

**ANDROGYNY AND "GENDERIZATION" :
A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS**

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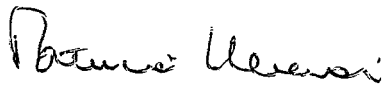
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DECLARATION

This is to certify that the Dissertation entitled "Androgyny and 'Genderization': A Sociological Interpretaton" submitted by Mr. Surajit Chandra Mukhopadhyay in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Philosophy has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or anyother University.

We recommend that this dissertation should be placed before the examiners for their consideration for the award of the above mentioned degree.


(DR. PATRICIA UBEROI)
Supervisor


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DEDICATED TO THE
SACRED MEMORY OF MY FATHER
LATE SUNIL CHANDRA MUKHOPADHYAY

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T

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Needless to add the mistakes are all of my own making.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

What does it mean to be male or female in our society, a society that is changing fast? Are the notions of male and female that are 'given' to us still adequate to define gender relations? From these questions that nibble at the mind arises our concern for a fresh look at "genderization".

The positing of the male and female at both ends of the continuum does nothing to reduce the tension, opposition and repression between sexes. We must search for an answer - a resolution that mediates, the conflict of the sexes into a harmonious blend of synthesis that would answer the problems posed by atomistic and functionalist thinking. It is our contention that the concept of androgyny is the answer to our search. This work tries to unravel the symbol of androgyny, take it out from myths and alchemy, from psychology and folklore, and show how it can be usefully put in a sociological framework for understanding the problem of gender and gender relations.

Our attempt to site androgyny within a sociological discourse becomes all the more important

if we cite the case built up by the functionalists, notably Talcott Parsons. By his now famous system building, Parsons fitted the theme of sex to structures, and tried to show how people were integrated into them through 'socialization'. In his collaborative volume *Family, Socialization and Interaction Process* (1953), he achieved a synthesis. "He brought together a structural account of kinship, the socialization problem in sociology, psychoanalytic accounts of personality formation, the internal interaction patterns of the household and the sexual division of labour, into a coherent argument." The argument of such coherence manifested itself through a theme of differentiation and learning of sex-roles - where 'sex-roles' were themselves taken-for-granted.

While grappling with the sex role differentiation problem, Parsons rejected the biological difference argument as incapable of explaining the social patterns behind such roles. His effort was to find out the principle imperatives of structural differentiation and he identified sex roles as instrumental and or expressive, operating within the conjugal family. Since the family as an agent of

socialization, socialized the young for the rigours of larger society, he deduced gender patterning of roles as part of structural requirements of a social order.

The Parsonian schema of role acquisition and role internalization was according to him a matter of production from one generation to the next. He wrote,

-----relative to the total culture as a whole, the masculine personality tends more to the predominance of instrumental interests, needs and functions, presumably in whatever social system both sexes are involved, while the feminine personality tends more to the primacy of expressive interests needs and functions. We would expect, by and large, that other things being equal, men would assume more technical, executive and 'judicial' roles, women more supportive, integrative and tension-managing' roles.

The Parsonian argument neatly fitted men and women to allotted slots in the social division of labour on the a priori assumption that there exist things like 'masculine personality' which would, then subsume a feminine personality as the

obverse. It also glosses over the concept of power relation between the two sexes, the tension of role assumption in the theoretical schema that links the person to the society. By allotting women 'supportive integrative and 'tension-managing' roles', an academically sophisticated legitimization of intense social conservatism and institutionalisation is sought to be established. Functionalist sociology echoing conservative masculine ideology thus negates the subordination of women by the assumption of sex role complementarity instead of the relation of power and sexual politics. The integration of androgyny into the body of sociology we feel is an attempted critique of establishment social science. The search for the androgyne has to be seen as arising out of these forces that are operating within the precincts of present day capitalism in particular and the industrial society at large.

In working out the problem we have set for ourselves, we have taken recourse to various disciplines and sub-disciplines - sociology, anthropology, psychology, psycho-analysis and mythology. The eclectic nature of choosing the material does not arise so much from lack of methodological rigour as it does from the very nature of the problem at

large. Trying to understand the various facets of androgyny has invariably led us to a selection of material which we hope is not merely mechanical and an unwieldy concoction of discordant bits and pieces. In trying to stretch the diaspora of our study, we hope that depth has not been sacrificed but rather positively used. The limitations imposed by time and academic ability precluded the possibility of trying to write a counter-history of the problem.

Thus Chapter two is an extensive discussion of Freud - the theory of sexuality from which we derive the concept of bisexuality. This we use as our launching pad to progress on to several myths and Jungian alchemy which posit the idea of the andorgyne in our third chapter. Chapter four tries to analyse the implications androgyny holds for 'genderization' and in the light of recent researches in sociology and psychology tries to fathom the consequences of using such a concept. Our work concludes by trying to show androgyny as an alternative model of thinking in gender sociology - as a critique and an answer to the complexities of our modern society.

CHAPTER 2

THE SYSTEMATICS OF SEXUALITY IN FREUD

Twentieth century thinking has been irreversibly revolutionised by the work of Sigmund Freud [b.6 May 1856]. His 'Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality' [1905] along with his 'Interpretation of Dreams' [1900] stand as momentous contributions to human knowledge. Whilst the former traced for the first time the course of development of the sexual instinct in human beings from their infancy to maturity, the latter gave his views of mental processes, of the dynamics of the unconscious, and of the dominance of the 'pleasure principle'.

His discoveries maybe heuristically divided as, (a) an instrument of research, and (b) the findings produced by the instrument, and (c) the theoretical hypotheses inferred from the findings. The instrument that Freud discovered was the scientific examination of the human mind. Others preceding him had in their own fragmentary and unorganised way sought to plumb the depths of the human mind, more often than not as insights inspired by creative genius.

Knowing the Unconscious

In trying to systematize the technique and theory of research of the complexities of the human mind, Freud realised that there existed active parts of the mind not immediately or directly visible and open to examination either by the subject or an onlooker. These parts were termed as the unconscious.

Trying to fathom this unconscious proved to be a problem. For though hypnotic suggestion was an obvious answer, already in use by Breuer, (the person subjected to this treatment while fully awake, performs an action which had been suggested some time earlier, though he does not remember the suggestion), Freud discovered that this method was imperfect, providing results irregularly and uncertainly. Over a period of time, Freud came to abandon the use of the suggestion (he made changes both in the procedure and in the underlying theory) and perfected his very own instrument of probing - the idea of 'free association'. This form of investigation was entirely unheard of, for Freud simply asked his patients to say whatever came to their heads as part of a wider association. Thus was born psycho-analysis.

However, this form of investigation did not really become successful. After a while, the flow of associations that a subject could think about dried up and the subject could not or would not think of anything more to say. Freud thus came to identify 'resistance', a force separate from the subject's conscious will. This refusal of the mind to collaborate with the investigation led Freud to the belief that the mind was dynamic consisting in a number of mental forces, some conscious and some unconscious, operating at times in harmony and at times in opposition with each other.

According to Freud, the unconscious contents of the mind consist wholly in the activity of conative trends - desires or wishes. These are propelled by physical instincts. The instincts seek immediate satisfaction unhampered by other considerations. Since these instincts have an independent drive, more often than not, they fall out of step with those conscious elements in the mind which help avert external dangers and adapt and integrate with the reality. Freud identified these trends as being overtly sexual or destructive and came to uncover the hitherto undiscovered sexual life of children and the Oedipus complex.

Freud's inquiry into the nature of dreams revealed an equation of conflict and compromise between the primary unconscious impulses and the secondary conscious areas. By laying threadbare the elements of the dream, it became possible to infer their hidden unconscious contents; and, since dreams are a common phenomenon of almost universal occurrence, their interpretation turned out to be most useful.

But what was really a pathbreaking endeavour, was Freud's attempt at differentiating the primary and secondary processes of thought, between events in the unconscious and conscious regions of the mind. In charting out the topographical contours of the mind, he discovered the unconscious as lacking in organisation and coordination. Impulses being independent of each other, they seek satisfaction independently and being uninfluenced by one another, contradictions are virtually inoperative. The associations of ideas proceed without any logical systematization. The objects to which conative trends are attached are of a non-rational nature with no fixity of time and space. Freud realised that incursions into the domain of conscious thinking of mechanisms that properly belong to that of the unconscious causes oddity not only of dreams but of many

other normal as well as pathological mental events.

The later part of Freud's work is only an extension and elaboration of the above stated ideas. They were used not only to understand mechanisms of psychoneuroses and psychoses, but went on to open up new vistas in archaeology, anthropology, criminology, education and sociology.

Freudian Metapsychology

The Freudian theoretical superstructure came to be erected on the basis of such observations made above. He termed this 'metapsychology'- his basic theoretical schema. This was designed by Freud to deal with more general concepts. The apparatus of the 'meta' consisted of the physical reality - the unconscious, pre-conscious and the conscious, the libidinal relation to work (the concept of Tribe) and the dynamics of the ego, super-ego and the 'id'. The 'id' contains the uncoordinated instinctual trends, the 'ego'. the organised realistic part whilst the 'super-ego corresponds to the critical and moralizing functions.

These are a system of intelligibility, an analytic method to be used in psycho-analytic situations and it constitutes a methodology in the theory

of sexuality. With this he was able to recognise a whole field of mental facts which had hitherto been excluded from normal consciousness. He was able to interpret dreams as a certain space - the inside of the analytic scene against the outside. His theoretical scheme enabled him to recognise infantile sexuality as valid and for us made the unconscious mind real.

Bisexuality

Having spelt out the theoretical framework for understanding the concept of sexuality as posited by Freud, we shift our focus to the concept of bisexuality, an element which he recognised and termed as a "decisive factor".¹ Indeed bisexuality is an umbrella term that subsumes evolutionary, embryological, biological and psychological connotations. It will be our endeavour to stretch this very fertile concept a bit more, so as to embrace sociological and anthropological aspects, which happily follow from the Freudian systematic.

The concept of bisexuality, so crucial to psychoanalysis, is in the main derived from biology. It has over a period of time come to occupy a centrality as a concept of fundamental importance.

This is because, Freud and his theory tries to demolish the popular and universal belief that a human being is either a man or a woman. Freud goes on to state that, "Science, however, knows of cases in which the sexual characteristics are obscured, and in which it is consequently difficult to determine the sex. This arises in the first instance in the field of anatomy. The genitals, of the individual concerned combine male and female characteristics."² This is ofcourse the typical hermaphroditism which occurs but normally . "In every normal male or female individual, traces are found of the apparatus of the opposite sex."³ Mostly these are found, according to Freud, as organs without any particular function. Some do get modified and undergo changes by taking on other functions, whilst in rare cases both male and female sex apparatuses are found fully developed and placed side by side. But in most cases both sets are found in an atrophied condition. Thus, the originally bisexual physical disposition comes to be unisexual by the process of evolution, leaving in its wake atrophied remains of its dual past.

Bisexuality assumes a very important dimension

in the entire gamut of Freudian theory because the propositions that Freud makes about men and women need to be understood in this context. The resolution of the Oedipal situation for both the sexes is affected by perception about the possession of the penis, or the non possession of it, and the meaning this has for each boy or girl accompanied as it is by the constitutional pre-disposition to seek active or passive pleasures. Before the attainment of puberty, bisexuality takes the form of seeking a mix of active or passive aims. The post pubertal period finds bisexuality being expressed in genital ways in heterosexual and homosexual object relations. (Freud writing about deviations in respect of the sexual object states that there are people who have 'contrary sexual feelings' whom he terms as 'inverts'. Men whose sexual object is a man and not a woman and women whose sexual object is a woman and not a man exhibit 'inversion'. He classifies inversion as (a) absolute, (b) amphigenic and (c) contingent. By 'absolute' Freud meant people whose sexual objects are exclusively of their own sex. "Persons of the opposite sex are never the object of their sexual desire, but leave them cold, or even arouse sexual aversion in them."⁴

By 'amphigenic' Freud meant psychosexual hermaphroditism where "sexual objects may equally well be of their own or of the opposite sex. This kind of inversion thus lacks the characteristic of exclusiveness."⁵

Contingent inversion comes about through certain external conditions - "of which inaccessibility of any normal sexual object"⁶ forces people to derive sexual satisfaction by having sexual intercourse with the same sex.)

Freud makes it quite clear that physical sexual characteristics do not parallel mental characteristics or sexual attitudes and behaviour. Freud states, "It was tempting to extend this hypothesis (bisexuality) to the mental sphere and to explain inversion in all its varieties as the expression of a psychical hermaphroditism. All that was required further in order to settle the question was that inversion should be regularly accompanied by the mental and somatic signs of hermaphroditism."⁷

"But this expectation was disappointed. It is impossible to demonstrate ^{so} close a connection between the hypothetical psychical hermaphroditism

and the established anatomical one. A general lowering of the sexual instinct and a slight anatomical atrophy of the organs is found frequently in inverts. Frequently, but by no means regularly or even usually. The truth must therefore be recognised that inversion and somatic hermaphroditism are on the whole independent of each other." 8

An important addition, which appears as a footnote to the 'Three Essays' of 1905, came up in 1915, Freud vehemently stated that :

"Psychoanalytic research is most decidedly opposed to any attempt at separating off homosexuals from the rest of mankind as a group of special character. By studying sexual excitations other than those that are manifestly displayed, it has found that all human beings are capable of making a homosexual object-choice and have in fact made one in their unconscious. Indeed, libidinal attachments to persons of the same sex play no less a part as factors in normal mental life, and a greater part as a motive force for illness, than do similar attachments to the opposite sex. On the contrary, psychoanalysis considers that a choice of an object independently of its sex-freedom to range equally over

male and female objects as it is found in childhood , in primitive states of society and early periods of history, is the original basis from which, as a result of restriction in one direction or other, both the normal and the inverted types develop. Thus from the point of view of psychoanalysis the exclusive sexual interest felt by men for women is also a problem that needs elucidating and is not a self-evident fact based upon an attraction that is ultimately of a chemical nature."⁹

Having thus stated quite plainly that homosexuality is a part of sexual normalcy which is found in all human-beings, Freud implied a bisexual disposition for all humans. "Thus the sexual object is a kind of reflection of the subject's own bisexual nature."¹⁰

The Freudian theory stresses that there are some similarities between boys and girls, especially so during the first two phases of the development of personality - the oral and the anal. In these two phases,¹¹ the pleasures and pains are similar if not identical for both sexes. With the onset of the phallic phase the similarities do not really die out. Both boys and girls enjoy stimulation of the genital area and both are interested in the penis (when girls play with little boys). The castra-

tion complex affects the two sexes differently - boys who have seen girls think it is a real threat that they can lose their penises, whilst girls know that they are without a penis but want one. Hence the two begin to diverge, but not completely.

A paradox seems to rear its head to make matters a bit clouded, when one finds Freud writing on the differentiation between men and women, one which is completed at or after puberty. The accent that informs the discourse is of the importance of the male impulse. He maintained that the female child's libido is more male than female, because her autoerotic activity concerns predominantly the clitoris. He went on to suggest that perhaps all libido, being like all impulses in its nature active, is thereby essentially male.

Thus, there is in Freud this uneasy relation between two areas of his theory - the gender and the sexuality. On the one hand he continually uses the notion of the basic bisexuality of humans which is sometimes expressed as the early infantile choice of active or passive pleasures and sometimes as the masculine and feminine aspects of infant

sexuality. For example girls are said to be 'masculine' if and when they masturbate whilst boys may take a passive 'feminine' attitude to their fathers. The fundamentals of the Freudian bisexuality lies ambiguously within statements made about women or men, when he attaches more weight to the differences between the anatomy of the sexes. (The presence or absence of the penis; the idea of clitoris as atrophied male organ, etc.)

In his paper, 'Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes' (1925), he writes, "----- 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-----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; but we shall, of course, willingly agree that the majority of men are also far behind the masculine ideal and that all human individuals, as a result of their bisexual disposition and of cross-inheritance combine in themselves both masculine and feminine characteristics, so that pure masculinity and femininity remain theoretical constructions of uncertain content."¹²

The above passage highlights the vagueness and ambiguity of Freud and he himself is aware of the tentativeness of what he has to say. Perhaps the fault lies in his trying too hard to combine two theoretical positions - the anatomical/ biological with the psycho-sociological. Whereas the former comes out easily, i.e. the understanding of male and female per se, the second position 'implicts a cultural factor which lends itself to the entire gender construction. The combination of these two becomes an uneasy mix.

Freud-Fliess Controversy

An overview of Freudian bisexuality would remain incomplete if we ignore the contribution of Wilhelm Fliess (1858-1928), two years younger to Freud, who entered into a collaboration on the idea and later on left the company of Freud in quarrel over it. Fliess was a specialist in affections of the nose and the throat, a brilliant talker who could interestingly hold forth on a number of subjects. Fliess practised in Berlin and was well known for unrestrained fondness for speculation and a correspondingly self-confident belief in his imaginative ideas combined with a dogmatic refusal to consider any criticism of them.

Fliess began with two simple facts on which he then built an enormous superstructure of a hypothesis. They were - (a) that menstruation occurs once a month, and (b) there is a relationship between the mucous membrane of the nose and genital activities; it often swells with genital excitement or during menstruation. ¹³

Fliess in 1897 announced the arrival of the 'nasal reflex neurosis'. It comprised headache, neuralgic pains widely distributed - from the cardiac to the lumbar region, from the arms to the stomach - and, thirdly disturbances of the internal organs, of the circulation, respiration and digestion - a very wide net. The point about the syndrome was that all the manifestations could be relieved by applying cocaine to the nose. The cause was stated to be either organic (after results of infection, etc.) or functional (vasomotor disturbances of sexual origin). This last feature linked with Freud's investigations, more especially as the 'Fliess syndrome' bore remarkable resemblances to neurasthenia - Freud's actual neuroses'.

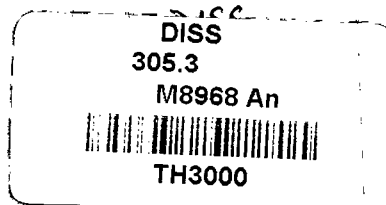
The specificity of this syndrome has never been established, nor has the idea that nasal irri-

tation differs in nervous effects from any other. Fliess failed to convince his colleagues about the nasal origin of dysmenorrhea. Nevertheless the phenomenon of menstruation itself started him off on a far-reaching flight of ideas. It was seen as the expression of a wider process in both sexes, throughout life, a tendency toward periodicity in all vital activities. He thought he had discovered the key to such periodicity by use of two numbers, twenty-eight and twenty-three; the first evidently derived from menstruation, the second probably from interval between the close of one menstrual period and the onset of the next. Fliess laid great stress on the bisexuality of all human beings, and on the whole the number twenty-eight referred to the feminine component, and twenty-three to the masculine.



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-It was the Christmas of 1897 at Breslau, that Fliess had expressed to Freud his conviction that all human beings had a bisexual constitution, However, in 1900 at Achensee, Freud announced it to his friend as a new idea. Fliess was rightly astonished and replied, "But I told you about that on our evening walk in Breslau, and then you refused to accept the idea." Freud having completely forgotten the talk, denied all knowledge of it, and it was



only a week later that he acknowledged what Fliess had to say.

Ernest Jones in his book, 'The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud', in an interesting footnote has this to say :-

"A very severe case of amnesia, only a year before, in 1899, he had written: 'You are certainly right about bisexuality. I am also getting used to regarding every sexual act as one between four individuals'. And the year previous to that he had expressed his enthusiasm in the words: 'I have taken to emphasizing the concept of bisexuality and I regard your idea of it is the most significant for my work since that of "defence" ' " ¹⁴

The rupture of the Fliess-Freud friendship according to Max Schur, in his book, 'Freud! Living and Dying', came about when Fliess turned the theory of man's inherent genetic bisexuality into a theory of bilaterality. The concept of bilaterality arbitrarily and literally insisted on a feminine (left) and masculine (right) half in every human being. Freud whilst writing his 'Three Essays on Sexuality' (1905) also refers to the "poetic fable"¹⁵ of the original human being cut up in two halves - man

and woman - and how they strive ever since to be united. Wendy Doniger O' Flaherty quoting the Brahmavaivarta Purana writes that, "At the time of creation, the Goddess was born from the left side of Krsna."¹⁶ Within the Hindu androgynous pairs Parvati is to the left of Siva, Radha to the left of Krsna and Lakshmi to the left of Siva.¹⁷

The male is to female what right is to left motif of Hindu mythology gets transformed in the Grecian mythology. Hermaphroditus, born of Hermes and Aphrodite, was divided horizontally - male below the waist and female above it.¹⁸

Freud having willy-nilly acknowledged the contribution of Fliess, went on to criticise people whom he felt were crudely trying to explain bisexuality and thereby failing. He attacks the idea of 'a feminine brain in a masculine body' by stating that everyone is ignorant of what characterizes a feminine brain. Freud felt no justification in trying to replace a psychological problem by anatomical analogy. He went on to state that "we have not even any grounds for assuming that certain areas of the brain ('centres') are set aside for the functions of sex, as in the case, for instance, with those of speech".¹⁹

Differentials of Sexuality : Men and Women

Having stated that all human beings are in their first two phases of sexual/personality development, bisexual, Freud focused his attention to the differentiation between men and women that comes about through transformations of puberty. It is not "until puberty that the sharp distinction is established between the masculine and feminine characters. From that time on, this contrast has a more decisive influence than any other upon the shaping of human life."²⁰ He goes on to state that since girls experience inhibitions of sexuality, like shame, disgust, pity etc. earlier than boys (who face less resistance to their sexuality), the component instincts of sexuality appear in a passive form. However, since the autoerotic activity of the erotogenic zones is same in both the sexes, distinctions between the two sexes appear only after puberty, after the passing away of uniformity.

Freud goes on to state that the leading erotogenic zone in female children is located at the clitoris, homologous to the masculine genital zone of the glans penis. To understand how a little girl turns into a woman, one has to follow according

to Freud, the further vicissitudes of the excitability of the clitoris. Whereas, puberty brings about an accession of libido in boys, in girls a fresh wave of repression sets in. Clitoridal sexuality is affected and the brake upon sexuality brought about by pubertal repression serves as a stimulus to the libido of men. While the male sexuality is released, the woman holds herself back and denies her own sexuality. When a sexual act is permitted by the woman, the clitoris is used by her to transfer her excitation to adjacent sexual parts. This is because she is yet to fully understand the vaginal excitability (Freud uses the term anesthesia of vaginal orifice) and if clitoridal excitability refuses to leave her, then the woman becomes permanently 'anesthetic'. When erotogenic susceptibility to stimulation has been successfully transferred by a woman from her clitoris to the vaginal orifice, it implies that she has adopted a new leading zone for the purposes of her later sexual activity. It is in this way, by changing her leading erotogenic zone accompanied by a wave of repression at puberty, that a woman casts aside her childish masculinity and the transformation of a girl to a fully matured sexual woman takes place. 'A man, on the other hand,

retains his leading erotogenic zone unchanged from childhood." ²¹ The differentiation between men and women arising out of bisexuality to sexuality is thus completed.

Puberty having established the primacy of the genital zones, sets in motion for the man the insistent search for a new sexual aim - "penetration into a cavity in the body which excites his genital zone".²² Along with this purely physical development, a parallel psychical process of finding an object, preparations for which have been made for the very childhood, is completed. The object-choice is given its direction by childhood hints which are revived at puberty. It comes through the child's sexual inclination towards his parents and others who take care of the child. It is then "diverted away from them, on to other people who resemble them, owing to the barrier against incest which has meanwhile been erected." ²³

However, with the final touches to the development of female sexuality, the Freudian systematic throws open an entirely new debate, a dissension of note, that cannot be ignored. Feminists like Luce Irigaray pointed out that female sexuality has been conceptualized on the basis of masculine

parameters. The opposition posited by Freud and others of his ilk, between clitoral activity as "masculine" and vaginal passivity as "feminine" in the "normal" woman's sexual development echoes requirements of male sexuality and practice. The clitoris is seen as a "little penis pleasant to masturbate so long as castration anxiety does not exist (for the boy child), and the vagina is valued for the "lodging" it offers the male organ when the forbidden hand has to find a replacement for pleasure -giving." ²⁴ Thus, the woman's erogenous zone is in actuality reduced to "a non-sex, or a masculine organ turned back upon itself, self-embracing." ²⁵

Irigaray, in an interview titled, "The Power of Discourse and the subordination of the Feminine", criticised Freud for bringing to light the implicit and hidden "sexual indifference that underlies the truth of any science," ²⁶ and for defining female sexuality by masculine parameters. The "feminine" she feels, has always been described in terms of atrophy and deficiency, egged on by penis envy. She asks, "How can we accept the idea that woman's entire sexual development is governed by her lack of and thus by her longing for, jealousy of, and

demand for the male organ?"²⁷ She feels that Freud overlooks the possibility of the female sex having its own 'specificity'.

As a consequence, the Freudian theory of sexuality veils woman as a necessary complement of male sexuality, and hides behind the clinical and scientific facade the dominant male ideology. Irigaray feels that it is a denigration of female sexuality which is a consequence of male appropriation that the Freudian schema unfolds. She does not on the other hand find a solution to the question of male dominance through homosexuality or inversion. Nor does she visualize bisexuality as a resolution of the male-female conflict.

Irigaray sees in Freud an absence of a socio-cultural interpretation to the entire problem. "He interprets women's sufferings, their symptoms, their dissatisfactions, in terms of their individual histories, without questioning the relationship of their "pathology" to a certain state of society of culture. As a result, he generally ends up by resubmitting women to the dominant discourse of the father, to the law of the father, while silencing their demands."²⁸

NOTES

1. Freud Sigmund, On Sexuality, Pelican Freud Library, Volume Seven, 1977, p.142.
2. op.cit., p.52.
3. op.cit., p.52.
4. op.cit., p.46
5. op.cit., p.47
6. op.cit., p.47.
7. op.cit., pp-52-53.
8. op.cit., p.53.
9. op.cit., pp-56-57.
10. op.cit., p.56.
11. According to Freud, there are four phases of psychosexual development leading to adult sexuality. The infant enters the world a polymorphous pervert. This means that excitation of any part of his body gives him sexual pleasure. However, at about the age of one (and it must be stressed that age is less important than sequence in this part of the theory), this pleasure becomes focused round the mouth. Pre-genital erotism is oral, sucking and biting, give great pleasure, and this pleasure is sexual. This is oral phase of development.

Later at about 2½ to 3 years, the anal phase takes over and the anus becomes the centre for excitation : sexual pleasure is obtained from defaecation and retention of faeces. By about 4 to 5 years the phallic stage is reached when the phallus or clitoris become the erotogenic zone. This stage is far removed from adult sexuality : It is simply that these organs become centres of sexual pleasure.

After the Oedipus and castration complexes, it is claimed in psychosexual theory, that this pregenital sexuality dies down, the child enters the latency period until puberty. At puberty, hormonal changes awaken the sexual drives and the genital or adult stage of sexuality should be reached in which, ideally, sexuality embracing all three pregenital zones and affection can be combined. (Kline Paul, Psychology and Freudiana Theory, An Introduction, Methuen, London and New York, 1984).P.11.

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CHAPTER THREE

From Bisexuality to Androgyny

Bisexuality as we have already discussed in the previous chapter, is in the Freudian systematic the starting point of the individual's sexuality. It is part of infantile sexuality that eventually branches off to form separate sexual identity - the male and the female. The concept of bisexuality is couched in a scientific language - the discourse of psychoanalysis, which echoes a very clinical attitude.

On the other hand, discussions on androgyny invariably come up against a resistance of language that does not facilitate a strict definition and in a way contributes to an evasiveness in concept. The English language distinguishes in terms of gender, either a he (male) or a she (female). The other gender is neuter (it), neither he nor she and indeed not even alive. If, however the neuter gender is used to describe a living being, the image that it brings up is one of asexuality, of being 'neutered'. Thus, the cat or the dog is 'neutered' when kept as a pet. Thus, an androgyne is beyond grammar, beyond the ordinary scope of the language, and presents for us an impasse of adequate definition.

The easiest way out of such an impasse is to give a physiological definition and state that androgyny is a mixing of secondary masculine and feminine characteristics. But then, this discourse speaks in terms of physical features and does not account for the mental processes at work. The inadequacy of language in trying to concretize the concept of the androgyne however does not restrict the search for it. The symbol of the androgyne appears in various forms and in various cultures depicting a variety of meanings.

Types of Androgynes

Of late, androgyny is a fashionable word in Jungian, feminist, and homosexual circles. According to Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty "androgynes are popularly supposed to stand for a kind of equality and balance between the sexes, since they are technically half male and half female, they more often represent a desirable or undesirable distortion of the male-female relationship or a tension based on unequal distribution of power. Thus, in some societies androgynes play positive social roles, affirming culturally acceptable values, while others are despised as symbols of an undesirable blurring of categories. In the second sense, androgynes may be

regarded as "good", in the sense of symbolically successful, when the image present a convincing fusion of the two polarities and as "bad" when the graft fails to "take" visually or philosophically - when it is a mere juxtaposition of opposites rather than a true fusion." ¹ Androgynes can be classified by their respective myths of genesis. Some are the result of the fusing of a separate male and female, others are born in a fused form and subsequently split into separate male and female.

(a) Splitting: The splitting androgyne begins as a combination of male and female but must split before it can become physically creative. This type does not remain ambiguous, but resolves the sexual ambivalence. In Freud, a resemblance to this type can be found - the undifferentiated bisexual progresses out of the purely natural phenomenon and matures to become truly human.

(b) Fusing : This type of androgyne describes the merger with the other sex (the submerged side of the personality) in order to become psychologically whole. This process is not unlike the mystical realisation of nonduality described in many religions.

(c) The Two-in-One: This type is found not in a single individual but in two : the man and woman who join in perfect love. "This is the image of ecstatic union, another metaphor for the mystic realization of union with godhead. This is the romantic ideal of complete merging , one with the other, so that each experiences the other's joy, not knowing whose is the hand that caresses or whose the skin that is caressed. In this state, the man and woman in Tantric ritual experience each other's joy and pain. This is the divine hierogamy, and , in its various manifestations - as yab - yum, yin and yang, animus and anima it is certainly the most widespread of androgynous concepts!"²

In hierogamy (~~sacred~~ or divine marriage), the two-in-one is best represented by the androgynous motif of the Ardhanarisvara - the unity of Siva and Parvati. It is a merging of complementary units or opposites - the coniunctio oppositorum of the theology - two opposites that must have something in common in order to be opposed and united.

The Hijra, Transvestite & Ambivalence

The eunuch is often confused with the androgyne. Both are technically neither male nor female. "But

whereas the androgyne is both one and the other, the eunuch is neither one nor the other; he is empty where the androgyne is full."³ O'Flaherty feels that both the androgyne and the eunuch are primarily male. The androgyne is a man added to a woman whereas the eunuch is a man minus man. She quotes Morris Carstairs in his book 'The Twice Born' to show that the sexual ambivalence of the hijras is not well received in India. The hijra is thought to have a female penis, or to put it differently a male clitoris. This anomaly of gender identity images the eunuch in a negative light since it connotes female androgyny - a motif that is always viewed as negative.

A variant of the eunuch/transvestite ambivalence is found in the hagiography of Chaitanya - regarded as an avatar of Krsna. Chaitanya regarded himself (as did others) to be an avatar of Radha instead. "Thus it is said that Krsna became Radha in the form of Chaitanya in order to experience what it was like to be Radha (and to make love with Krsna), and he became Krsna in Chaitanya's body in order to make love to Radha."⁴ It is said that Chaitanya used to dress like a woman and retire each month for menstruation. But then he was not a mere woman

but an androgyne - fusing (creating a female self within) as well as a two-in-one (where the locus of a hierogamy is internalized).

It is important to keep in mind the movement which Chaitanya spearheaded - Bhakti - was decidedly one which spoke in a soft feminine voice against the then dominant Shakta (male) strain of Hindu theology. The Vaishnava sect explicitly fought against the increasing 'male' violence of blood and sacrifice that was creeping into mainstream Hinduism.

It is in this light that one must view Chaitanya's involuted relationship with Krsna, Radha and his own external form. Krsna himself once dressed like a woman to be near Radha after a quarrel. Radha embraced "her" passionately, where upon Radha became Krsna. In the Vaisnava discourse the faithful identifies with Radha - who becomes Krsna. This transmutation of forms mediates for the worshipper an androgynous linkage with a male god even as it expresses an erotic relationship that is explicitly heterosexual and implicitly homosexual.

The Sociological Dilemma

Elemire Zolla, in the book, The Androgyne:

Fusion of the Sexes, states that "the androgyne is stalking through the land. Men feel its shadow on them and relent, cease to cling to their harsh, cramped male roles and persuasions. Women it awakens to neatly defined new spaces, to precisely coordinated planes, into which they start calmly picking their way." ⁵ The "stalking" androgyne refutes or rather refuses to accept pre-social categories of masculinity and femininity determined by biology. It seeks to open up a new vista within the sex-gender debate of both the masculine and feminine.

In a metaphysical perspective, the androgyne is encountered by mystics on their way to transcendence - stages of divine love and marriage and ultimately the point whence sexual divisions are bypassed. Within the humdrum of modern life, however, one does not encounter an androgyne on the street. Does it therefore mean that androgynes exist only in the realm of metaphysics? But then androgyny cannot be circumscribed as belonging to some physical being. It is a question of a relation between a look and an appearance. In other words - psyche and image. One cannot posit androgyny as an entity but can visualise it as a symptom. ⁶ It could be, as we have already stated above, a fresh view point

on a debate that is now quite old. The present work seeks to fathom the depth of this conceptualization and by unravelling the impossible referent of symbolism tries to find out its sociological ramifications.

How is androgyny sociological, given that the metaphysical and imaginary perspective holds a major sway over the discourse? The social starts off with an impossibility—the impossibility of sexual ambivalence within the androgynous looking figure. Accustomed to a linkage of the social with the biological, the social cannot so easily shrug off the sex/gender continuity. The social is limited by its own discourse, which like the difficulty of language⁷ of which we spoke above, lacks the tools to transfer the sociological imagination on to a more plastic one, whereby it can start off by disregarding anatomy as a given construct within which to operate. The situation is best comprehended when one appreciates that the androgynous figure is an eraser of differences, the very difference that constructs one as a boy or a girl per se, and consequently a subject over and above a mere biological being. A boy or a girl take up positions in society, positions what are pre-determined by social mores, norms and forms of behaviour, positions that are on either side of the sexual divide. These -

stations in life are governed by genderized codes, reaffirming the difference of the male and the female.

The androgynous position represents a denial, or a transgression, of the rigid gender code of divide, and as such implies a threat to one's given identity and to the system of social roles. The psychoanalytic concept as developed by Freud succeeded in disengaging psychic masculinity and femininity from physiological maleness and femaleness. The sociological understands gender as crucial. It amplifies and elaborates on the psychological in order to pose the question "how" as against the "what" of biology. Thus, given the fact that biological facts of maleness and femaleness as well as human reproduction is crucial, gender roles cannot be ignored, neither can be questions about the nature of the relation between biology and the social.

We shall return again and again to the logic of the above argument in this work, but for the moment we shall essay into the symbols of androgyny and its various representations, notably in myths, both occidental and oriental.

The Androgyne in Myths and Religion

The androgyne is the symbol of supreme identity

in most religious systems. It stands for the level of non-manifested being, the source of manifestation which corresponds numerically to zero, the most dynamic and puzzling of numbers, the sum of both aspects of Oneness : $+1 -1 = 0$. Here zero symbolizes androgyny as the starting point of numeration, divisibility and multiplicability.⁸

With the adoption of Christianity, the Roman emperor came to represent as the supreme authority, Christ and his Church. A further bisexual element was implicit in the Emperor, who came to be called 'restorer of Eden' and "Messiah'. As he sat on the throne, surrounded by a candelabra, representing the Tree of Life as a burning bush (fire being male), he was the male spear-bearer and measurer of time as also the female wearer of the crown and measurer of the sacred space of the city. He represented both male victory and female peace.

The Pope, the other pillar of the Empire, epitomised or rather was vested with the motherly quality. He ritually gave birth to the Church during the coronation ceremony at the Lateran basilica, sprawled out on a midwife's chair.⁹

Zolla sees abiding power as being always androgynous. The Catholic Church comprised magnificence, splendour, overbearing majesty and pitiful beggary. The pomp of the cardinal in his scarlet finery combined with the tattered rags of the mendicant monk. Where the Swiss guards exuded strength and power, the sister of charities came forward with soothing fingers of help. And this Church is one of the most lasting institution of the West.

Likewise the strong ruler. The ruler must appear always as poor as well as rich, needy as well as lavish. We must show a vulnerable, suffering and persecuted part of himself. The appeal of the truly powerful lies in his ability to inspire fear and wonder, pity and contempt. Thus, Mesopotemian kings were slapped in the face and were supposed weep at their coronations. The state combines in itself the qualities of the Heavenly Lady and the stern ruthless ruler. The subject must be able to appeal to her against him, and vice-versa. Thus, the Byzantine Empire, whose symbol was the double eagle, persisted in its archetypal duality, till 1453, when Christianity as the official religion was replaced by Islam, as a result of Turkish victory.

Protestantism which came up in England, spawned androgynous literature through poets, who highlighted its ideology. Spencer in his epic poem, the Faerie Queen, used the image of the hermaphrodite to convey the idea of a complete blending of two souls.

"No word they spake, no earthly thing they felt
But like two senceless stocks in long embracement
dwelt!"

The two souls having attained of the highest power in the universe, Spencer felt,

"Yet certes by her face and physnomy
Whether she man or woman inly were,
That could not any creature weel descry."

In seventeenth century Germany, Jacob Behmen preached a strain of Protestant mysticism that based itself on the idea of the androgyne. Johann G. Gichtel, a follower of Behmen preached that earthly maleness and femaleness must be discarded in order to achieve unity with the Father and with Sophia. Theology describes Sophia as God's mirror and at the same time the mirror of pure awareness in men. She is female in relation to God and androgyne in relation to humanity. According to Vladimir Solovev (19th century Russian Sophianist), Sophia can be imaged

as a challenged to the Spirit of Humanity, where Sophia's maleness is manifested by Jesus and her femaleness by Mary. John Pordage, head of the Philadelphians, a seventeenth century English sect, taught that Sophia is the female part or side of Adam.

The myth of androgyne became so well developed in England and Protestant circles, that it came to be reflected through literature. Along with Spencer, whom we have already quoted, William Blake was one of major poets who gave androgyny within Christianity, a graphic description. For him God, or Eternal Man, was originally androgynous - beyond female space and male time. Blate writes in 'The Gates of Paradise'

I rent the Veil where the Dead dwell:
When wary Man enters his Cave
He meets his Savior in the Grave,
Some find a Female Garment there,
And some a Male, woven with care .

The Fall of man comes about through the disjunction of the male from the female. In Blake's 'Jerusalem', we find;

The Feminine separates from the Masculine
& both from Man
Ceasing to be this Emanations, Life to
Themselves assuming.

In Chinese thought, a harmonious human being balances father-soul and matrix-brain, peopling his or her little world with spherical, star like androgynous thoughts. For them androgyny could be an inner goal where opposite parts of the soul then come together like a man and woman in ecstatic love-making. To describe the polarities and the unity, the Chinese constructed the Tao, the ultimate, undefinable reality. It is a cosmic process in which all things are involved; the world is seen as a continuous flow and change. All manifestations of the Tao are generated by the dynamic interplay of the polar opposites - the yin and yang.¹⁰ The original meaning of the words yin and the yang was that of the shady and sunny sides of a mountain. 'That which lets now the dark, now the light appear is Tao.'

From the very early times, the two archetypal poles of nature were represented not only by bright and dark, but also by male and female, firm and yielding, above and below. Yang, the strong, male, creative power, was associated with Heaven, whereas yin, the dark, receptive, female and maternal element, was represented by the Earth. Heaven is above and dynamic, the Earth (in the old geocentric view) is below and resting, and thus yang came to symbolize

movement and yin rest. In the realm of thought, yin is the complex, female, intuitive mind, yang the strong creative action of the king. All these polarities came to be symbolised by the ancient Chinese symbol called T'ai-chi T'u, or 'Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate'.

The diagram is a symmetric arrangement of the dark yin and the bright yang, but the symmetry is not static. It is a rotational symmetry suggesting, very forcefully, a continuous cyclic movement:

'The yang returns cyclically to its beginning, the yin attains its maximum and gives place to the yang.'¹¹

The two dots in the diagram symbolize the idea that each time one of the two forces reaches its extreme, it contains in itself the seed of its opposite. The interplay of opposites known as t'ai chi blends the male and female, the yang and the yin. The secret of its creativity lies in the female dot at the centre of its male part, and in the male centre of its female part. The dynamics of the yang and the yin ensure the femaleness. No one part becomes stronger than the other and the balance produces a perfect androgyny - the whole.

Israel, like China, produced its esoteric androgyny - a careful balance of the male and female. Genesis 1:26 says:

A And Elohim said - Let us make man [adom, the earthly' Adamah, earth] in our image [tzelem, 'figure' or 'imagination', and according to Qabbalists also 'destiny' or 'mould', the raiment of light or body of glory, or crown, which was lost with the fall, but which was restored to Moses] and in our likeness and let him rule..... and Elohim created man [adam] in his image, in the image of Elohim created him male and female and blessed them, and Elohim said to them-be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth (this was interpreted to mean that Adam extended from heaven to earth). 12

Image was read as 'man' and likeness as 'woman': it followed that man shall rule only when in image and likeness he was similar to God. Thus if Adam being the reflection of God is androgyne, then inferentially speaking God too is androgynous. Thus, all human beings made in the likeness of God could be harmonized and made perfect only when soul and reason, heart and brain combined to a perfect synchronised synthesis.

Opposites & Alchemy

Hermes Trismegistus, the legendary founder of alchemy, points to the primal mystery in nature, the principle of fire, which enfolds in its fourfold flames the two essential opposites, sun and the moon, male and the female, sulphur and mercury, which become the one androgyne at all moments of conception and birth in nature.

Alchemy was called the 'spagyric' art (bring or collect together) with the motto of "solve et coagula" - dissolve and coagulate. The alchemist saw this as the essence of his art - separation and analysis on the one hand and synthesis and consolidation on the other. For the alchemist there was an initial stage in which opposite forces or tendencies were in conflict; secondly there was a question of a methodology and procedure capable of bringing the hostile elements and qualities, once they were separated, back to unity again. The initial state was named chaos. It was to be sought for as prima materia. The commonest ideas are of permanence (prolongation of life, immortality, incorruptibility), its androgyny, its spirituality and corporeality, its human qualities and resemblance to man (homo-unculus) and its divinity. Carl Gustav Jung felt

"that the world of alchemical symbols definitely does not belong to the rubbish heap of the past, but stands in a very real and living relationship to our most recent discoveries concerning the psychology of the unconscious." 13

As stated above, alchemy seeks to bring together opposites. Opposites are factors of the coniunctio, its components, Ripley, as quoted by Jung, states, "The coniunctio is the uniting of separated qualities or an equalizing of principles". These factors of the whole are conceptualized as either confronting one another in enmity or attracting one another in love. "To begin with they form a dualism; for instance the opposites are humidum (moist)/siccum (dry), frigidum (cold)/calidum (warm), superiora (upper, higher)/inferiora (lower), spiritus-anima (spirit-soul)/corpus (body), coelum (heaven)/terra (earth), ignis (fire)/aqua (water), bright/dark, agens (active)/patiens (passive), volatile (volatile, gaseous)/fixum (solid) pretiosum (previous, costly; also carum, dear)/vile (cheap, common), bonum (good)/malum (evil), manifestum (open)/ occultum (occult; also celatum, hidden), oriens (East)/ occidentis (West), vivum (living)/mortuum (dead, inert), masculus (masculine)/foemina (feminine) Sol/Luna". Quite often the mascu-

line - feminine opposition is represented through a dyad of King and Queen.

"The alchemist's endeavours to unite the opposites culminate in the "Chymical marriage", the supreme act of union in which the work reaches its consummation. After the hostility of the four elements has been overcome, there still remains the last and most formidable opposition, which the alchemist expressed very aptly as the relationship between male and female."¹⁵ The attraction of unity between male and female is apparently triggered by the power of love or passion, but what is implicitly hidden or masked is an equally strong resistance which tends to keep them apart.

Jung traces back this tension of resistance to the myth of Christian genesis, where explicit enmity was posited between the serpent and the women but nevertheless the curse fell upon the relationship of the sexes in general. Primal guilt¹⁶ lies between them for the Eve was told : "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee". And Adam was told, "Cursed is the ground for thy sakebecause thou hast hearkened unto the voice

of thy wife," This interrupted state of eminity that is a consequence of the above stated position appears unreasonable only to our rational mind, feels Jung. It does not seem so to our psychic nature. This schism in perception is, according to Jung due to "our reason is (being) often influenced far too much by purely physical considerations, so that the union of the sexes to it the only sensible, thing and the urge for union the most sensible instinct of all. But if we conceive of nature in the higher sense as the totality of all phenomena, then the physical is only one of her aspects, the other is pneumatic or spiritual. The first has always been regarded as feminine the second as masculine. The goal of the other is discrimination."¹⁷ The antinomian thinking of alchemy counters every position with a negation and vice-versa.

The male-female principle for Jung is seen in terms of the animus and the anima. The anima is a personification of all feminine psychological tendencies in a man's psyche, such as vague feelings and moods, prophetic hunches, receptiveness to the irrational, capacity for personal love, feeling for nature and not the least - his relation to the uncon-

scious. It is therefore no mere chance that in olden times priestesses were used to fathom the divine will and to make connection with the gods.

To quote Jung himself, "The man, or the masculine ego-consciousness, is then contrasted with an animus, the masculine figure in a woman's unconscious, who compels her either to overvalue him or to protect against him. The corresponding figure that contrasts with the woman and her feminine ego-consciousness is the anima, the source of all the illusions, over-and under - valuations of which a man makes himself guilty in regard to a woman. There is nothing to indicate in this schema that the man is better than the animus or vice versa, or that the anima is a "higher" being than the woman." When through one's experience the knowledge of this structure is attained, an integration or completeness of the individual follows which leads on to wholeness.

In alchemy, base metal lead was supposed to turn into gold under certain conditions, and the dark, "psychic" man to the higher "pneumatic" man. Jung states that "just as lead, which theoretically could become gold, never did so in practice, so the sober -minded man of our own day looks round in vain

for the possibility of final perfection. Therefore, on an objective view of the facts, which alone is worthy of the name of science, he sees himself obliged to lower his pretensions a little, and instead of striving after the ideal of perfection to content himself with the more accessible goal of approximate completeness. The progress thereby made possible does not lead to an exalted state of spiritualization, but rather to a wise self-limitation and modesty, thus balancing the disadvantages of the lesser good with the advantage of the lesser evil."

Shamanism

We had briefly referred to priestesses being used in olden times to fathom divine will. Shifting our focus from alchemy to anthropology we find a particularly good example of how the anima is experienced as an inner figure in a man's psyche.¹⁸

Medicine men and prophets (shamans) among the Eskimo and other arctic tribes wear women's clothes or have breasts depicted on their garments, in order to manifest their inner feminine side - the side that enables them to connect with the "ghost land", (read unconscious in psychoanalysis).

The androgynous shaman in the Siouan tribes

is motivated by a desire to identify with the moon. Among the Araucanian shamans, the aim of sex reversal is to identify with the bisexual Supreme Creator. In other cases it is the acquisition of special magical powers, especially ventriloquy.

One reported case tells of a young man who was being initiated by an older shaman and who was buried by him in a snow hole. He fell into a state of dreaminess and exhaustion. In this coma he suddenly saw a woman who emitted light. She instructed him in all he needed to know and later, as his protective spirit, helped him to practice his difficult profession by relating him to the powers of the beyond. Such an experience shows the anima as the personification of a man's unconscious.¹⁹.

Myths of Origin

Androgyny as a concept of genesis is found in Indian myths. Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty in her book Sexual Metaphors And Animal Symbols in Indian Mythology, quotes the Brhadavanyaka Upanisad, to show the explicitness of Prajapati as an androgyne:

In the beginning this world was Soul (Atman) alone, in the form of Purusa. He had no joy, and desired a second. Now he was as large as a woman

and a man in a close embrace, and so he caused his self to fall into two pieces, which became a husband and a wife. Therefore it is said, "Oneself is like a half-fragment." He copulated with her and produced human beings. But then she thought, "How can he copulate with me when he has just produced me from himself? I will hide." She became a cow; he became a bull copulated with her, and produced cattle. She became a mare; he a stallion..... thus were born all pairs there are, even down to the ants.²⁰

Creation myths, feel O'Flaherty, are like infantile consciousness, because one comes across a situation in which there is neither being nor non-being, neither dark nor light, and neither male nor female. The metaphor is one of ecstatic union, a romantic ideal of complete merger. In Tantra if this stage is reached than the man and the woman experience each other's joy and pain.

A South Indian myth tells the story of Bhrngin, the adopted son of Siva and Parvati who had vowed to worship Siva alone, ignoring Parvati. Thus, Bhrngin circumambulated Siva and Parvati persuaded Siva to join her to his own body. Even then the adopted

son found ways and means of bypassing Parvati. As punishment she took from his flesh and blood -substances given by the mother. Reduced to a mere skeleton, Bhringin was about to fall down when Siva intervened to support him. This was ostensibly a lesson, reiterating that all creatures are truly androgynous, and that a male cannot remove or ignore the female half of his god, or of himself, and still be whole.²¹

Androgyny : The Other Consciousness

Thus, androgyny is a certain type of consciousness, a whole that is not divisible to its constituent parts and neither the sum of it. Unlike bisexuality, a female consciousness is not added to a given male sexual parameter. Nor does the female component come about by atrophy of female genitals. The conceptualization of the androgyne does not involve girls young of age who are little boys actually --- a theme that recurs in Freud more than once. An androgyne does not produce 'effeminate' males, but man and woman in one person - the primordial unity - a coniunctio. James Hillman in his paper, 'first Adam, Then Eve,' (Eranos Yearbook) comments that, "the coniunctio is not an attainment, but a given. It is not a goal to be sought, but an a priori possibility always there for anyone."

Hillman takes up the myth of Dionysos to represent androgyny, because he feels that Dionysos does not represent an effeminate maleness or an added femaleness. The 'Dionysos approach' as he terms it, does not a la Freud distinguish active with the male and passive with the female. He feels that the 'Dionysos approach' would not "extract the active male light from the passive suffering, since this would be to divide the bisexual totality and to favour the male knower at the expense of the female known." The male and female principles supplement and complement each other and Dionysos "represents a radical shift of consciousness." The structure of the androgyne, Hillman feels, "offers an end to misogyny." The androgynous consciousness that can end misogyny and perhaps mediate the male-female opposition as well as break the male hierarchy need not be a conversion by a will of conscious effort. As an alternate structure of consciousness the shift would approximate the inner bisexuality of each individual.

So the 'other consciousness' as Hillman terms it, calls for taking back those feminine aspects that put the female as an inferior to the male in society. As a consequence it calls for a 'reinvestiture'

of feminine qualities. The 'other consciousness' would then unhinge contemporary and traditional thinking from male identification. He visualizes that "the physiological qualities which have been declared inferior and to belong to the female would now become psychological qualities appropriate to man or woman. Inferiority would no longer be only feminine because it is part of a conjoined human consciousness, and the feminine because it is part of a conjoined human consciousness, and the feminine would no longer be inferior because it belongs to this structure of generally human consciousness."

This general human consciousness as an alternate norm of thinking along staid gender code, dispels the notion of the female being inferior and incomplete. The stringent criticism of Freud that Luce Irigaray had launched about not allowing female sexuality to have its own parameters finds resolution through the androgynous consciousness. Having transcended such a structure and entered a conjoined structure of consciousness, the consequence of a breakdown of polarities and hierarchy becomes apparent. A polycentricity may develop that would upset the superimposition of a power structure, where circulation and rotation is an alternate to fixed positions and where no positions are a priori inferior in the final analysis.

NOTES

1. O'Flaherty, Wendy Doniger, Sexual Metaphors and Animal Symbols in Indian Mythology, Motilal Banarsidass, 1981, PP 283-284.
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3. op.cit., p.297
4. Dimock, Edward Cameron, Religious Biography in India : The "Nectar of the Acts" of Caitanya, in Frank E. Reynolds and Donald Capps (ed), The Biographical Process : Studies in the History and Psychology of Religion, as quoted in O'Flaherty (1981), p. 298.
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CHAPTER FOUR

Androgyny and the Sociology of Gender Implications
& Consequences

If the myth of Adam and Eve underlies an inherent androgynous representation insofar as Eve is created from the body of Adam, the deconstruction of the myth as Hillman has proved in his paper, "First Adam, then Eve", images the stereo types of female inferiority and male superiority. The locus classicus of Christian and occidental culture posits male primacy and the secondary derivative nature of women.

The argument of Hillman runs thus : Adam was fashioned in God's own image and Eve was made only from Adam. Thus Adam is First and Divine. The divinity of Eve flows second-hand from Adam with the consequence that the male being prior in time is also superior as he alone was created in the image of God. Then again Eve was created when Adam slept i.e. Eve was extracted from the unconsciousness of Adam, and thus the male has superior consciousness. Adam is Eve's formal cause because she is performed in him, and he is her material cause since she is made of his rib, and he is her final cause since her end and purpose is help for him. The male is the precondition of the female and the ground of its possibility. Hillman goes on to state that the

psychological history of male-female relationship in human civilisation is a "series of footnotes to the tale of Adam and Eve". The implication of such difference lies in the field of male-female sexuality, "the battle between man and woman becomes a sexual battle and the conjunction of masculine and feminine principles becomes a sexual union." To this we may rightly add, that the above mentioned battle is not only sexual but very much sociological. The myth becomes the harbinger of misogyny and the stereotyping of sex roles. It works out the contours of sexual repression and establishes a hierarchy of dominance.

Gender is a Social Product

Biological differences between sexes are not in themselves sufficient to limit individuals to the great extent that social rules dictate. Biological explanations are contradicted by the fact that behaviours prescribed for women and for men vary enormously from one society to another. The psychological differences that exist are also created or fostered by social factors. As the social world changes, psychological patterns change as well.¹

To use the term gender role instead of sex role is to shift the focus from biology to the social. It is an effort to deemphasize the physical, for sex role as a term often connotes prescriptions and proscriptions relating directly to sexuality. This narrow usage reduces our awareness of gender activities not related to reproduction or to the erotic. Females and males are taught to behave in typically female and male ways long before they learn to engage in erotic or reproductive activities. Thus the term gender role is more appropriate for our study because it emphasizes the importance of social environment, conditioned by the philosophical milieu of the age and the technology of the time.

What then is a gender role? A gender role is set of behaviours, attitudes, and motivations culturally associated with each sex. They are socially developed or encouraged differences between the two sexes.² Thus these roles are not a priori qualities but are products of socialization that come out of a belief system. Ideology determines the social 'reality' through which the male and female is viewed and thus opens up the sociological content for analysis.

Internalizing a gender role, children through socialization learn their own genders in much the same way that they learn the identity of physical objects and recognize that these physical objects and retain identity over time. According to Lawrence Kohlberg who'd developed a cognitive - developmental model, children learn the contents of their gender role because they find it intrinsically rewarding to do whatever may conform to the gender identity they have acquired earlier. ³

Walter Mischel forwarded the ideas of gender-identity formation as linked to rewarding of children. If children find that they are rewarded for doing the 'proper' boy or girl things, then they will come to want to be boys or girls and will identify themselves as such. The rewards of appropriate gender-role performance reinforce the child's self-identification as either male or female. ⁴

Joseph H. Pleck has developed a model which focuses sharply on the learning of gender role. He sketches three phases of gender-role development. The first stage induces the identification of oneself as either female or male and the realization of the permanence of that identity. In

the second stage, the individual learns the basic dimensions of gender-role definitions but applies these rules with the rigidity that characterises children who are learning moral rules, like differentiating between right and wrong.

The third stage of Pleck's model involves the transcendence of gender-role norms and boundaries and the development by individuals of "psychological androgyny in accordance with their inner needs and temperaments". In this stage the individual has developed the sophistication to apply gender-related rules with flexibility, permitting the adaptation of both feminine and masculine traits.⁵

Androgyny & Research in Gender Roles

Pleck's model as we have shown above contains the seeds of liberation. The freedom from assumption of uni-dimensionality of masculinity and femininity is supported by research, notably that of Sandra Bem. Bem in 1974 published the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI), a tool with which to measure androgyny. Bem defined the androgynous individual operationally as one who endorsed both desirable masculine and desirable feminine

attributes as equally self-descriptive.⁶ Apart from Bem, Spence Helmreich & Stapp (1974/75) and Constanopole (1973) were beginning to privately and independently converge upon the set of ideas of an iconoclastic nature ~~that~~ masculinity and femininity are not opposite poles of a single dimension, but are instead two separate, orthogonal, and equally important aspects of human personality; that individuals do not have to be either masculine or feminine (or somewhere ambiguously and undesirably in between), but instead can be androgynous or both masculine and feminine, containing in a single personality a balance between the attributes of agency and communion, of instrumentality and expressiveness.

They also posited the view-point that the sex typed individual may not be ideal of psychological health; instead, the androgynous individual, whose self-image and behaviour being less restricted along sex lines, would be more psychologically flexible and more geared to meet the complexities of our society.

Bem's personality scale to measure androgyny (BSRI) allows individuals to score high or low

on both masculinity and femininity at the same time, so that scores on one dimension do not automatically determine scores on the other. An individual scoring high on both masculinity and femininity indices is rated high on androgyny. The preliminary report on usage of such a scale indicates that androgynous individuals exist in larger numbers than stereotypes would lead us to imagine and that they fare better than non-androgynous in the ability to behave appropriately in a wide range of sex-typed situation. Her findings that androgynous subjects tend to act more appropriately in situations not associated with stereotypical gender roles, lead her to the conclusion, that androgyny is a psychologically more mature level of gender-role development.

Bem also found out that playful and nurturant behaviour, traditionally feminine, was displayed to a significantly greater degree by androgynous and feminine males than by masculine males. However, what is surprising is that androgynous females displayed more of the type of behaviour than did feminine females.

Recent researches have supported the notion

that androgynous females tend to be better adjusted than traditionally feminine females. Webster, Hunter and Lester (1977) studied families of servicemen missing in action and found that androgyny in wives was positively corelated with personal adjustment, low family conflict and high family independence. Makieve, Beaman and Paul (1977) found that androgynous females were less concerned about negative evaluations of themselves than were traditional females. ⁷

Apart from the value of such empirical findings per se, it proves the importance of androgynous symbolization of which we have written above. The myths, anecdotes and religious texts do not remain as merely part of a metaphysical perspective aeons away from a sociological one. Psycho-social research on gender takes the dust away from musty texts on androgyny and brings to us newer and fresher perspectives.

One Dimensional Thought ⁸

What eludes these researches is however, a very pertinent question. If androgyny or androgynous people exist in the world of ours and in the cognitive map of individuals, then why is it

that it is the stereotye image of gender divide that holds sway? Somewhere along human history, the androgynous consciousness was pushed back into the recess of the mind. The moral of androgynous myths got lost in the maze of strict gender divide, the alchemical harmony broke down into bits and pieces and Freudian bisexuality could not proceed to its natural end of a complementarity of maleness and femaleness. A disruption of those opposites which actually blended together precluded the possibility of a plurality of 'reality' existence. The result of such a break-down a consequence of ~~atomism~~ ^{atomism}, posited in its wake, a trail of repression between male and female, man and man. Civilization began with the burdenn of the original sin and the course of history found in its male voice the ideology to justify the fetters of the female.

We had said in the previous chapter that androgyny is a holistic concept which cannot be reduced to its parts. Alchemy as the precursor of modern science and a way of looking at things (world view) upheld this holism. The philosophy of alchemy did not allow a schism between subject and object. However, it is our contention that

modern science which followed alchemy began its life with the view that all problems obscure and complex could be broken down to its simplest parts - to its component units. Descartes as the official philosopher of this new science regarded it as the only key to knowledge.⁹ The implications drawn from the Cartesian corpus exercised a staggering impact on the subsequent history of Western consciousness in particular and of all consciousness that came in touch with the West in general.

Descartes felt that Man's activity as a thinking being is purely mechanical. The mind confronts the world as a separate object. It applies this method to the object again and again, and eventually comes to know all that is there to know. The method is mechanical, the problem being broken down to its components and the act of cognition or direct perception has the same relationship to the knowledge of the whole problem that, let us say, an inch has to a foot; one measures and then sums up the result - subdivide, measure, combines; subdivide, measure, combine. The essence of atomism comes out loud and clear - a thing consists of the sum of its parts. The assumption implicit in this mechanical philosophy is that of a schism between mind and body, subject and object.

Descarte's emphasis on geometrical precision served to reaffirm and canonize the Aristotelian formalism of non-contradiction. According to this principle a thing cannot be and not be at the same time. A person therefore cannot be both male and female. The person is either male or female - a paradigm whose logic admits of no opposites and no contradictions. One dimensionality of thought is firmly entrenched in the saddle and atomism, quantifiability and the equation of truth with utility, with the purposive manipulation of the environment comes out boldly in this paradigm. The holistic view of man as a part of nature, as being at home in the cosmos becomes mere romantic claptrap. Not holism, but domination of nature; not the ageless rythm of ecology, but the conscious management of the world becomes the new world-view. Personality imbued with such a philosophy loses its own magic and bows down to fetishism of commodities. The Industrial Revolution riding high on the back of such a Scientific Revolution, stamped the world with its logic of dominance, and repression, imperialism and colonialism. In such social climates the typification of gender crystalized into strict codes and labels with the consequence

of male-female dictotomy, of subservience and repression.

Performance Principle¹⁰

The repression that came out of the above stated world-view was however not something new. Repression of man by man, of the female by the male has a history that stretches back to time immemorial. What was new of repression in modern society was that it operated from a position of strength rather than from a position of technical and natural immaturity. The intellectual and material capabilities of contemporary society being immeasurably greater than ever before the scope of dominance is thereby increased. As Herbert Marcuse says, "Our society distinguishes itself by conquering the centrifugal forces with Technology rather than Terror, on the dual basis of an overwhelming efficiency and an increasing standard of living."¹¹

Mature and contemporary societies still carry on their backs archaic mental conditioning. In his Eros & Civilisation, Marcuse states, that "the memory of pre-historic impulses and deeds continues to haunt civilization: the repressed

material returns, and the individual is still punished for impulses long since mastered and deeds long since undone." ¹²

The archaic mental conditioning that lurks behind the contemporary mind is sought to be overcome or window-dressed by a modern society which spawns the notion of 'performance principle'. A high standard of living equated in terms of automobiles, aeroplanes, skyscrapers and penthouses serves to justify repression. Prometheus symbolises the milieu, the archetype - hero of the performance principle. "And in the world of Prometheus, Pandora, the female principle, sexuality and pleasure, appear as curse-disruptive, destructive," ¹³ Prometheus promises toil, productivity and progress through repression. It is essentially a 'male' world, where the beauty of the woman and happiness of femininity come to be viewed as fatal for the work-world of a civilization that gives priority and weightage to economic production. Feminine characters are viewed as useless drones or luxury items - images that are negative and pejorative.

As a scientific rationality of Western

civilisation slowly unfolded itself, the undercurrent of implicit physical attributes became more and more clear. The ego which came to be imprinted with this new national transformation and which undertook the onerous responsibility of bringing about changes in the human and natural environment revealed itself as an essentially aggressive, offensive subject, whose thinking process aided only those actions that were geared for mastering the objects. The subject - object relationship became fraught with the tension of dominance and subject was pitted against object in a jousting match expected to be fought out in the full.

Nature which also stands for the female principle came to be seen as susceptible to mastery and control. As a consequence of such a priori assumption, work is experienced as power and provocation in an eternal struggle with nature. Work becomes overcoming resistance. The work attitude that is fostered through such a world view is supported by knowledge geared to domination and achievement.

"The aggressive attitude toward the object", feels Marcuse, "the domination of nature, thus

ultimately aims at the domination of man by man. It is aggressiveness toward the other subjects: satisfaction of the ego is conditioned upon its 'negative relation' to another ego....."¹⁴ We have a post-script to add to the above observation. The domination of man by man (where man we hope is genus man) subsumes within itself domination of the female by the male. The ideology of aggressiveness is a 'male' ideology that encompasses the gender relation of a given society.

The Dionysus Alternate

Baudelaire despairing at the setting up of the 'performance principle' cried out in anguish, "True civilization does not lie in gas, nor in steam, nor in turn-tables. It lies in the reduction of original sin,"¹⁵ And Marcuse sounded ominous and pessimistic when he pronounced, (that) "if absence from repression is archetype of freedom, then civilisation is the struggle against this freedom,." ¹⁶ But one need not be despaired to such an extent. The Dionysus model of which we have already stated holds out the promise of a "radical shift in consciousness". Along with Orpheus and Narcissus ¹⁷ the challenge to

Prometheus bring about an alternate reality where they are the harbingers of joy and fulfillment. Their voice does not ring out in command but sings in melody. Their image is one of peace and the end of conquest - images that negates that which sustains the world of the performance principle. Marcuse finds that, "The opposition between man and nature, subject and object, is overcome. Being is experienced as gratification, which unites man and nature, so that the fulfillment of man is at the same time the fulfillment without violence of nature. In being spoken to, loved, and cared for, flowers and springs and animals appear as they are - beautiful, not only for those who address and regard them, but for themselves "objectively".....The song of Orpheus pacifies the animal world, reconciles the lion with the lamb and the lion with the man. The world of nature is a world of oppression, cruelty and pain, as is the human world; like the latter it awaits its liberation.." ¹⁸

Androgyny as Liberation

None understood this better, than the great reformers of Indian society. Rammohan Roy and Vidayasagar, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, Vivekananda and Aurobindo have all centered their arguments along the symbol

of womanhood and have made womanliness a subject of their study.¹⁹ They well realised the importance of inducting the female principle in an otherwise male world - a principle that was the centerpiece of their creative consciousness in social life.

The concept of ardhanarishwara, the traditional androgynous god, has always been an indicator of saintliness and yogic accomplishments - "an indicator of having successfully coped with or transcended one's deepest conflicts about femininity and masculinity."²⁰ One who has reached this stage is expected not to be tied down with the worldly division between the sexes. The imposition of barriers imposed by one's own sexual selfhood was expected to be transcended and the fetters of society's prevalent sexual identities were expected to be overcome.

Even though in India, unlike the West, the softer forms of creativity and the more intuitive and introspective styles of intellectual and social functioning are not so manifestly and explicitly linked with femininity, the 'twilight zones of consciousness in which the creative minds dwell,

there is always a certain emphasis on the ability to turn inward and live in one's own inner world; a tendency to accept intuition, tenderness, and caritas as values; a sensitivity to one's natural environment and to the 'latent' communication among men; and the capacity to use media of self-expression which mobilize feelings, 'imageries and fantasies."²¹

With particular reference to the West, Nandy quotes Berdyaev to show that the figure of Christ is androgynous and that "all creators must be so if they are to conceive and bear greatly and whole."

Nandy corroborates this finding. He however adds a caveat. "The Indian, apparently, is not more creative only when he is more feminine, i.e., when he can better accept his feminine self. His creativity also consists in his being able to identify the cosmic feminine principle with his own internal concept of authority and then in defying this authority and simultaneously making large-scale symbolic reparations for this defiance."²²

This, feels Nandy, "is a major ingredient of the relationship between womanliness and creativity in India." ²³

The other aspect of creativity is that of a linkage of public defiance of authority to the cause of women, "either as an exercise in reform geared to her good or as a purely intellectual exercise in understanding her problems. " The implication of this lies in the strengthening of a structure of rationalization that is usable as well. Working for the cause of women or intellectually trying to understand her problems and the idea of femininity is a sort of atonement that the 'male' society goes through - a catharsis that becomes the single most important theme in the history of social creativity in india.

The last two hundred and odd years in Indian history is replete with creative self expression which gave impetus and kept pace with the fast tempo of social change. In breaking down the many aspects of an older life style, one comes across more than once the crucial role that woman as a symbol and womanliness as an aspect have played on the new Indian identity that started emerging out of a pure 'male' cognitive apparatus of a peasant society stamped with patriarchy and ambivalent in its attitude towards women.

On the political front Gandhi tried out his experiments, trying to link womanliness and political potency, denying the oft held concept of maleness and control over public affairs and statecraft. He thereby sought to negate and reject the martial tradition within Indian society that had nothing but contempt for things feminine, and which as all martial traditions debased womanhood. This linkage of Gandhi had the distinction of assaulting the colonial mind which equated femininity with "passivity, weakness, dependence, subjugation and absence of masculinity."

As Gandhi sought to rediscover womanhood as a civilizing force in human society, especially Indian, he set out to negate the stereotypes of masculinity and femininity. Nandy feels that Gandhi's urge to incorporate the female principle and to integrate it within the male culture arose essentially out of his urge to "live down within himself, his identification with his own outwardly powerful but essentially weak, hedonistic; semi-modernised father." On the other hand in his apparently weak mother he saw a lady of courage and self-confidence who wielded womanly power within the limitations of a patriarchal society.

"If a traditional peasant society either abnegated femininity or defensively glorified it out of all proportion", then the colonial culture that the British sought to impose on India did not do much better. The colonialist carried with him the Cartesian schismatic thought process that rigidified gender roles and identified rulership with male dominance and subjecthood with feminine submissiveness.

The liberation that androgynous consciousness of gender can bring about is best exemplified in Gandhi. In one fell swoop, so to say he challenged the Brahmanic and Kshatriya orthodoxy as well as the British colonial system. He disturbed and negated the British -Brahmanic - Kshatriya "equation between manhood and dominance, between masculinity and legitimate violence, and between femininity and passive submissiveness. He wanted to extend to the male identity - in both the rulers and the ruled - the revalued partly non-Brahmanic, equation between womanhood and non-intrusive, nurturant, non-manipulative, non-violent, self-deemphasizing 'merger' with natural and social environments." 25

This 'merger' with nature is a merger with the feminine, a search for holism that gets lost in

patriarchy and rationality of a scientific society imbued with the spirit of the 'performance principle'. By fighting against the "psychological equation which a patriarchy makes between masculinity and aggressive social dominance and between femininity and subjugation" he sought to fight colonialism. His success and failure rested on such a fight. But what comes out more importantly is the sociological implications for a new gender awareness, an ideology of emancipation of the woman and an equality of the sexes.

Androgyny as a radical shift in consciousness ushers in the fresh wind of liberation, a freedom from closed schismatic thinking, of strict gender codes and above all from repression. The merger of the male and the female in a happy conjunction negates the original sin and its burden. Androgyny becomes the hall mark of gender relations of a modern society that finds its lost humane touch in a holistic view-point. The androgynous mind is a modern mind, adaptive to the strains and stresses of a fast moving social world which brings within its discourse an egalitarian perspective that negates the logic of repression and opens up a new vista in "genderization" sans power and hierarchy.

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