinity complex. This rebellion carries a promise - the promise that a society based on genuine human values is possible. Freud's obstinate refusal to receive the ^emessage women's liberation movement carries with it shows his extreme pessimism; his inability to

think of a society that permits women to live freely without having any tendency to dominate over others. ✓

One serious objection that can be levelled against Freud is that he takes monogamy for granted. Although he is aware of the fact that monogomy often causes neurosis, Freud is not ready to challenge it. One probable reason behind his unwillingness to raise his voice against monogomy is that he thinks that neurosis is a price man has to pay, if he wants civilization. As a result, psychotherapy, instead of challenging the system, aims at curing neurosis. Its purpose is to make man 'fit' into the system. So Freud accepts that slavery is the destiny of women. A 'healthy' woman, as Freud would argue, is one who accepts her feminine role. The kind of 'normal' woman Freud approves of is one who does not question why she should deny her independence. She is so conditioned by partriarchal ideology that even in her dream the idea of independence frightens her. To quote from Eva Figses:

"...Freud's basic view was that every woman was a square peg trying to fit into a round hole. It did not occur to him that it might be less destructive to change the shape of the holes rather than to knock all

the corners off!.. The 'cured' patient is actually brainwashed, a walking automator as good as dead. The corners have been knocked off and the woman accepts her own castration, acknowledges herself inferior, ceases to envy the penis and accepts the passive role of femininity.¹⁹

Wilhelm Reich, although a psychoanalyst, challenges monogamy. He believes that the precondition for liberation is sexual freedom. Monogamy, as he sees, is based on sex-negating morality. The slavery of women can never be abolished, unless monogamy is challenged. This leads Reich, to argue convincingly in favour of 'lasting love relationship'. In this kind of relationship women would be independent. An independent woman would fulfil herself in a relationship that is based purely on love. It is impossible for an independent and sexually free man to accept monogamy; her free spirit would never allow her to accept slavery as her destiny.

*There is no woman who does not have the so-called prostitution phantasies. It is the wish to have intercourse with more than one man, the wish not to have her sexual experience limited to one man. The woman of this kind is not sick, but is apt to fall ill if she

19. Eva Figs, Op.cit. pp 147-8.

adjusts more to conventional morality, than her sexual demands can stand. More attention should be paid to the fact that the 'good' wives, those 'adjusted to reality' that is, those who have accepted the burden of marriage seemingly without conflict, because they are sexually inhibited present all the signs of a neurosis. But this fact is overlooked because they are adjusted to reality.²⁰

At this juncture, the distinction between Freud and Reich becomes clear. For Freud, women are inferior passive and mesochistic. Slavery is their destiny. Monogamy is unalterable. A woman cannot but 'adjust' to monogamy. But Reich believes that women are potentially active, free and independent. The kind of 'normal' woman Freud approves of repels Reich. Reich allows women to make their own destiny; he gives them the strength to believe that monogamy can be abolished only if they refuse to accept the so-called 'feminine' role.

There is a tendency on the part of feminist to believe that socialism can assure women's freedom. Engel's well-known work 'The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State' can be regarded as a manifesto for women's

20. Wilhelm Reich, The Sexual Revolution, Vision Press, London, 1951, p 143.

liberation. In this work Engels raises his voice against monogamy, because he thinks:

"Monogamy does not by any means make its appearance in history as the reconciliation of man and women, still less as the highest form of such a reconciliation. On the contrary, it appears as the subjection of one sex by the other, as the proclamation of a conflict between the sexes entirely unknown hitherto in prehistoric times... The first class antagonism which appears in history coincides with the development of the antagonism between man and woman in monogamous marriage, and the first class oppression with that of the female sex by the male, monogamy was a great historical advance, but at the same time it inaugurated, along with slavery and private wealth, that epoch, lasting until today, in which every advance is likewise a relative regression, in which the well-being and development of the one group are attained by the misery and repression of the other."²¹

Engels argues that socialism, by giving economic independence to women, would bring about equality between the two sexes. With this, as Engels hopes, monogamy would be abolished and women would achieve freedom.

21 Friedrick Engels, The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, Progress, Progress, 1977, pp 65-6.

"With the passage of the means of production into common property, the individual family ceases to be the economic unit of society. Private housekeeping is transformed into a social industry. The care and education of the children becomes a public matter. Society takes care of all children equally, irrespective of whether they are born in wedlock or not. Thus, the anxiety about the 'consequences', which is today the most important social factor - both moral and economic - that hinders a girl from giving herself freely to the man she loves, disappears. Will this not be cause enough for a gradual rise of unrestrained sexual intercourse, and along with, a more lenient public opinion regarding virginal honour and feminine shame?"²²

This kind of optimism is what Freud is unwilling to propose. As we have already mentioned, Freud's inability to go beyond the kind of society he lived in was largely responsible for his pessimistic philosophy. Freud, not being a revolutionary, justifies the status-quo, despite his awareness that what exists does not make us contented. For him, any social theory that talks about freedom, equality and justice is an illusion. It would not be a mere speculation if one says that

22. Ibid, p 76.

Freud would laugh at Friedrich Engels. 'Here is a thinker so hypnotized by illusions that he expects that women can be free'.

Juliet Mitchell is not ready to agree with the kind of solution Engels talks about. Mitchell argues that it would be entirely wrong to think that Freud is justifying women's slavery. Freud's purpose, as she argues, is to show how a woman, under patriarchy, accepts her feminine role.

"..... a rejection of psychoanalysis and of Freud's works is fatal for feminism. However it may have been used psychoanalysis is not a recommendation for a patriarchal society, but an analysis of one. If we are interested in understanding and challenging the oppression of women we cannot afford to neglect it".²³

Mitchell agrees with Levi-Stravss when he says that whatever the nature of the society - patriarchal, matrilineal, patrilineal, etc. - it is always men who exchange women. So she argues that the very entry into civilization is the entry into patriarchy. For Mitchell, Freud is important because he shows how patriarchal values are deeply rooted into our unconscious.

23: Juliet Mitchell, Psychoanalysis and Feminism,
Penguin, 1979, p xv.

As she writes in her 'Woman's Estate' :

"That Freud, personally, had a reactionary ideological attitude to women in no way affects his science - it wouldn't be a science if it did. That he partook of the social mores and ideology of his time whilst he developed a science that could overthrow them is neither a contradiction nor a limitation of his work."²⁴

With this assumption Mitchell finds it reasonable to argue that socialism alone cannot assure women's freedom. Even under socialism, it is possible that the unconscious of men and women is filled with patriarchal values. So she argues that what is needed is cultural revolution. This kind of revolution, as she hopes, would change man's psychical structure. To abolish patriarchy class struggle alone seems to be insufficient. Mitchell wants to change the very psychical structure that makes patriarchy possible.

"We should also recognize that no society has yet existed - or existed for a sufficient length of time - for the 'eternal' unconscious to have shed its immortal nature..... Socialist societies have had too little time on earth to have achieved anything as radical

24. Juliet Mitchell, Woman's Estate, Penguin, 1981
p 167.

as a change in man's unconscious."²⁵

So she suggests:

"The overthrow of the capitalist economy and the political challenge that effects this, do not in themselves mean a transformation of patriarchal ideology. This is the implication of the fact that ideological sphere has a certain autonomy. The change to a socialist economy does not by itself suggest that the end of patriarchy comfortably follows suit. A specific struggle against patriarchy - a cultural revolution - is requisite."²⁶

For Mitchell, Freud is not an enemy. The enemy is patriarchy. And to fight against patriarchy one must know how in one's unconscious one accepts patriarchal values. Without this awareness no revolution can be successful. Freud makes us aware of our unconscious. And this seems to be the reason why Mitchell, unlike other feminists, is so enthusiastic about Freud.

IV

MAN-WOMAN DUALISM : THE REFLECTION OF AN IN-HUMAN WORLD

The kind of society Freud lived in was hostile

25. Juliet Mitchell, Psychoanalysis and Feminism,
Op.cit. p 415.

26. Ibid, p 414.

and cruel. Freud, not being a revolutionary, took his society for granted. This kind of civilization makes man violent,, aggressive and selfish. And this is precisely the image of man Freud repeatedly presented before us.

One need not wonder why women, for Freud, ^{are} is so inferior. If man is selfish and aggressive, how can he consider woman as a free subject who exists in her own right? Since Freud believes in man's innate selfishness and hostility towards the world, he cannot relate man with woman in a life-affirming relationship. In Freud's framework love hardly occupies any important place. In the absence of love any relationship is bound to lose its human significance. This kind of civilization, because of its very nature, discourages love, solidarity and freedom.

Freud's inability to go beyond capitalism reflects itself in his theory of woman. A man with his aggressive and brutal impulses is active, superior and intelligent. A woman with her emotions, vulnerability and need for relatedness is passive, inferior and stupid. This is the way he argues. It is very clear that when he is arguing that women are passive and inferior, he,

in fact, is making a choice.' His choice is that he is giving importance to values on which capitalism is based power, mechanical relationality and egotism. It is understandable that Freud, because of his strong patriarchal bias, equates human nature with the nature of man. This tendency to see everything from the perspective of man prevents one from appreciating the qualities of women. Jean Baker Miller makes this point very clear, when she says 'It is clear that the large element of human activity that involves doing for others has been separated off and assigned to women. When this is combined with the fact that what women do is generally not recognized, we end up with some strange theories about the nature of human nature. These strange theories are, in fact, the prevailing theories in our culture.' One of these is that 'mankind' is basically self-seeking, competitive, aggressive and destructive. Such a theory overlooks the fact that millions of people (most of them women) have spent millions of oth hours for hundred of years giving their utmost to millions of others..... Since man is the measure of all things - and man, literally, rather than human beings - we have /all tended to measure ourselves by men. Men's interpretation of the world defines and directs us all, tells us what is the nature of human nature.²⁷

27. Jean Baker Miller, 'Toward a new Psychology of Women' Penguin, 1979, pp 73-4.

The dualism between man and woman is rooted in man's inability to live with his own feminine qualities. In capitalist civilization man is consistently encouraged to deny his womanhood. If he develops qualities of love, sympathy, vulnerability and emotions, his manlihood is challenged.

"There is no reason that serving others has to be a threat to maleness. This, like many other notions, is culturally imposed. In a very deep sense then we have created a situation in which men's allowing themselves in a primary ^a why to be attended to the needs of others and to serve others threatens them with being like a woman. To be like a woman is almost to be nothing."²⁸

This taboo on tenderness on which this aggressive civilization is based alienates man from his own feminine qualities. And this alienation or self-denial reflects itself in his attitude towards woman. He begins to believe that there is nothing to be learned from a woman. This becomes clear when Freud says that to develop the super-ego man has to internalize the role of the father, but not the mother. Although the mother gives him love, affection and life itself, the child, Freud says, must

28. Ibid, p 75.

not learn anything from his mother. This kind of attitude towards women, it seems, shows man's escape from himself. He is afraid of bearing feminine qualities because that would make him absolutely unfit or rather abnormal, for the system - Freud's 'normal' man is highly mechanical - and inhumanly rational. What Freud forgets is that a revolutionary, despite his uniqueness and independence, need not repress his capacity of love. He is not ashamed of his mother hood quality, because these qualities make him human, affectionate and ethical.

Erich Fromm makes this point clear when he says:

"Freud, in his concept of the super-ego, relates only the father figure to the development of conscience... But there is not only a fatherly but on also a motherly conscience; there is a voice which tells us to do our duty, and a voice which tells us to love and forgive - others as well as ourselves... The inner father's and the inner mother's voices speak not only with regard to man's attitude toward all his fellow men. He may judge his fellow man with his fatherly conscience, but he must be at the same time have in himself the voice of the mother who feels love for all fellow creatures for all that is alive, and who forgives all transgressions."²⁹

29. Erich Fromm, The Sane Society, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London. 1979, pp 47-8.

The way Freud degrades women is chiefly responsible for his reluctance to admit that the kind of cruel world we are living in can be turned into a more humane world, only if we unfold our feminine qualities. To do this, we have to be extremely sensitive to the message women's liberation movement carries with it. As Branka Magas writes:

"The male perversion of violence is an essential condition of degradation of women. The penis... has become a gun... Women cannot be liberated from their impotence by the gift of a gun... The process to be followed is the opposite; women must humanize the penis, take the steel out of it and make it flesh again. Women's liberation is revolutionary precisely because it involves the liberation of all humanity."³⁰

But, as we have already mentioned, Freud is not one who can be said to have this amount of faith in women. And this explains his pessimism - his inability to go beyond the neurotic world he lived in.

30. Branka Magas, 'Sex Politics: Class Politics' in New Left Review (No. 66) March-April, 1971.

CHAPTER - IV

PSYCHOANALYSIS AND HUMAN FREEDOM GOING BEYOND SIGMUND

FREUD

I

FREUD'S FINAL VERDICT ON HUMAN DESTINY : NO HOPE FOR
MANKIND

(1) Civilization, Repression and a sense of guilt:

The answer which Freud is supposed to give to the question whether man is really capable of leading a peaceful and contented life is bound to disappoint us. According to Freud, civilization presupposes repression. Hence to talk about a society free from repression does not make any sense. It is important to ask what would have happened to humanity, had there been no repression. "Totem and Taboo" provides an answer to this question. Before the beginning of this civilization, as he says, men somehow got an opportunity to gratify their instinctual desires. In the primitive horde, the brothers were prevented from having sexual intercourse with their mothers and sisters, because their father, the chief of the horde, was unwilling to give up his absolute monopoly over the women of the horde. But one day the expelled brothers joined forces, slew and ate the father, and thus put an end to the father horde".¹ Gradually, they, however, began to realize that some

1. Sigmund Freud, Totem and Taboo from the Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud, A.A. Brill (Ed.) Modern Library New York, 1938, p. 915.

prohibitions were necessary, otherwise they would have to fight among themselves. This realization gave birth to the most elementary form of religion i.e. totemism. The totem symbolizes the father. As the morality goes, members of the clan are not allowed to kill their totem. Secondly, they are not allowed to marry the women of the same clan. These two fundamental taboos of totemism indicate that the revolutionary brothers ultimately came to the conclusion that what their father did, although by no means a joyful experience for them, was nevertheless necessary for their survival. In other words, they felt that in order to live together, the curtailment of individual freedom was necessary. Although this was a realistic decision, Freud believes that the triumph of the 'reality principle' over the 'pleasure principle' created a severe mental anxiety - a sense of guilt among the revolutionary brothers. As he observes:

^{ll}They hated the father who stood so powerfully in the way of their sexual demands and their desire for power, but they also loved and admired him. After they had satisfied their hate by his removal and had carried out their wish for identification with him, the suppressed tender impulses had to assert themselves. This took place in the form of remorse, a sense of guilt was formed

which coincided with the remorse generally felt. Thus they created two fundamental taboos of t^otemism out of the sense of guilt of the son and for this very reason these had to correspond with the two repressed wishes of the oedipus complex.²

With this civilization started its march. ✓ The origin of civilization, as Freud argues, lies in repression. Had there been no repression, the result would have been chaos. As he implies, any kind of rebellion ultimately leads to domination, because freedom, as he sees it, is a goal that man, provided he wants civilization, can never arrive at. Yes Freud talks about rebellion, but, for him, rebellion can come only from n^eurotics, although neurotics by their very nature fail to have decisive impact on the reality. This is man's ultimate fate! To become 'civilized', he has become a hypocrite; neurosis is a price he has to pay. His feelings are not genuine. A sense of guilt intensifies his dilemma. This is what Freud teaches. In the ultimate analysis, he becomes a philosopher of despair.

(ii) Work and Man's eternal dissatisfaction:

Freud argues that the kind of work man has to

2. Ibid, pp 916-7.

perform if he wants to maintain civilization can not be reconciled with the demands of the pleasure principle.⁵² Why is it so? If we observe carefully, it becomes clearer to us that one of the fundamental reasons behind his unwillingness to place the pleasure principle at the centre of everything is rooted in his fear that the pleasure principle may converge with the Nirvana Principle. Although Freud takes special care to distinguish the Nirvana principle from the pleasure principle, there are occasions when he almost confuses the Nirvana principle with the pleasure principle. Both these principles aim at reducing tensions. And to become free from tensions means to seek refuge in eternity. Freud fears that a 'free' being can safely avoid ^{his work}. This leads him to argue that if history is to progress, man has to remain discontented. Since he thinks that a contented being has no special urge to work, he comes to the conclusion that repression and work must go together. In other words, the idea of joyful work, for Freud, is nothing but absurd. In 'Beyond the Pleasure' he observes:

'It may be difficult, too, for many of us, to abandon the belief that there is an instinct towards perfection at work in human beings which has brought them to their present high level of intellectual achievement.'

3. I have no faith, however, in the existence of any such internal instinct.... What appears in a minority of individuals as an ^u ⁱnterⁱng impulsion towards perfection can easily be understood as a result of the instinctual repression upon which is based all that is most precious in human civilization. The repressed instinct never ceases to strive for complete satisfaction, which would consist in the repetition of a primary existence of satisfaction. No ~~substitutive~~ or reactive formations and no sublimations will suffice to remove the repressed instinct's persisting tension; and it is the difference in amount between the pleasure of satisfaction which is demanded and that which is actually achieved provides the driving factor which will permit of no halting at any position attained".³

① This means that dissatisfaction is the sole motive force behind the progress of history. If the pleasure principle is allowed to dominate over the reality principle, man would no longer be dissatisfied. And history would cease to progress. So unless we invite the death of history, some sort of repression seems to be unavoidable.

3³ Sigmund Freud, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle'
Hogarth Press, London, 1971, p 36.

Work, according to Freud, can never be a joyful experience. Man works because the reality principle forces him to do so. He, however, observes that poets and artists, in their works, are guided by the pleasure principle. So it seems that art may inspire man to go against the repressive reality principle. But Freud refuses to accept art as a form of rebellion. To quote from Freud:

"Art brings about a reconciliation of the two principles in a peculiar way. The artist is originally a 'man who turns from reality because he cannot come to terms with the demand of the renunciation of instinctual satisfaction as it is first made, and who then in phantasy life allows full play to his erotic and ambitious wishes'. But he finds a way of return from this world of phantasy back to reality; with his special gifts he moulds his phantasies into a new kind of reality, and men concede them a justification as valuable reflections of actual life. Thus by a certain path he actually becomes the hero, king, creator, favourite he desired to be, without pursuing the circuitous path of creating 'real alternations in the outer world'.⁴

44 Sigmund Freud, 'Formulations Regarding the two Principles in Mental Life' in Collected Papers Vol. IV, Hograth Press, London, 1971, p 19.

So art, ^{fact} from chainging the reality, releases people temporarily from tensions. As Freud implies, art is essentially a day-dream, but never a positive threat to the repressive civilization.

(iii) Freudian reasons for the fear of freedom:

One important reason behind Freud's fear of freedom lies in the image of man he tries to present before us. He says that man is fundamentally a selfish animal. No relationship can be said to be free from self-interest. Even a child needs his mother for the gratification of his sexual urges. What we call affection, as Freud says, is the consequence of repression. He seems to have given the final verdict on man in his 'Civilization and its Discontents'. In this work he asks the question why man has been taught to love his neighbours like himself. He says that behind this kind of moral teaching lies society's fear that man without morality may destroy his neighbours. For him, this kind of morality is the consequence of repression. He rejects the possibility of love because he believes that what is natural for man is not to love, but to destroy.

"The truth is that men are not gentle, friendly creatures wishing for love, who simply defend themselves

if they are attacked, but that a powerful measure of aggression has to be reckoned as part of their instinctual endowment. The result is that their neighbour is to them not only a possible helper or sexual object, but also a temptation to them to gratify their aggressiveness on him, to exploit his capacity for work without recompense, to use him sexually without his consent, to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and to kill him".⁵

To love without reservation is an idea which Freud is unwilling to accept. He says that love is so valuable that it cannot be given to all. Man has recently learned to quantify and measure love. The very idea of becoming 'rational' and 'calculative' at the time of giving love appears to have originated in a particular civilization which reduces man to the status of a commodity. Freud is the child of that civilization. So one need not wonder when he says:

"My love seem-s to me a valuable thing that I have no right to throw away without reflection... If I love someone, he must be worthy of it in some way or other... But if he is a stranger to me and cannot attract me by any value he has in himself or any significance he may

5. Sigmund Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents from Civilization, War and Death, Hograth Press London, 1939, pp 50-1.

have already acquired in my emotional life, it will be hard for me to love him. I shall even be doing wrong if I do, for my love is valued as a privilege by all those belonging to me; it is an injustice to them if I put a stranger on a level with them.⁶

Anyone who has read Nietzsche can understand that Freud's idea of love is not essentially different from that of Nietzsche. He too believes that man should be responsible only to his equals. Any philosophy that demands responsibility to all is an insult to Nietzsche's 'Superman'. What is natural for the 'superman', as Nietzsche says, is not love, ^{but} his 'will to power'.

It is possible to argue that the image of man Freud visualizes is the product of capitalism. Although the increasing tendency to measure everything including love in terms of 'exchange value' makes man aggressive and hostile, he does not know how to change the world he lives in. Since the society which rests on the idea of the survival of the fittest deprives man of his capacity to love, he needs imposed morality to restrain his aggressiveness. So Freud's 'Civilization and Its Discontents' can better be called Capitalism and Its Discontents.

6. Ibid, p 50.

The question may be raised whether the kind of normal man Freud talks about is the only possible type we can think of. Although he finds everywhere either 'adjusted' people or neurotics, the fact remains that every society has its authentic rebels. They know that the idea of universal love for mankind, especially at a time when ceaseless competition divides mankind, is utter nonsense. But unlike the 'normal' man of psychoanalysis they do not adjust. They revolt against the system. But their rebellion, although at times appears to be violent and aggressive, is not the rebellion of Nietzsche's superman. It is not the manifestation of Freudian death instinct. This rebellion manifests man's 'will to live', it is the outcome of man's strongest desire for happy and free society. That man, under given historical circumstances, can change society is what Freud is unwilling to accept. He considers capitalism as the highest form of civilization. (Although he is aware of its discontents he is unable to change it. For him, any kind of rebellion is the sign of anarchy, barbarism and disorder. He comes to this tragic conclusion because he believes that man's rebellion is rooted in his destructive impulses. That rebellion may serve the purpose of creating a free society is what has never occurred to Freud. Man rebels not only

to destroy others; he rebels to make love possible. And this is precisely what Freud is reluctant to accept.

(iv) Freud : The proponent of dictatorship:

Freud believes in 'reason'. And 'reason' has taught him that to have hope in any future society qualitatively different from the existing one is an illusion. In 'The Future of an Illusion' he gives a strong critique of religion. What compels him to do is of course an interesting question that needs to be answered. What strikes us immediately is that he expresses tremendous despair about the possibility of a perfectly democratic society. The reason is not very far to seek. (He thinks that if the common man is given freedom, the result would be chaos and disorder. That man can enjoy freedom without being irresponsible to anyone is an idea which he refuses to accept. The very idea of responsibility, Freud believes, is not the natural and spontaneous urge; it is the outcome of coercion and repression.)

"It seems more probable that every culture must be built up on coercion and instinctual renunciation; it does not even appear certain that without coercion the majority of individuals would be ready to submit to the

labor necessary for acquiring new means of supporting life. One has, I think, to reckon with the fact that there are present in all men destructive and therefore anti-social and anti-cultural tendencies and that with a great number of people these are strong enough to determine their behaviour in human society".⁷

Herein, we believe, lies Freud's political philosophy. He is frank enough to admit:

"It is as impossible to do without government of the masses by a minority as it is to dispense with coercion in the work of civilization, for the masses are lazy and unintelligent, they have no love for instinctual renunciation, they are not to be convinced of its inevitability by argument, and the individuals support each other in giving full play to their unruliness. It is only by the influence of individuals who can set an example whom the masses recognize as their leaders, that they can be induced to submit to the labors and renunciations on which the existence of culture depends".⁸

Needless to add, psychoanalysis permits dictatorship. Any philosophy that raises man's confidence in

7. Sigmund Freud, The Future of an Illusion; Hograth Press, London, 1934, pp 10-11.

8. Ibid, p 12.

his ability to make his own destiny seems to be an illusion to Freud. What is real for him is a doctrine that makes dictatorship possible. That he does not believe in freedom becomes clear when one goes through his 'Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego'. A group can exist only when the aim of sexual^a instincts is diverted. Since, according to him, there is no special need for love and affection, one has to divert the aim of one's sexual instincts, if one wants to love. But what is the nature of this love? As, according to him, narcissistic love is primary, any relationship with love-objects is bound to make man dependent and submissive. A lover is a slave, since he has lost his narcissism. A lover allows himself to be hypnotized by the love-object. Love, especially when it is the outcome of aim-inhibited sexuality, makes man completely dependent. The leader of the group is the hyponatizer. His followers love the leader, although the aim of the libido has been diverted. This gives the leader an opportunity to hypnotize his followers. This is the way the group maintains its existence.

"From being in love to hypnosis is evidently only a short step. The respects in which the two agree are obvious. There is the same humble subjection, the same

compliance, the same absence of criticism towards the loved object.⁹

A moment's reflection makes it clear that, according to Freud, an independent man cannot love. One who loves sacrifices one's independence, creativity and freedom. A lover is destined to suffer, he cannot change anything, he simply allows himself to be hypnotized by the love-object. A lover invites dictatorship. It can be said that Freud's group consists of a leader who by nature is a dictator and thousands of slaves who believe that the leader is their father. These slaves accept their leader almost blindly. The fact that Freud fails to go beyond this kind of group psychology shows his reactionary political philosophy: to remain in the group man has to sacrifice his independence and freedom.

(v) Darkness remains even after Freud's rebellion against God:

In 'The Future of an Illusion' Freud gives a critique of religion. He says that God is like our father whom we need desperately. Even in our adult life, our helplessness does not cease to exist. In our childhood, we had our father who, despite his domination, gave us

9⁹ Sigmund Freud, Group Psychology and the Analysis OF THE Ego, Hograth Press, London, 1967, p 46.

a sense of security? Since man cannot bear helplessness, he needs another father. And God fulfills this function?

"We know . . . that the terrifying effect of infantile ^{need} for protection - protection through love - which the father relieved, and that the discovery that this helplessness would continue through the whole of life made it necessary to cling to the existence of a father - but this time a more powerful one. Thus the benevolent rule of divine providence allays our anxiety in the face of life's dangers, the establishment of a moral world order ensures the fulfilment of the demands of justice, which within human culture have so often remained unfulfilled, and the prolongation of a earthly existence by a future life provides in addition the local and temporal setting of their wish-fulfilments."¹⁰

Since God is an illusion, Freud is against religion. He wants to replace God by 'reason'. But the question arises whether the kind 'reason' Freud talks about is really conducive to the growth of a society where men lead a peaceful and contented life without, however, relying on God? No, he believes that the world cannot be changed. Repression is our destiny. And we have to accept

10% Sigmund Freud, The Future of an Illusion, Op.cit. pp 52-3.

it. Reason, as Freud implies, enables one to live with contradictions. Although it saves man from 'neuroses' it does not make him a revolutionary. It makes him 'normal', it makes him 'fit' for the 'reality principle'. Reason teaches him that since suffering is an unavoidable destiny, it is better to adjust to the world. A man with reason accepts his helplessness without ever trying to change it.

"He will have to confess his utter helplessness and his insignificant part in the working of the universe; he will have to confess that he is no longer the object of the tender care of a benevolent providence. He will be in the same position as the child who has left home where he was so warm and comfortable. But, after all, is it not the destiny of childishness to be overcome? Man cannot remain a child for ever; he must venture at last into the hostile world".¹¹

Although Marx deprived man of God, he gave them a revolutionary philosophy. Marxism, without relying on God, assures man that he is really capable of constructing a world of universal brotherhood. Freud is bold enough to argue that God is dead. But the way he replaces

11. Ibid, pp85-6.

God by reason is hardly something a revolutionary can rely on. He knows that God is an illusion. But he does not know what can really replace God. His inability to imagine the possibility of a society free from repression and coercion is rooted in his theory of the nature of man. For him, man, because of his aggressive impulses, cannot love. What at best he can do is to pretend that he loves. A neurotic is deprived of the Freudian reason. But he is at least sane in the sense that he finds it difficult to pretend ceaselessly. Freud can cure 'neurosis'; but he cannot visualize the societal reasons behind neurosis. Freud's ahistorical philosophy does not allow him to believe that, given a new history, man can really love without being subject to 'ambivalence' and hypocrisy.

II

REICH AND HIS REVOLUTIONARY PSYCHOANALYSIS

Wilhelm Reich, although a psychoanalyst, seems to have gone beyond Sigmund Freud. The way Freud depicts the roots of neurosis in the repressive sexual morality is surely an indicator of the revolutionary aspect of psychoanalysis. But Freud, because of his desire to isolate psychoanalysis from politics, however, fails to maintain the revolutionary promise which psychoanalysis, at the time of its inception, generated. Freud argues that man becomes neurotic, because, 'repression' for him is too heavy to bear. The question has to be raised: If repression is largely responsible for neurosis, what should be the reaction of the psychoanalyst to those societal values which make repression possible? Instead of challenging the societal values, Freud begins to advise his patients how to live like a 'normal' man. If repression is too heavy to bear, Freud is ready to replace 'repression' by 'sublimation' and 'renunciation'. This makes the patient able to adjust to the 'reality principle': Freud is probably successful in curing neurosis; but the kind of 'normal' man psychoanalysis aims at creating does by no means appear to be a positive

challenge to the reality principle." As a result, psychoanalysis, despite its apparent boldness, became ultimately a part of the system. Reich observes:

" This substitution of renunciation and rejection for repression seems to banish the ghost which raised its threatening hand when Freud confronted the world with his early findings. These findings showed unequivocally that sexual repression makes people not only sick but also incapable of work and cultural achievement. The whole world began to rage against Freud because of the threat to morals and ethics.... Then, after the new formula of rejection, the previous enmity was replaced by partial acceptance. For just as long as the instincts were not lived out, it did not make any difference, from a "cultural point of view", whether it was the mechanism of instinctual rejection or that of repression..... Psychoanalysis, previously condemned had now itself become capable of culture - unfortunately by way of 'renunciation of the instinct', that is, the renunciation of its own theory of the instincts"³¹

31. Wilhelm Reich, The Sexual Revolution, Vision Press London, 1951, pp 13-4.

Freud does not want to bring politics in psychoanalysis. This is what Reich challenges. Reich believes that what Freud calls the 'reality principle' is relative in the sense that it is subject to change. The Freudian reality principle, as Reich would argue unequivocally, is the product of the patriarchal authoritarian civilization. To accept this kind of civilization as the ultimate form of human civilization or to advise patients not to go beyond the reality principle shows Freud's helplessness before the kind of civilization he lived in. The way Freud allows his psychoanalysis to submit itself to the reality principle of the patriarchal authoritarian civilization shows his politics. Reich argues in 'The sexual Revolution':

"The fact that this reality principle is itself relative, that it is determined by an authoritarian society and serves its purposes, this decisive fact goes carefully unmentioned. To mention this, they say, is politics and science has nothing to do with politics. They refuse to see the fact that not to mention it is also politics."³²

Relying heavily on Malinowski's study of sexuality among the Trobriand Islanders, Reich challenges the Freudian

32. Ibid, p 19.

thesis that no civilization can be free from sexual repression. Malinowski shows that apart from incest taboo the Trobriand Islanders are not subject to any kind of a sexual repression. And the incest taboo, as Reich argues, is not felt as a kind of repression, because children and adolescents are given the fullest opportunity to gratify their sexual urges in other ways. Reich goes on arguing that the Trobriand Islanders, in contrast to Freud's assumption, are happy and quite capable of leading an ordered life without the slightest indication of sexual crimes. In other words, Malinowski's study proves an important fact freedom and order aren't incompatible with each other. This historical fact leads Reich to argue that the reality principle is not given for ever; it is subject to change. Reich believes that sex-negating morality is not natural; it is the outcome of the patriarchal civilization. Malinowski's study raises Reich's confidence in the fact that the Freudian theory of the origin of civilization, is bound to be erroneous. Reich argues in 'The Invasion of Compulsory Sex Morality', "the patriarchal concept of primeval history has also quite logically led to the assumption that compulsory monogamy, jealousy, the suppression of women etc, have

a biological foundation. If we add that this concept serves the purpose of justifying our patriarchal organization and forms part of the basis of fascist sexual ideology, whereas the matriarchal theory shows that all is subject to change and also the things can be done differently, we can hardly hesitate in deciding which concept to make our own".³³

Reich now asks the question: What are the factors that has made this transition possible? He shows that the roots of the patriarchal civilization lie in the 'economic advantage' from marriage. And this advantage from marriage, needless to add, gives birth to sex-nega-ting morality. The reason is simple enough. Reich argues:

".....persons who reach the full development of their genital needs, either through a special stroke of fortune or by a cure, become incapable of conforming to the monogamous demand - 'one partner for life'. A comparison with the sexually crippled and therefore armored wives who can tolerate morality and the relative ease with which the sexually crippled men keep to monogamy, shows

33. Wilhelm Reich, The Invasion of Compulsory sex Morality Penguin, 1971, p 95.

that: (1) the impairment of genital sexuality makes men and women capable of marriage, (2) the full development of genitality through a satisfactory sex-life before marriage does not destroy the possibility of monogamy of a certain duration, but it does destroy the capacity for life-long monogamy".³⁴

To prevent chaos Freud imposes morality on man. But Reich argues that morality itself creates chaos which it, however, does not intend to do. And this is the fundamental contradiction of any sex-negating morality. One of the major contradictions of compulsive morality manifests itself in the institution of monogamy. Since monogamy deprives the individual of his free choice, he is forced to seek alternative. And since the chastity of 'pure' women makes it impossible for the individual to find out a healthy alternative, what emerges is prostitution. Reich observes in 'The Sexual Revolution'. "The demand of prematerial chastity deprives the male youth of love objects. This creates conditions which, though not intended by the existing social order, are inevitably a part of its sexual regime; monogamy marriage gives rise to adultery, and the chastity of the girls gives rise to

34. Ibid, p.85.

prostitution... Due to the natural demands of sexuality however, a strict sexual morality results in exactly the opposite of that which is intended".³⁵ The question can be raised; Isn't it true that monogamy, despite its inherent contradictions, is the only possible way to maintain order in the society? Reich argues that monogamy is indispensable only for the patriarchal authoritarian civilization. There is no reason to think that man cannot be free and happy, if he denies monogamy. To make men realize that the alternative to monogamy is not necessarily chaos and disorder, what is needed is the 'sex economic morality'. With this conviction, Reich rejects monogamy and argues confidently in favour of 'lasting love relationship'. To make this kind of relationship possible, women have to be given absolute freedom so that the sexual love can by no means be interfered by economic interests. Although most of the women are subject to 'prostitution phantasies', it is almost impossible for them to deny monogamy, because their husbands give them economic security. So Reich argues that the economic independence is the fundamental prerequisite for a lasting love relationship. One can argue that the kind of lasting love relationship Reich is talking about may

35. Wilhelm Reich, The Sexual Revolution, Op.cit. p 35.

destroy the institution of the family. Reich is not unwilling to demolish the 'authoritarian' family which, as he has repeatedly argued, creates the mass psychological basis of any authoritarian social order. But if by family one means a special environment that allows free and spontaneous relationship to develop, Reich finds no reason to oppose that. "What we want to destroy is not the family, but the hatred which the family creates, the coercion, though it may take on the outward appearance of love'. If familial love is that great human passion it is made out to be, it will have to prove itself. If a dog which is chained to the house does not run away, nobody will, for this reason, call him a faithful companion. No sensible person will talk of love when a man cohabits with a woman who is bound hand and foot. No half-way decent man will be proud of the love of a woman whom he buys by supporting her or by power. No decent man will take love which is not given freely. Compulsive morality as exemplified in marital duty and familial authority is the morality of cowardly and impotent individuals who are incapable of experiencing through natural love capacity what they try to obtain in vain with the aid of the police and marriage laws."³⁶

36. Ibid, p 29.

Reich finds another important contradiction of monogamy. Since monogamy demands premarital chastity, it makes the individual orgasmically impotent. Because of the deep-rooted influence of the sex-negating morality, the individual, even after marriage, does not find it easy to combine the sensual and tender aspect of love together. This makes the relationship between the husband and wife charmless, unhappy and absolutely dull. To make marriage a success, what is needed is the sex-affirmative education. But the moment one is enlightened by this kind of education, one refuses to stick to monogamy, because monogamy demands slavery which the sexually-contented individual hardly tolerates. It can be said that what can make marriage a success is itself the precondition for its destruction. Reich notes:

"Marriage could be good at least for a certain period of time if there were sexual harmony and gratification. This would, however, presuppose a sex-affirmative education, premarital sexual experience, and emancipation from conventional morality. But the very thing that might take for a good marriage means at the same time its doom. For once sexuality is affirmed, once moralism is overcome there is no longer any inner argument against intercourse

with other partners except for a period of time, during which faithfulness based on gratification exists (but not for a life time). The ideology of marriage collapses and with it marriage. It is no longer marriage but a permanent sexual relationship. Such a relationship, because of the absence of suppression of genital desires, is more apt to prove happy than strictly monogamous marriage."³⁷

There are some questions which, Reich believes, vulgar Marxism cannot answer. For instance, the question that seems to have drawn his attention in The Mass Psychology of Fascism is: What was the reason that the lower-middle class supported the fascist regime, especially at a time when the 'objective conditions' were almost favourable for revolution? What makes vulgar Marxism incomplete, as Reich believes, is its inability to take into account the psychical structure of the masses. This, however, does not mean that Reich is giving absolute importance to human psychology, denying the role history plays in shaping man's character. Although what man is depends to a large extent on the kind of society he lives in, the point which Reich wants to emphasize is that man's character which is formed in childhood may not always cope with the rapidly changing social circumstances. So

37. Ibid, p 144.

it would be wrong to expect that at the period of acute economic crisis man would necessarily be willing to fight for socialism. If one is submissive, timid and dependent one cannot take the role of a revolutionary. In other words, to know whether man would be able to bring about revolution, one cannot be indifferent to the way he is socialized in his family. This leads Reich to study the way the masses are socialised in the authoritarian family. He finds that the family, being the 'factory of the authoritarian ideologies', takes the leading role in the process of destroying us. He is highly critical of the sex-nagating morality on which the family is based. It deprives the child of his capacity to gratify his sexual urges. It does not allow the child to develop his curiosity in the natural manner. Since it denies everything that is living and vital, the child, instead of becoming a revolutionary, becomes timid and dependent. "The moral inhibition of the child's natural sexuality, the last stage of which is the severe impairment of the child's genital sexuality, makes the child afraid, shy, fearful of authority, obedient, good and docile in the authoritarian sense of the words. It has a crippling effect on man's rebellious forces because every vital life impulse is now burdened with severe fear; and since sex is a forbidden subject,

in general and man's critical faculty also become inhibited. In short, morality's aim is to produce acquiescent subjects who, despite desires and humiliations, are adjusted to the authoritarian order.... Man's authoritarian structure - this must be clearly established - is basically produced by the embedding of sexual inhibitions and fear in the living substance of sexual impulses".³⁸ It goes without saying that when a man, after being socialized in an authoritarian family, ultimately faces the world, he discovers his utter helplessness. He begins to believe that his helplessness can be overcome only by surrendering to some external authority. It is at this juncture that the contradiction of the lower-middle class individual becomes clear. His 'class situation' demands that by becoming a socialist he should make his own destiny. On the other hand, the authoritarian family has already formed his character in such a manner that even in his dream he cannot afford to be a revolutionary. Reich argues

"The basic traits of the character structures corresponding to a definite historical situation are formed in early childhood, and are far more conservative than the fears of technical production. It results from

38. Wilhelm Reich, The Mass Psychology of Fascism
Penguin, 1978, p 64.

this that, as time goes on, the psychic structures lag behind the rapid changes of the social conditions from which they derived, and later come into conflict with new forms of life".³⁹

Reich, although an admirer of Karl Marx, is not happy with the kind of socialism ^{which} that the Soviet Union has established. Reich argues that the Marxist dream that the state would gradually wither away has not come true in the Soviet Union. To explain why the masses have accepted their helplessness before the powerful state, Reich argues that socialism has failed to penetrate into the psychical structure of the masses. In the Soviet Union, Reich observes, man has not been given the fullest opportunity to gratify his sexual urges.

Although socialism demands initiative and responsibility from the concrete individual, he for all practical purposes accepts his helplessness. As a result, instead of withering away, the state becomes more and more powerful. "The transition from authoritarian state government to self-administration was not possible. This transition failed to materialize because the biopathic structure of

39. Ibid, pp 52-3.

the masses and the means of effecting a basic change in this structure were not recognised. There can be no question that the disappropriation and curbing of individual capitalists was a complete success; but the education of the masses, the attempt to make them capable of abolishing the state, which was only an oppressor to them, to effect its 'withering away' and to take over its functions was not a success."⁴⁰

The failure of the soviet experiment drives Reich to develop his theory of 'Work democracy'. What characterizes work democracy is that it allows the individual to manage his own affairs. In other words, in a work democracy all individuals are supposed to be independent, spontaneous, confident and capable of shaping their own destiny. "The working masses of men and women, they and they alone, are responsible for everything that takes place, the good things and the bad things. True enough, they suffer most from a war, but it is their apathy, craving for authority etc., that is most responsive for making wars possible.... To become capable of freedom and of securing peace, masses of people who are incapable of freedom will have to have social power".⁴¹

40. Ibid, pp 290-91

41. Ibid, pp 356-7.

To make the individual fit for work-democracy what is needed is the sex-affirmative education. Reich believes that without a cultural revolution that changes man's psychical structure, no democratic movement can be a success. To make this kind of revolution possible he attaches great importance to the role the educators of children have to play. He writes

"Educators and sexologists who are unable to tolerate the sight of two children caressing each other, who cannot see the charm and the naturalness of infantile sexuality, are completely useless for a revolutionary education of the new generation, no matter how good their intentions may be".⁴² Reich writes in The Sexual Revolution, "The Marxist sentence that 'the educator himself has to be educated' has become an empty phrase. It is time to give it a concrete and practical content, the educators of a new generation, parents, teachers, government leaders and economists, must first be sexually healthy themselves before they can even consent to a sex-economic upbringing of children and adolescents."⁴³

In work-democracy, as Reich believes, there will be no antithesis between work and pleasure. Sigmund Freud

42. Wilhem Reich, The Sexual Revolution, Op.cit. p 259.

43. Ibid, p 259.

believes that work is necessarily antithesis to pleasure, because he thinks that to do work man has to repress or renounce his sexual drives. Freud argues that a sexually contented man, because he is lost in the pleasure principle, finds of no necessity of doing work. This seems to be the reason why the Freudian reality principle rests on imposed duty rather than pleasurable work. But Reich believes that to do work successfully, man has to be sexually contented. When he is sexually free, his work ceases to be a burden imposed on him. On the other hand, he realizes himself through his work. "The relationship between the worker's sexual life and the performance of his work is of decisive importance. It is not as if work diverted sexual energy from gratification, so that the more one worked the less need one would have for sexual gratification. The opposite of this is the case; The more gratifying one's sexual life is, the more fulfilling and pleasurable is one's work, if all external conditions are fulfilled. Gratified sexual energy is spontaneously converted into an interest in work and an urge for activity. In contrast to this, one's work is disturbed in various ways if one's sexual need is not gratified and is suppressed. Hence the basic principle of the work hygiene of a work-democratic society is: It is necessary to

establish not only the best external conditions of work, but also to create the inner biological preconditions to allow the fullest unfolding of the biologic urge for activity. Hence, the safeguarding of a completely satisfying sexual life for the working masses is the most important precondition of pleasurable work".⁴⁴

Karl Marx talked about 'alienation'. For him, alienation can be explained by the fact that what the worker produces goes to the capitalist on whom the worker has no control. So, as Marx would argue, work would be pleasurable or 'alienation' would be prevented from disturbing man's activities only when socialism would emerge. Reich argues that the abolition of private property can by no means be the sufficient condition for 'non-alienated' labour. What is needed is the affirmation of man's sexuality. A sexually discontented person, Reich would argue, would not find pleasure in his work, even when he knows that there is no capitalist to exploit him.

44. Wilhelm Reich, The Mass Psychology of Fascism, Op.cit. p 326.

III

MARCUSE'S PROMISE : THE DREAM OF SEXUAL FREEDOM

Like Reich Marcuse, too, is not ready to give the final verdict on human destiny. Although a follower of Freud, the kind of concepts Marcuse uses to develop his philosophy seem to have originated in his Marxian world view. This makes Marcuse all the more interesting. He intends to make the impossible possible; psychoanalysis does not necessarily prevent one from becoming a Marxist.

To begin with, with his notion of 'Surplus repression' Marcuse tends to refute the Freudian hypothesis that civilization is bound to be repressive. Although he argues that certain amount of repression is almost inevitable, he does not fail to see that the amount of repression we are subject to often exceeds the limit. This 'surplus repression', as Marcuse believes, is not necessary for civilization as such; it is the inevitable outcome of the kind of civilization we are living in - the civilization that rests on domination and exploitation. "While any form of the reality principle demands a considerable degree of repressive control over the instincts, the specific institutions of the reality principle and

the specific interests of domination introduce additional controls over and above those indispensable for civilized human association. These additional controls arising from the specific institutions of domination are what we denote as surplus repression".⁴⁵ To make the distinction between basic repression and surplus repression clear, a simple illustration would suffice. For the maintenance of any kind of civilization whatsoever, one should not be allowed to have sexual intercourse with one's mother. This 'basic repression' is easily understandable. But the question arises: What would happen if man refuses to stick to life-long monogamy or denies to bear the burden of alienated labour for ever? To argue that the alternative to monogamy and alienated labour is barbarism does not make any sense. Marcuse argues that these are illustrations of surplus repression. And they serve the purpose of the class that, in order to maintain its existence, wants to dominate over the rest of the society. So it can be said that 'surplus repression' is a very useful strategy that makes the exploited class completely incapable of gratifying their sexual urges. Instead of utilising his pre-genital organs for sexual purpose, the

45. Herbert Marcuse, Eros and Civilization, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1956, p 37.

ordinary worker in the capitalist society is forced to utilize them for alienated labor. This process achieves the socially necessary 'desexualization of the body', the libido becomes concentrated in one part of the body, leaving most of the rest free for use as the instrument of labor. If one wants to be governed by the demands of the pleasure principle, one has to be free from alienated labor. And this is precisely what is impossible in the capitalist society. So Marcuse goes on arguing that 'surplus repression' - the kind of repression that makes alienation possible - does not characterize civilization as such; it has to be associated with a particular kind of reality principle which Marcuse calls the 'performance principle'.

Freud, because of his unwillingness to take politics into account, fails to consider the most fundamental point; the reality principle is not given for ever; it is so dependent on history that it becomes qualitatively different under changed circumstances. The reason why Marcuse is not happy with the Freudian notion of the abstract reality principle is undeniably his deep-rooted faith in Marxism. One of the fundamental lessons of Marxism is that nothing is universal, everything is in

flux. With this conviction Marcuse finds it reasonable to argue that the Freudian reality principle is subject to change. This emphasis on the reality of the reality principle leads him to introduce the concept of the performance principle. Although Marcuse's Marxism gives a new dimension to psychoanalysis, it is necessary to emphasize the way Marcuse differs from vulgar Marxism, as far as the question of alienation is concerned. For instance, alienation, as Marcuse sees it, is unbearable chiefly because it prevents the individual from gratifying his sexual urges. In other words, Marcuse does not challenge the ahistorical nature of sexuality. That man is potentially a 'polymorphously perverse' being, irrespective of history, is the most important Freudian proposition which Marcuse finds no reason to refute. It can be said that as far as the nature of man is concerned, Marcuse seems to be tremendously inclined to Freud. But unlike Freud, he believes that man can be sexually free, even when he lives in the realm of civilization. Orthodox Marxists, it has to be kept in mind, criticize capitalism not because it does not allow man to live with his essence. The reason is obvious. Marxism does not permit one to talk about the universal essence of man. Marcuse, on the other hand, believes in the universal essence of man because

like Freud, he, too, thinks that man is fundamentally a sexual animal. What Marcuse wants from a revolutionary society is sexual freedom. Marxism, for Marcuse, is a tool that has to be utilized to make sexual revolution possible. He needs Marxism in order to prevent psychoanalysis from becoming philosophy of pessimism. For Marcuse, it seems, Freud is more real than Marx.

The question we will now ask is what leads Marcuse to think of a non-repressive civilization. He believes that the idea of a non-repressive civilization is not merely a fantasy. What raises his confidence in the possibility of a free civilization is his hope that the very achievements of the performance principle would make man free from alienation. The very process of civilization under the performance principle has attained a level of productivity at which the social demands upon instinctual energy to be spent in alienated labor could be considerably reduced. Consequently, the continued repressive organization of the instincts seems to be necessitated less by the struggle for existence than by the interest in prolonging this struggle by the interest in domination. Although Freud believes that economic security is largely responsible for repression, Marcuse finds enough reasons to assume

that man now is in a position to meet his demands without being subject to alienation and long working day. The reduction of the working day would enable the individual to regain his sexuality. Being ^{free} from alienation and de-sexualized labor, the individual would allow himself to be a happy servant of the Eros. Marcuse observes:

"The achievements of domination based civilization have undermined the necessity for unfreedom the degree of domination of nature and of social wealth attained makes it possible to reduce ungratifying labor to a minimum quantity is transformed into quality, free time can become the content of life and work can become the free play of human capacities. In this way the repressive structure of the instincts would be explosively transformed; the institutional energies that would no longer be caught up in ungratifying work would become free and develop a libidinous civilization".⁴⁶

Marcuse does not seem to be worried about the fact that the reduction of the working day would necessarily reduce the average standard of living. The way modern man whom Marcuse does not hesitate to call 'one-dimensional man'

46. Herbert Marcuse, Five Lectures, Allen Lane The Penguin Press, London, 1970, p 22.

allows himself to be manipulated by all sorts of 'artificial needs' makes him sceptical about the utility of this kind of high living. His anger manifests itself when he writes

"The people recognize themselves in their commodities; they find their soul in their automobile, hi-fiset, split-level home, kitchen equipment. The very mechanism which ties the individual to his society has changed, and social control is anchored in the new needs which it has produced".

Marchse wants to make man free from these artificial needs which sustain alienation. So he argues in "Eros and Civilization".

"Since the length of the waking day is itself one of the principle repressive factors imposed upon the pleasure principle by the reality principle, the reduction of the working day to a point where the mere quantum of labor time no longer arrests human development is the first prerequisite for freedom. Such reduction by itself would almost certainly mean a considerable decrease in the standard of living prevalent to day in the most advanced industrial countries. But the definition of the standard of living in terms of automobiles, television sets, airplanes and tractors is that of the performance principle

itself. Beyond the rule of this principle, the level of living would be measured by other criteria; the universal gratification of the basic human needs, and the freedom from guilt and fear internalized ~~as well as~~ as well as external, instinctual as well as rational".⁴⁷

Against the allegation that a sexually free society makes it impossible for the individual to be devoted and responsible, Marcuse has his own reply. He argues convincingly that the fear of freedom is the fear generated by the performance principle. Since men under the performance principle do not know what sexual freedom is, they become unnecessarily afraid of freedom. A sexually free person, as Marcuse leads us to believe, does not find any reason to allow his activities to be disturbed by more sexuality. The free development of transformed libido within transformed institutions would minimize the manifestations of mere sexuality by integrating them into a far larger order, including the order of work. In this context, sexuality becomes its own sublimation. The Freudian fear that sexual freedom and civilization cannot go together disappears. Unlike Freud, Marcuse gives man the strength to believe that the

47. Herbert Marcuse, Eros and Civilization. Op.cit. p 153.

moment he is sexually free, he feels an almost infinite urge to unite with all that is beautiful in this universe. So sexual freedom, instead of creating anarchy and disorder, makes this earth really worth-living.

Marcuse writes:

"Out of this freely polymorphous sexuality arises the desire for that which animates the desired body; the psyche and its various manifestations. There is an unbroken ascent in erotic fulfilment from the corporeal love of one to that of the others, to the love of beautiful work and play, and ultimately to the love of beautiful knowledge..... The culture building power of Eros is non repressive sublimation; sexuality is neither deflected from nor blocked in its objective; rather in attaining its objective, it transcends it to others, searching for fuller gratification".⁴⁸

Although Marcuse expresses hope ^{about} in the possibility of a sexual paradise, the kind of sexual freedom that has come in advanced western capitalist countries should not be confused with what he argues for. Another harmful illusion has been created in the name of sexual freedom. Man thinks that he is sexually free, but this freedom

48. Ibid, p 219.

makes him blind to the fact that sex has been utilized to maintain domination. This is what Marcuse calls 'repressive de-sublimation'. "Today compared with the Puritan and Victorian periods, sexual freedom has unquestionably increased. At the same time, however, the sexual relations themselves have become much more closely assimilated with social relations; sexual liberation is harmonized with profitable conformity. The fundamental antagonism between sex and utility - itself the reflex of the conflict between pleasure principle and reality principle - is blurred by the progressive encroachment of the reality principle on the pleasure principle.... The individuals who relax in this uniformly controlled reality principle recall not the dream but the day, not the fairy tale but its denunciation. In their erotic relations, they "keep their appointments" - with charm, with romance with their favourite commercials".⁴⁹

The fact that Marcuse is not happy with the so-called sexual freedom poses an important question. Can man be really free, if his need for love and relatedness is not satisfied? Although sexual permissiveness has allowed man to sleep with as many women as he desires,

49. Ibid, pp 94-5.

he finds his life unhappy, discontented, empty and absolutely meaningless. This probably shows that sexual union does not necessarily make one 'related' to one's partner. Especially in a society where alienation awaits man, sexual freedom is bound to manifest itself as a kind of opium that gives man a temporary relief from tensions. All these tend to indicate that the problem of modern man is no longer the problem of sexual repression; it is the problem of meaning of life, the problem of positive involvement, the problem of love and relatedness. One cannot but agree with Viktor E. Frankl when he argues in his book 'From Death Camp to Existentialism' that the predominant problem in our world is 'existential frustration'.

"Man is threatened by existential frustration, by frustration of his well-to-meaning, by his unfulfilled claim to a meaning for his existence, by his existential vacuum, by his 'living' nihilism." To make man really free psychoanalysis has to shift its focus of attention from sexuality to the need for love and relatedness. This leads us to evaluate the arguments of two neo-Freudians - Karen Horney and Erich Fromm, and the major existentialist psychoanalyst - R.D. Laing.

IV

PSYCHOANALYSIS : IN SEARCH OF NEW VALUES - A NEW -FREUDIAN APPROACH

For Freud, man is essentially ahistorical. When Freud studies the patient of the twentieth century, he hardly tries to situate the patient in his special environment. On the contrary, the patient appears to Freud as the same primitive man who once killed his father in the primitive horde. The fact that the patient of the twentieth century experiences a reality that by no means resembles that of the primitive horde is of little importance to Freud. He considers that the problem of man, despite revolutionary changes in history, remains same. This problem is the problem of sexuality; the inability of the patient to overcome the incestuous attachment, his unwillingness to consider the genital union as the sole aim of sexuality. This extraordinary emphasis on the libido seems to have imprisoned Freud. And that is indeed his tragedy. Freud, although a genius, because of his obsession with the libido, fails to give the satisfactory answer to the problem the neurotic of our age is suffering from. It never occurs to him that a man who goes to the psychoanalyst for help may have

nothing to do with the oedipus complex. He may have problems which are unique to the situation he belongs to. He probably needs love, but alienation prevents him from developing any authentic relationship. He wants to be recognized as what he is, but the growing standardization of feelings deprives him of his uniqueness. These problems are no less real than the problem of sexuality. But Freud is completely blind to them. This makes psychoanalysis dead. Karen Horney wants to make it alive.

Psychoanalysis as Horney intends to imply, can claim to be a living philosophy, if it succeeds in situating the patient in his special environment. This leads Horney to study the childhood experiences of her patients. Horney believes that the roots of neurosis lie in the 'basic anxiety' which the child, because of the hostile environment, cannot escape. Basic anxiety is defined as a feeling of helplessness toward a potentially hostile world.

*It contends that the environment is dreaded as a whole because it is felt to be unreliable, mendacious, unappreciative, unfair, unjust, begrudging and merciless. According to this concept the child not only fears punishment or desertion because of forbidden drives, but he

feels the environment as a menace to his entire development and to his most legitimate wishes and strivings. He feels in danger of his individuality being obliterated, his freedom taken away, his happiness prevented".⁵⁰ Because of this basic anxiety the child develops certain 'neurotic trends'. If the child is not allowed to live with spontaneity, if everytime his parents impose their likings and dislikings on the child, if he is consistently discouraged whenever he wants to raise his voice; in other words, if the parents refuse to recognize him as a poet, an artist, a revolutionary, and a person with uniqueness and independence, there is a possibility that the child may begin to consider the world as potentially hostile. This causes anxiety. To overcome his anxiety, his utter helplessness, his unbearable loneliness, he may take different paths. He may become completely masochistic. His intention is clear: 'If I submit to the authority, nobody can harm me'. He may become tremendously narcissistic. This time his intension is: 'I need power to deprive others of their capacity to hurt me'. He may withdraw himself from the world. His intention is: 'If I do not mix with others, nobody can injure me'. All these lead Karen Horney to

50. Karen Horney, New Ways in Psychoanalysis, Kegan Paul, London, 1947, p 71.

suggest:

" The relevant factor in the genesis of neurosis is then neither the Oedipus Complex nor any kind of infantile pleasure strivings but all those adverse influences which make a child feel helpless and defenceless and which make him conceive the world as potentially menacing. Because of his dread of potential dangers, the child must develop certain 'neurotic trends' permitting him to cope with the world with some measure of safety. Narcissistic, masochistic, perfectionistic trends seen in this light are not derivatives of instinctual forces, but represent primarily an individual's attempt to find paths through a wilderness full of unknown dangers. The manifest anxiety in neuroses is then not the expression of the ego's fear of being overwhelmed by the onslaught of instinctual drives or of being punished by a hypothetical 'super ego' but is the result of the specific safety devices' failure to operate."⁵¹

The neurotic trend the child develops is not easy to overcome, because the world he faces in his adult life is not essentially different from what he experienced in childhood. As a matter of fact, the world remains hostile.

51. Ibid, pp 9-10.

Horney argues in her New Ways in Psychoanalysis:

"Among the factors in western civilization which engender potential hostility, the fact that this culture is built on individual competitiveness probably ranks first. The economic principle of competition affects human relationships by causing one individual to fight another, by entiling one person to surpass another and by making the advantage of one the disadvantage of the other."⁵² Besides this, a society that evaluates man in terms of what he appears to be rather than what he ^{is} bound to create the feeling of restlessness and insecurity. Horney is quite justified in arguing that as a neurotic reaction to this hostile world, one may invite loneliness and isolation. Although a certain amount of loneliness is inescapable, a neurotic thinks that he is incapable of developing any relationship whatsoever. He takes it for granted that loneliness is his destiny. When a man of this kind comes to any relationship, he begins to suspect himself. This explains why Franz Kafka, despite his almost infinite love for Felice, is so hisitant, so restless, so inconfident about himself. In one of his letters Kafka writes:

52. Ibid, p 173.

"I cannot live with people; I absolutely hate all my relatives, not because they are my relatives, not because they are wicked, not because I don't think well of them, but simply because they are the people with whom I live in close proximity.⁵³ It is just that I cannot abide communal life; what's more, I hardly have the energy to regard it as a misfortune.⁵³ Seen in a detached way, I enjoy all people, but my enjoyment is not so great that, given the necessary physical requirements, I would not be incomparably happier living in a desert, in a forest, on an island rather than here in my room between my parents' bedroom and living room."⁵³

This is not all. Kafka is so suspicious about himself that he cannot think of making Felice happy. Kafka writes

"Are you not beginning to feel sick at the sight of me? Can you not see by now that if disaster - yours, your disaster, Felice - is to be averted, I have to remain locked up within myself? I am not a human being; I am capable of tormenting you cold-bloodedly, you whom I love most, whom I love alone out of the entire human race (as far as I am concerned, I have no relatives and no friends, and unable to have them, and don't want them),

53. Franz Kafka, Letters to Felice, Penguin, 1978
p 408.

and cold-bloodedly allowing you to forgive the torments I inflict. Can I tolerate this situation when I am in a position to see it so clearly, have suspected it, find my suspicions confirmed and continue to suspect it? If need be, I can live as I am, my rage turned inward tormenting only by letter, but as soon as we lived together, I would become a dangerous lunatic fit to be burned alive".⁵⁴

Kafka's fears Freud does not know how to explain. Kafka's isolation, his fear that he may not be liked by Felice - these are facts which have nothing to do with the Oedipus Complex or latent homosexuality. Kafka is Kafka because the world he lives in is hostile - the kind of persons he comes across never assure him that he can be loved, admired and respected. In other words, Kafka's need for relatedness, his passionate desire for affection, his willingness to be recognized as what he is have never been satisfied. This makes him tremendously helpless, he cannot bear this anxiety, he prefers to be lonely and isolated. It can be said that to know what neurosis is, it would be better to read Kafka's letters to Felice, rather than the case history of 'Little Hans'.

For all practical reasons, Kafka seems to be more

54. Ibid, p 409.

nearer to our age than Little Hans. And who can deny that Kafka's 'neurotic withdrawal from human relationships' cannot be explained by the Freudian libido theory? It has to be explained by neo-Freudian psychoanalysis, because it is capable of situating man in a world that is potentially hostile. The question has to be raised: If the world is hostile, what should be the aim of psychoanalysis? To advise patients to "adjust" to the hostile world would be reactionary. So psychoanalysis, if it wants to go to the roots, cannot be separated from politics. It has to answer the most fundamental question: What kind of society is desirable so that man can lead an authentic and meaningful life? To answer this question, it is necessary to study what Erich Fromm says about psychoanalysis and politics.

In 'Civilization and Its Discontents' Freud asks an important question whether it would ever be possible to apply psychoanalysis to the study of the sickness of the whole society. Fromm, it seems, keeps Freud's question in mind when he begins to study the 'pathology of normalcy'. Whereas Freud confines his psychoanalysis to the study of the individual neurosis, Fromm expands its horizon. Fromm argues that what appears as normal and healthy is

itself pathological. The kind of society we are living in is sick, abnormal and pathological. Unlike Freud, Fromm does not advise patients to "adjust" to the reality. He, on the other hand, argues that "mental health cannot be defined in terms of the adjustment of the individual to his society, but on the contrary, that it must be defined in terms of the adjustment of society to the needs of man, of its role in furthering or hindering the development of mental health".⁵⁵ Fromm believes that what signifies man is not his physiological drives, but his human needs which stem from the 'human situation'. "The animal is content if its physiological needs - its hunger, its thirst and its sexual needs - are satisfied. In as much as man is also animal, these needs are likewise imperative and must be satisfied. But in as much as man is human, the satisfaction of this instinctual needs is not sufficient to make them happy; they are not even sufficient to make him sane. The archimedic point of the specifically human dynamism lies in this uniqueness of the human situation; the understanding of man's psyche must be based on the analysis of man's needs stemming from the conditions of his existence".⁵⁶

55. Erich Fromm, The Sane Society, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1979, p 72.

56. Ibid, p 25.

Fromm says that the moment man is born, he discovers his existential peculiarity. Man, unlike animals, is no longer united with nature. Because of the capacity of his brain to reflect, he discovers that he is alone and unique. He needs unity. He cannot bear loneliness. But at the same time he cannot regress to the stage (of natural harmony) to which animals belong. "Man's evolution is based on the fact that he has lost his original home, nature - and that he can never return to it, can never become an animal again. There is only one way he can take; to emerge fully from his natural home, to find a new home - one which he creates, by making the world a human one and by becoming truly human himself".⁵⁷ This 'existential dilemma' gives birth to a set of needs. Man needs unity, even when he wants to maintain his uniqueness. This can be satisfied only through 'creative love'. "There is only one passion which satisfies man's need to unite himself with the world, and to acquire at the same time a sense of integrity and individuality, and this is love. Love is union with somebody, or something, outside oneself, under the condition of retaining separateness and integrity of one's own self."⁵⁸

57. Ibid, p 25.

58. Ibid, p 31.

The kind of society modern man is living in does not allow him to fulfil his human needs. Freud argues that man becomes neurotic, if he is not sexually satisfied. Modern man has become a consumer. He consumes everything including sex. "The world is one great object for his appetite, a big bottle, a big apple, a big breast. Man has become the sucker, the eternally expectant - and the eternally disappointed".⁵⁹ As a result, the kind of sexual repression Freud discovered in his own society is missing from modern consumer society. Still man is unhappy. This shows that the Freudian psychoanalysis is incapable of studying the problem of modern society.

The kind of psychoanalysis Freud develops is dangerous for one more sociological reason. It attracts urban middle class intellectuals who, although not happy with ~~class intellectuals who, although not happy with~~ capitalism, are, however, incapable of revolting against the system. They are alienated, unhappy and discontented. But ^{still} they need knowledge. They invite the illusion that what they miss in real life i.e., love, creativity and innovation, can be compensated by knowledge. Psycho-

59. Erich Fromm, The Dogma of Christ and Other Essays, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1963, p 71.

analysis fulfils this function. It explains everything. Man is unhappy, because civilization has to be based on repression. Man cannot avoid war, because his destructive impulses make war inevitable. Man has to remain selfish, because his nature does not permit him to be a lover of mankind. In this way, psychoanalysis intends to justify everything. But it does not expect commitment, responsibility and devotion. It does not inspire people to jump from the realm of knowledge to the realm of action. It becomes a religion. But this religion, unlike all other religions, demands no sacrifice. To become a true Catholic, one has to sacrifice something. To become a socialist, one has to fight. But to become a fellower of Sigmund Freud, one needs only knowledge that enables one to 'adjust', even when one is not happy. This is the way psychoanalysis deprives man of his revolutionary potentialities. In his book "Sigmund Freud's Mission" Fromm writes:

"Psychoanalysis became a surrogate for religion for the urban middle and upper middle classes, which did not want to make a more radical and comprehensive effort. Here, in the movement, they found everything - a dogma, a ritual, a leader, a hierarchy, the feeling of possessing the truth, of being superior to the uninitiated,

yet without great effort, without deeper comprehension of the problems of human existence, without insight into and criticism of their own society and its crippling effects on man, without having to change one's character in those aspects which matter, namely to get rid of one's greed, anger and folly. . . . From a forward moving and courageous idea, psychoanalysis became transformed into the safe crede of those frightened and isolated members of the middle class who did not find a heaven in the more conventional religious and social movements of the time. The decay of liberalism is expressed in the decay of psychoanalysis".⁶⁰

Moreover, psychoanalysis creates the illusion that man's need for love and relatedness can be compensated by knowledge. The patient is unhappy. Freud explains why he is unhappy. After that, psychoanalysis stops. But the patient does not need knowledge only; he wants to be happy. Ofcourse, when the patient knows the reasons behind this unhappiness, his tension is slightly removed. But this is the first step. He has to jump from the realm of knowledge to the realm of love. Unless he loves, his knowledge, despite its importance, is of no use. This

60. Erich Fromm, Sigmund Freud's Mission, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1971, p 112.

is precisely what Freud is not ready to accept. Marx demands that the philosophers should not only interpret the world; they should try to change it. But Freud goes on interpreting; he is hardly capable of changing the world. In "The Dogma of Christ and Other Essays". Fromm argues:

"If psychoanalysis is to fulfil its real possibilities, the analyst must overcome his own alienation, must be capable of relating himself to the patient from core to core, and in this relatedness to open the path for the patient's spontaneous experience and thus for the understanding of himself. He must not look on the patient as an object, or even only be a participant observer, he must become one with him and at the same time retain his separatedness and objectivity, so that he can formulate what we experiences in his act of oneness..... If psychoanalysis is to develop in this direction, it has still unexhausted possibilities for human transformation and spiritual change. If it remains enmeshed in the socially patterned defect of alienation, it may remedy this or that defect, but it will become another tool for making man more automatized and more adjusted to an alienated society."⁶¹

61. Erich Fromm, The Dogma of Christ, Op.cit. pp 139-40.

Freud is so afraid of freedom that he cannot imagine a person without a strong Super ego. The Super-ego, as Freud argues, consists of all societal values and norms which the child begins to internalize at the latency period. Despite this internalization, the individual cannot escape anxiety. Freud says that the eternal conflict between the id and the superego makes the ego absolutely helpless. Although the individual does whatever his society demands from him, his action is not his free choice. He fulfils his duty because he is afraid of the super-ego. This kind of conscience is what Fromm calls 'authoritarian conscience'. This does not make man free. This assumes that there is an eternal conflict between the individual and society. This presupposes that man, if he is given freedom, would be absolutely anti-social. Needless to add, the roots of the super-ego lie in the Freudian theory of the nature of man. Since Freud assumes that man is selfish and egoist, he cannot but force him to bear the burden of the super-ego. The super-ego is the voice of the society. It is not the innovation of the individual. Under the pressure of the super-ego, the individual cannot be spontaneous. He pretends, he becomes a 'role', he never knows what he is. His alienation is complete. This is, as Freud argues, man's destiny. Indeed, this is the destiny of man, if one intends to

justify the repressive civilization. The Freudian theory of the super-ego has its political implications! Man has to accept the role society imposes on him. He cannot get freedom because freedom means the destruction of civilization. It never occurs to Freud that through the super-ego the ruling class speaks for itself.

Fromm believes that man himself is capable of deciding what is right and what is wrong for him. Freedom, as Fromm sees it, is not anarchy. Freedom enables man to have a 'humanistic conscience'. And this conscience is his own creation. He is not alienated from his conscience. Whatever he does never appears to be a burden to him. It is possible for Fromm to think of a free individual, because he believes that freedom is a need that is rooted in man's existential peculiarity. Freud thinks that man is anti-social, selfish and egoist. This kind of man is the product of capitalism. In 'The Crisis of Psychoanalysis' Fromm argues:

"Freud's homo-sexualis is a variant of the classic homo-economicus. It is the isolated, self-sufficient man who has to enter into relations with others in order to that they mutually fulfil their needs.... In both variants

the persons essentially remain stronger^a to each others being reduced only by the common aim of drive satisfaction. The social determination of Freud's theory by the spirit of the market economy does not mean that the theory is wrong, except in its claim of describing the situation of man as such; as description of interpersonal relations in a bourgeois society, it is valid for the majority of people⁶². Although capitalism makes man selfish, he has to pretend that he has love for society. This is the fundamental contradiction of capitalism. ~~And this contradiction of capitalism.~~ And this contradiction Freud imposes on man. Man is basically a bundle of anti-social drives and impulses which Freud calls the id. But he has to live in society. That is why, the super-ego has to be imposed on him. It can be said that the kind of guilty feeling the individual suffers from reflects the inherent contradiction of capitalism. It makes man selfish, but at the same time it demands love for society.

This contradiction, Fromm believes, can be removed if man is allowed to have humanistic conscience. This

62. Erich Fromm, The Crisis of Psychoanalysis, Penguin, 1979, pp 47-8.

conscience enables man to love humanity, but this love is never an imposed duty. It is a free choice through which man fulfils himself. It can be said that whereas Freud, in order to justify the repressive civilization, degrades man, Fromm, because of his deep-rooted faith in revolution, places man at the centre of the universe. This leads Fromm to talk about "productive character". Those who are productive in their outlook create their own values; they make their own destiny. An imposed morality does not govern them, because they believe that nothing can transcend them. Nietzsche, too, challenges morality Nietzsche's 'superman' makes his own destiny. But the superman is governed by the will to power; the superman hates love. But Fromm's 'productive character' does not utilize power to dominate over others. He uses power to unfold his potentialities. He is powerful because he loves. Fromm writes:

"Productiveness is man's realization of the potentialities characteristic of him, the use of his powers. But what is 'power'? It is rather ironical that this word denotes two contradictory concepts: power of = capacity and power over = domination.... "Power over" is the perversion of "power to". The ability

of man to make productive use of his powers is his potency; the inability is his impotence.... With his power of love he can break through the wall which separates one person from another".⁶³ Fromm finds no reason why an independent man cannot love humanity. For Fromm, self love is not antithesis to love for others. Freud believes that if a man loves himself, i.e., if he he ^anarcissistic, he cannot love others. Fromm does not think that a narcissistic person really loves himself, because he believes that selfishness and self-love, far from being identical, are actually opposites. Fromm writes:

"Freud holds that the selfish person is narcissistic, as if he had withdrawn his love from others and turned it towards his own person. It is true that selfish persons are incapable of loving others, but they are not capable of loving themselves either".⁶⁴ As a matter of fact, Freud considers love as an investment. This attitude to consider love as a kind of investment reflects itself in the psychoanalytical terminology. In his book 'Greatness and Limitations of Freud's Thought' Fromm raises an interesting point. "Is there really such a thing as a love object? Does not the loved

63. Erich Fromm, Man for Himself, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1978, pp 87-8.

64. Erich Fromm, The Art of Loving, Unwin paperbacks, 1980, p. 37.

person cease to be an object i.e., something outside and opposed to me? Is not love precisely the inner activity which unites two people so that they cease to be objects (i.e. possessions for each other)? To speak of love-objects is to speak of having with exclusion of any form of being; it is not different from a merchant speaking of capital investment. In the latter case capital is invested, in the former, libido. It is only logical that frequently in psychoanalytic literature one speaks of love as libidinous investment in an object. It takes the banality of a business culture to reduce the love of God, of men and women, of mankind to an investment.....⁶⁵

Fromm, although a Marxist, gives more importance to humanistic conscience rather than some positivistic theory of revolution. Man makes revolution, because he wants to unfold his potentialities. Although there is a tendency on the part of Marxists to believe that man's nature is absolutely historical, Fromm argues that man has some unique potentialities valid for all ages. But he maintains the view that history often makes it impossible for the individual to unfold all his potentialities. Man wants to change history, precisely because he wants

65. Erich Fromm, Greatness and Limitations of Freud's Thought, Jonathan Cape, London, 1980, pp 8-9.

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to become what he is! In other words the driving force behind the progress of history is not some inexorable laws. It is rather man's will to realize himself. "What man does in the process of history is to develop this potential, and to transform it according to its own possibilities. The point of view taken here is neither a "biological" nor a "sociological" one if that would mean separating these two aspects from each other. It is rather one transcending such dichotomy by the assumption that the main passions and drives in man result from the total existence of man, that they are definite and ascertainable, some of them conducive to health and happiness, others to sickness and unhappiness. Any given social order does not create these fundamental strivings but it determines which of the limited number of potential passions are to become manifest or dominant".⁶⁶ This leads Fromm to talk about universal ethics for humanity. Marxists often fail to do that, because they believe that history has the power to shape man in the manner it wants. But this makes man abnormal, sick and neurotic. Fromm is not ready to ^{accept} socialism for its own sake. Freud justifies capitalism, because his psychoanalysis cannot go beyond that. And orthodox Marxists justify socialism, even when man is sick. They argue that there cannot be any universal definition of 'normalcy'. Even when man

66. Erich Fromm, The Sane Society, Op.cit. pp 13-4.

is nothing but a cog in a vast social machine, orthodox Marxists intend to justify this sickness because the "inexorable laws" of 'Historical Materialism' permit this sickness. But Fromm goes beyond Freud and Marx. His is humanistic psychoanalysis. And it allows him to argue convincingly in favour of universal ethics. For Fromm, it matters very little whether man is sick under capitalism or socialism. What matters is man, his sanity, his capacity to fulfil himself.

Freud, as we have already mentioned, does not find any possibility of the emergence of a perfectly democratic society. Since Freud does not have faith in the capacity of man to make his own destiny, the kind of society he talks about has to be authoritarian. Fromm's 'Humanistic psychoanalysis' places man at the centre of the universe. So it is reasonable to assume that Fromm cannot be happy with Freud's political ideology. Although Fromm talks about democracy, it would be entirely wrong to assume that he favours the kind of democracy that characterizes advanced capitalist countries. In The Fear of Freedom Fromm observes:

"We have become automatons who live under the illusion of being self-willing individuals-.... He lives in a world to which he has lost genuine relatedness."

and everything has become instrumentalized... He thinks, feels, and wills what he believes he is supposed to think, feel and will; in this very process he loses his self upon which all genuine security of a free individual must be built".⁶⁷ Fromm, although a critique of modern democracy, is not happy with socialism. Although he accepts some of ^{the} fundamental differences between modern democracy and socialism, he is careful enough to pinpoint that man's needs that stem from the 'human situation' have not been satisfied in the socialist countries. This leads Fromm to talk about "Communitarian socialism". This kind of socialism, according to Fromm, has to be based on direct democracy which would be practised by small city houses of not more than 500 people. Needless to add, this kind of socialism, if possible, would enable the concrete individual to think, act and reflect for himself. In other words, it would safeguard humanity from robotism. This seems to be the reason why Fromm argues:

" Man today is confronted with the most fundamental choice, not that between capitalism or communism, but that between robotism (of both the capitalist and the communist variety), or Humanistic communitarian socialism".⁶⁸

67. Erich Fromm, The Fear of Freedom, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1979, pp 218-9.

68. Erich Fromm, The Sane Society, Op.cit. p 363.

Fromm is aware of alienation. He believes that the roots of alienation lie in the nature of specialized technical work. But this work can be meaningful and enjoyable, if the worker is aware of the whole process. Moreover, if the worker is allowed to work under a socially favourable condition, his work, even though monotonous, would not be boring. And this kind of favourable condition can be created only when workers are allowed to raise their voice in the decision making process.

V

EXISTENTIAL PSYCHOANALYSIS AND HUMAN FREEDOM

The problem of 'ontological insecurity' occupies the central place in R.D. Laing's analysis of sanity and madness. One feels ontologically insecure if one is not recognized as a 'person' with one's uniqueness, distinctiveness and independence. An ontologically insecure person, Laing argues, prefers loneliness and isolation, because he begins to believe that any relationship with others would make him more and more insecure. "A firm sense of one's own autonomous identity is required in order that one may be related as one human being to another. Otherwise, any and every relationship threatens the individual with loss of identity.... In this

the individual dreads relatedness as such, with anyone or anything or, indeed, even with himself, because his uncertainty about the stability of his autonomy lays him open to the dread lest in any relationship he will lose his autonomy and identity."⁶⁹ An authentic person is one who is capable of going beyond what is immediately given. The fact that he is alive, rather than dead manifests itself in his ability to transcend ceaselessly.⁷⁰ But this is what our civilization represses. Freud, too, admits that our civilization is a repressive one. Freud says that civilization represses man's sexuality. For Laing, the meaning of repression is much more wider. In 'The Divided Self' Laing writes:

"Our civilization represses not only the 'instincts' not only sexuality, but any form of transcendence".⁷⁰ These whom we call 'normal' adjust themselves to this repressive civilization. But there are persons who are in an 'untenable' position. They can neither revolt nor adjust. They are ontologically insecure. Although this kind of madness does not express authentic rebellion, Laing is by no means ready to degrade them. "The Kernel of the Schizophrenic's experience of himself must remain incomprehensible to us. As long as we are sane and he is

69. R.D. Laing, The Divided Self, Penguin, p 44.

70. Ibid, p. 11.

insane, it will remain so.... We have to recognize all the time his distinctiveness and differentness, his separateness and loneliness and despair".⁷¹

To know the reasons behind 'ontological insecurity' it is necessary to study the way the child is socialised in the family. Laing says that in modern families parents hardly recognize their children as independent and authentic persons. They have their own images about children. Although a child is a real, living human being, parents consider him as a lifeless object to be manipulated in the way they want. This is what they call love. Laing argues that this so called love - which is nothing but a kind of violence - destroys children. This kind of socialization which makes it impossible for the child to be 'confirmed' as what he is leads to ontological insecurity. Laing writes in 'The Politics of Experience' :

"From the moment of birth, when the stone-age baby confronts the twentieth century mother, the baby is subjected to those forces of violence, called love, as its mother and father have been, and their parents and their parents before them. These forces are mainly concerned with destroying most of its potentialities. This enterprise is on the whole successful. By the time the new human being is fifteen or so, we are left with

71. Ibid, p 38.

a being like ourselves. A half crazed creature, more or less adjusted to a mad world. This ^{is} normally in our age".⁷²

Freud, too, admits that what we call normal is the result of repression. It indeed goes to the credit of Freud ^{that he} shows that a normal man is a fragmented part of what he potentially is. Laing points out "The relevance of Freud to our time is largely his insight and, to a very considerable extent, his demonstration that the ordinary person is a shrivelled, desiccated fragment of what a person can be".⁷³ Freud shows that it is because of the family socialization that the child represses the ~~Oedipus~~ Oedipus Complex and all other manifestations of infantile sexuality. For Laing, the problem is more complex. The family represses not only sexuality; it represses the child's most fundamental need; his need to be recognized as a creative agent. For Laing what is important is man's desire to occupy an important place in somebody's life. Man wants to be loved, admired, and recognized as what he is. For Freud, man is no more than an animal. This kind of materialistic thinking leads Freud to argue that man needs nothing but the gratification of instinctual desires. For Freud, Love is immaterial. The way Freud reduces man to the level of animal gives birth to the

72. R.D. Laing, The Politics of Experience and The Bird of Paradise, Penguin, 1981, p-50.

73. Ibid, p 22.

illusion that two strangers can be happy in the act of copulation. This is what Laing challenges. "Sex may be felt to be empty if the other is not dancing as well. The pure self-gratification of rise and fall of tension can be eminently frustrating. Any theory of sexuality which makes the 'aim' of the sexual 'instinct' the achievements of orgasmic potency alone, while the other, however selectively chosen, is a mere object, a means to this end, ignores the erotic desire to make a difference to the other".⁷⁴ And this desire to make a difference to the other is the desire to be loved and recognized by the other. This is what is simply impossible in modern families. In 'Self and others' Laing observes:

"Many families have now been studied (not only those in which one person has come to be regarded as psychotic) where there is little genuine confirmation of the parents by ~~confirmation of the parents~~ by each other and of the child by each parents, separately or together... The absence of genuine confirmation may take the form of confirming a fiction the child is taken to be, without the actual child receiving recognition. The characteristic family pattern that has emerged from the studies of the families of schizophrenics does not so much involve a child who is subject to outright neglect or even to obvious trauma, but a child who has been subjected to

74. R.D. Laing, Self and others, Penguin, 1980, pp 84-5.

in shaping man's character Sartre makes it clear:

"Today's Marxists are concerned only with adults; reading them, one would believe that we are born at the age when we earn our first wages. They have forgotten their own childhoods. As we read them, everything seems to happen as if men experienced their alienation and reification first in their own work, whereas in actuality each one lives it first, as a child, in his parent's work. . . . Existentialism believes that it can integrate the psychoanalytic method which discovers the point of insertion for man and his class - that is, the particular family - as a mediation between the universal class and the individual".⁸⁰

Laing seems to have been highly influenced by Sartre's insight. Quite rightly he points out the way children are socialized in modern families. But Laing fails to consider that the family has to be related to the wider social context. If Marxists are accused of economic determinism, Laing, for the similar reason, can be accused of familial determinism.⁸¹ It seems that Laing is inclined to Sartre so far as Sartre is without Marx.⁸²

Moreover, the kind of 'sane' person Laing dreams of, despite his existential freedom, cannot do much against a hostile world, especially when, all his neighbours

80. Ibid, p 48.

outright neglect or even to obvious trauma, but a child who has been subjected to subtle, but persistent disconfirmation, usually unwittingly".⁷⁵

Laing challenges the prevalent definition of 'normalcy'. A normal man is one who adjusts himself to the pseudo-reality. "The condition of alienation, of being asleep, of being unconscious, of being out of one's mind, is the condition of the normal man".⁷⁶ To become really normal one has to deny the prevalent reality; one has to listen to one's own voice. One has to know what one is. To go into the inner realm what is needed is an adventurous journey. "This journey is experienced as going further 'in', as going back through one's personal life, in and back and through and beyond into the all experience of mankind, of the primal man of Adam and perhaps even further in to the being of animals, vegetables and minerals".⁷⁷ This leads Laing to argue that:

" True sanity entails in one way or another the dissolution of the normal ego, that false self competently adjusted to our alienated social reality: the emergence of the inner archetypal mediators of divine power, and

75. Ibid, p 100.

76. R.D. Laing, The Politics of Experience and The Bird of Paradise, Op. cit: p. 24.

77. Ibid, p. 104.

through this death a rebirth, and the eventual reestablishment of a new kind of ego functioning, the ego now being the servant of the divine, ~~no longer its betrayer~~.⁷⁸

In his book 'The Problem of Method' Sartre emphasizes the importance of psychoanalysis. Sartre argues that Marxists often make a mistake by considering all social phenomena in terms of classes. Although the reality of social classes can hardly be denied, Sartre argues that to know what man is, it is essential to study his childhood experiences. "Today psychoanalysis alone enables us to study the process by which a child, groping in the dark, is going to attempt to play, without understanding it, the social role which adults impose upon him. Only psychoanalysis will show us whether he stifles in his role, whether he seeks to escape it, or is entirely assimilated into it. Psychoanalysis alone shows us to discover the whole man in the adult; that is, not only his present determinations but also the weight of his history. And one would be entirely wrong in supposing that this discipline is opposed to dialectical materialism".⁷⁹ The family situation shapes the character of man. This is, however, not to underestimate the role of social class

78. Ibid, p 119.

79. J.P. Sartre, The Problem of Method, Methuen, London, 1963, p. 46.

remain 'ontologically insecure'. Any journey towards freedom has to be a political action. And politics demands the strength of 'collectivity'. Marxists surely make a mistake when they underestimate the role of the individual, his freedom and his praxis. But isn't it a bigger mistake, if one assumes that the world will be revolutionized by isolated rebellions? Sartre once wrote:

" We are all acquainted with the passage in which Marx alludes to that far-off time: " This reign of freedom does not begin in fact until the time when the work imposed by necessity and external finality shall cease; it is found, therefore, beyond the sphere of material production proper." As soon as there will exist for every-one a margin of real freedom beyond the production of life, Marxism will have lived out its span; a philosophy of freedom will take its place. But we have no means, no intellectual instrument, no concrete experience which allows us to conceive of this freedom or of this philosophy".⁸¹ Laing, although an existentialist, does not seem to have given much importance to Sartre's confession.

81. Ibid, p 70.

CONCLUSION

(QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED)

It is clear from what I have written so far that Freud, despite his boldness to expose the hypocrisy of the kind of civilization he lived in, was not a revolutionary. He took his civilization for granted. His inability to go beyond his time reflects itself in his extreme pessimism. For Freud man's fate has been determined for ever. It is simply impossible for man to live without repression and coercion. If man wants civilization, neurosis is a price he has to pay.

To take Freud for granted implies one's reluctance to fight for a better society. The sole aim of my thesis is to prove that there is no reason to take Freud for granted. All my chapters prove that the prophesy of psychoanalysis has to be refuted; there is no reason to think that man's 'sickness' is his ultimate fate. I have tried to show that Freud, being the prisoner of his time, failed to think of the possibility of a 'sane' society.

My faith in liberation is extraordinarily strong. So I cannot but react sharply to the sense of tragedy Freud makes us familiar with. I refuse to accept the Freudian doctrine that man has been condemned to be brutal, selfish, aggressive and sick. I do not say that man is free from selfishness and aggressiveness. But man can make choices. If at present he is aggressive,

I am, for that reason, not ready to accept that he cannot alter his present state of being. This faith in man's ability to make his own destiny is the driving force behind my present attempt to refute the Freudian determinism.

I do not pretend that I am free from passions. But I believe that the kind of arguments I have put forward in my thesis are sufficient to prove that my faith in liberation is not simply an emotional outburst. Marx, Fromm, Laing and Sartre have helped me giving a passionate and yet solid critique of Freud.

This, however, does not mean that I have accepted that we are already in a state of perfect happiness. In fact, my thesis does not end with giving a critique of Freud. It carries another important message: Unless Marxism expands its horizon by being open to the findings of psychoanalysis, the possibility of knowing the depth of human crisis will remain obscured. My refusal to accept the theory of the death-instinct notwithstanding, I am not inclined to the naive optimism, as put forward by some orthodox Marxists, that things would be all right, if institutions are changed. Man's aggressiveness, although determined by social factors, is so deeply rooted in his unconscious mind that even under changed historical circumstance he may not emerge as a completely new man.

Likewise, in a patriarchal society women are so conditioned to believe that they are inferior that this inferiority^{or} complex cannot easily be altered, even if they are given the fullest opportunity to create their own values. I have selected these two examples to show that these 'psychical complexes', although determined by society, have, nevertheless, their relative autonomy: It would be easier to accept the possibility of ceaseless dialectical interaction between human psychology and social structure, if one is equally honest to both Marxism and psychoanalysis.

Marcuse, Reich, Fromm, Brown, Laing and Sartre have worked in this direction. The way these thinkers have tried to give a radical dimension to psychoanalysis seems to have reflected in all my chapters.

This attempt to allow Marxism to be open to psychoanalysis has posed the following questions:

- (i) Can Marxism be indifferent to the way characters are formed in childhood?
- (ii) Is it possible for man to gain freedom, if the institutions of monogamy and family are not abolished?

- (iii) What should be the attitude of Marxists to radical feminism? Is it reasonable to argue that Friedrich Engels is sufficient to know the specificity of the problems of women?
- (iv) Isn't it the task of Marxists to focus attention on cultural revolution so that man's psychical structure can be changed? Is it possible for one to participate in revolution, if one is 'masochistic', 'submissive', 'sexually crippled' and 'neurotic'?
- (v) Is 'alienation' merely the question of political economy? Can work be really enjoyable, if it is not merged with man's erotic desires?

These are questions I have raised again and again. These questions are so serious that I cannot claim that I have succeeded in giving exact answers to them.

Nevertheless, I have made an attempt, although limited in its scope, to understand problems to which, I feel, no serious student of social science can be indifferent.

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