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# **INFLUENCE OF FREUDIAN PSYCHOLOGY IN POST-WAR ASSAMESE FICTION**

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF  
GAUHATI FOR THE Ph. D. DEGREE  
( IN THE FACULTY OF ARTS )**

**Barada Kumar Deka, M. A.**  
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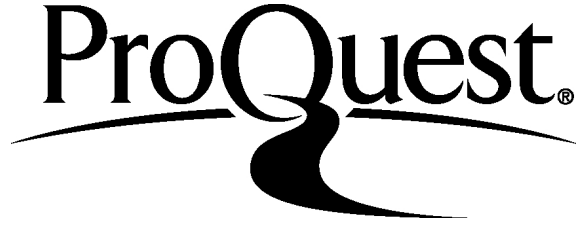
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**Dr. Satyendranath Sarma**

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September 30, 1980

This is to certify that Sri Barada Kumar Deka, Lecturer in English, Tihu College, having completed his research on the influence of Freudian Psychology on Assamese fiction after working for more than three years, has now come forward to present his thesis for adjudication. He regularly registered his name for the Ph.D. Degree of Gauhati University in 1976 and worked under my guidance for the same. The influence of modern psychology, especially that of Freud is too obvious to repeat here. But unfortunately no scholar up till now has made a serious study of the subject to assess the nature and depth of the influence on Assamese fiction. From that point of view the present work ventures to tread on a new ground of literary criticism. How far he has succeeded in his attempt is a matter to be decided by the examiners. He has fulfilled the relevant conditions for presenting the thesis laid down in the regulations. The comments and findings of his investigation are the products of his own study. He did not present this work for any Degree in any University of India or abroad.

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## PREFACE

It has been very late of us indeed to try for a work like this one I have undertaken to write. The use of Freudian psychology in literature has been so old, extensive and plain that it is cumbersome even if it is not common-place to spend time in its evaluation. The science of analysis has not remained confined to literature only. It is interesting to note how it has extended its realm to the other activities of man. Still, it must be said that psychoanalysis finds nothing so congenial to it as literature, nowhere feels so much at home as in fiction.

The creative approach to Freudianism in our literature was romantic and therefore, in most cases uncritical. And much to our surprise and regret what has been achieved has remained up to now unassessed. No literature can thrive, as we have learnt from experience in the right way in the absence of a critical literature, side by side, to judge its worth and achievement and to direct its course to follow. The few articles published in the monthlies (namely Rāmdhenu and others) as criticism pointing out the worth and limitation of the literary application of the scientific discoveries are fragmentary, and as a whole, loud in their bias, - hysterical in praise or condemnation. What T.N. Goswami and Dr Satyendra Nath Sarma have done through theirs for short stories and novels respectively is learned. But their criticisms are too general, and therefore, not of much help for an undertaking

like this. They do not limit their studies to a specific aspect of fiction. Versatile though they are, their use of the regional language has set a limit to the wider recognition of their critical worth and the creative ability of the fiction-writers.

A belief has established itself among our writers and readers alike that the high degree of excellence, that our literature, - short story in particular has achieved in matter and technique has been subject to a considerable set-back in its wider recognition, and that but for a propaganda literature created in its evaluation and appreciation in an intelligible medium other than the regional language, this progress could not be made more meaningful. We are fairly convinced that no language can be so much of service in this propagation as English. Our notion towards English even when we cannot write well in it and speak it as it should be spoken is free of ambivalence, for it is not ours i.e. not inherently related to us.

T.N. Goswami one day said in a word of exhortation (when I approached him for a preface to my anthology of poems) that it was time for us to look back to see over the progress, our literature had made in the creative field. "To be frank", he continued, "we have enough of creative writings, but very few to judge their worth." Shri Goswami seemed to have suggested the responsibility of the students of English literature in the propagation of our literary worth for recognition abroad.

( My encounter with Shri Goswami was inspiring so much so that I used to write short stories in English, and even felt the urgency of an authoritative writer for a look on them though with the least hope that these would be published one day. My approach to Dr. Satyendra Nath Sarma was rather instinctive and very interestingly humiliating, which I would like briefly to state if a bit of personal indulgence is no blot in a preface such as this.)

When I was on my way to Dr. Sarma I happened to have two things in my mind. I would entreat him first for a preface (to my book on different -isms which did not consider, I cannot explain whether for luck or ill luck, Freudianism and Marxism important for inclusion in it) and second, I would ask him to act as guide in a systematic study, - of what I had actually not the slightest idea, of course. When I offered the manuscript, Dr. Sarma accepted it but put it on the table in his propinquity just, as it were, to unburden himself. When I asked him for the preface of the book, he pleaded age and the want of time. I did actually have little courage left to entreat him for anything more. Dr. Sarma is old indeed but he looked more passive than age is apt in one to beget. It is hard to go farther on surmising about a scholar's behavioural singularity in the first encounter. But had I left him just then and there simply envisaging him as he appeared, I would have lost what I am now with, - my personality and possession, - this thesis if it is a thesis at all, the labour of the years involved, the invaluable knowledge of psychoanalysis and above

all, the wisdom about a scholar, reticent but always retaining for himself and resuscitating for his pupil.

I have no design to write a preface as a panegyric on Dr. Sarma. He is not the sort of a scholar, accustomed to get puffed up in popular praise. I am grateful to him for the choice of the subject, the kind guidance etc. in its being.

The synopsis or the chapters which have been made in preparation of the work are very simple, evident but inevitable, I think, in the process. The quest of the impact of Freudianism in literature or in a particular genre of it makes an outline of psychoanalysis imperative. The chapter has been longer than the rest and is likely to be monotonous to a scholar in the line, but it has been so intended for my own comprehension of depth psychology, of which I had only the slightest of popular knowledge. The brief survey of the influence of Freudian psychology in continental literature with which the second chapter of the book starts is just an attempt to examine the extent of the psychological knowledge used, and the art which has expressed it. This survey has enabled me to have a glimpse of the new realism towards which our fiction has directed its course. Chapter IV deals with the problem which the introduction of the new knowledge has posed, and been expressed through the reactions of the critics and the creative writers, prompted by their like and dislike of the literary tradition. The erudition of the Vaisnavite critics, conservative though they are, and the well-argued articles of the progressive writers, minor though most of them appear in consideration of their achievement



cannot be thrown out to the scrap-heap. The critical evaluation of their views has been illuminating for the purpose and the drawbacks have been brought to light. The frequent references, made by the critics in reaction to the application of Freudian discoveries to the Vedas, the epics, the great Sanskrit plays, and the plays, Kāvya and songs of the Vaiṣṇavite poets have made it urgent for me to discuss the sex-tradition in our literature and to examine to what extent it is pliant or susceptible to modern realism. It is a far cry indeed from old Indian eroticism to modern sex, and looks ambitious on one's part trying to establish a relation through contrast between the two. The impression of the unbridgeable gap is however soon wiped out when one assumes it and interprets in the manner of Freud to be the distance between the instinct and the object. Old eroticism, to make it more intelligible, is the extolation of the instinct; modern sex is a shift of importance from the instinct to the object. I do not believe in the inconceivability of an Indian or Assamese fiction to be grown on the base of our literary inheritance in the absence of the exotic materials. The treatment of sex and other aspects of Freudian psychology and the character-groups in the light of it could have been included and assimilated to form one big chapter but in so doing many of the materials now assimilated would have to be omitted. Chapter VIII has been developed in defense of psychoanalytic fiction which is often misconstrued as a cause of affliction and not as an instrument of cure. My inspiration for the creation of the last chapter has come from my study of Freud's Lecture 35 entitled "A

philosophy of Life" in his New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis, and from his remarks scattered throughout The Major Works on art and the artists, and has been added and intensified by the criticism on psycho-analysis, and of psychological fictions. The fault in the frame of my work and its development is mine. If it merits to be called an achievement the credit is Dr. S.N. Sarma's. If it is accepted as a thesis, it will be a possession of my mother tongue, which was being deprived of it. I shall reserve a prefix or suffix to add before or after my name.

At the end, I gratefully acknowledge the assistance accorded to me by the Gauhati University Library which lent me most of the books for the purpose. Specific acknowledgement is made to the Tihu College Library where I happened to have the two volumes, namely, The Major Works and The Basic Writings.

B. K. Deka  
Tihu College.

## Chapter I

### A BRIEF OUTLINE OF FREUDIAN PSYCHOLOGY

It little boots, I think, to try for a definition of psycho-analysis when Sigmund Freud has so very candidly and repeatedly stated it as "a method of medical treatment for those who suffer from nervous disorders."<sup>1</sup> As regards its aim and achievement, Freud has definitely stated, "Psychoanalysis aims at and achieves nothing more than the discovery of the unconscious in mental life."<sup>2</sup> By this, and what follows next in the text, Freud limits his investigation to the psycho-neurotic disorders of the mind to the exclusion of the problems of the actual neuroses. Psycho-analysis merits to be called 'depth psychology', for its stress on the release of the internal workings of the mind. Psycho-analysis interprets the mental life of man as "a play of purposive forces", which mechanical psychology used to demonstrate as "an aggregation or mechanical streaming of mental atoms."<sup>3</sup>

Psycho-analysis is akin to psychiatry in its aim, - the aim of both being the cure of mental disorders, but is distinguished from the latter by its stress on the particular and more scientific etiology of a disorder, as Freud puts it.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Sigmund Freud, The Major Works (1952) A General Introduction to psycho-analysis, p. 449.
  2. Ibid., p. 606.
  3. William McDougall, An Outline of Psychology (1968), p. xii.
  4. M.W. (Sigmund Freud, The Major Works abbreviated) General Introduction, p. 550.

Psycho-analysis connects every individual symptom, even the delusions of a psychotic with the experiences in the life of the patient, in the process of its investigation.

Psycho-analysis has occasionally been called "biological psychology", for the ego-instincts and the sexual instincts have been featured in accordance with the biological view of the two main instincts, namely, hunger and love. In introducing them in psycho-analysis "we are studying", as Freud puts it "the psychological concomitances of biological processes."<sup>5</sup>

#### Literary heritage of psycho-analysis:

Though Freud tried 'jealously' as he says, to defend the independence of his psychology from all other sciences, still he evinced a decisive inclination to the traditional stock of ideas, carried over by literature and frankly accepted all those ideas, which figured in his mind with promise of illumination and enrichment of his psychology. As a matter of fact, most of the psycho-analytic discoveries including the Oedipus complex, which is the pillar of psycho-analysis and which lies at the etiology of all psycho-neuroses are ideas scattered in literature belonging to different ages. The 'wise' psychologist considered literature as "a vast store-house of information about human experiences" and drew as much for his psychology as he deemed requisite in it.<sup>6</sup> It is,

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5. M.W. New Introductory Lectures, Lecture 32, p. 846.

6. McDougall, An Outline of Psychology, Chap. I, p. 8.

therefore, rightly said (by John Crow Ransom) that psycho-analysis is not at all points, a new technique but rather the systematic or scientific application of technique, that poets and artists have generally been aware of."<sup>7</sup> In an essay entitled "Dostoevsky and Parricide", Freud writes that Oedipus Rex, Hamlet and The Brother Karamazovs are the three literary masterpieces, which deal with parricide, and in all the three the motive for the deed is sexual rivalry for a woman.<sup>8</sup> Freud took the Oedipus theme from Euripides' Oedipus Rex, and found a more sophisticated application of the same in the other two, mentioned above. Colman mentions Euripides' Media, Sophocles' Electra, Orestes, Shakespeare's King Lear, Macbeth, The Merchant of Venice and Othello as demonstrative of irrational behaviour in more or less classic psychotic and psycho-neurotic patterns, as formulated by Freud.<sup>9</sup> The tragic theme of King Lear has been interpreted as demonstrative of a very complicated aspect of Freudian psychology, namely, 'the integration of death into life' as explained by Freud in his second essay on Thoughts for the Times of War and Death.<sup>10</sup> In Tolstoy's Resurrection Nekhlyudov's longing for his mother for reunion has been interpreted as a fine demonstration of

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7. Claudia C. Morrison, Freud and the Critic (The University of North Carolina press), p. 42.

8. Dostoevsky, A Collection of Critical Essays ed. Rene Wellek (Prince Hall Inc. 1962).

9. James C. Coleman, Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life (3rd edition), p. 652 ff.

10. Paul Ricoeur, Freud & Philosophy (1970). See pp. 329-330.

polymorphous perverse morality, and *The Prelude* as the psychologising of Wordsworth's poetic life.<sup>11</sup> Miller explains Socrates' idea of inerradicable animality in man as a fine approximation of Freud's id ("... even in good men there is a lawless wild beast's nature, which peers out in sleep."). Miller continues that myths and allegories have made their greatest inroads in psychology. Herbert Spencer's 'Unknowable' and Freud's unconsciousness are markedly similar.<sup>12</sup> R.M. Lowen refers in his essay entitled "A Special Form of Self-punishment" to the legend of the flying Dutch hunter as demonstrative of one of the most important aspects of psycho-analysis, namely, the venality of the super-ego, i.e., the result of a conflict between the super-ego and the id in which the former after its stern control relaxes its severity and permits the gratification of another instinctual drive.<sup>13</sup>

Thus the fundamentals of Freudianism were in literary vogue even before the birth of Freud. 'The good writers of every epoch have been expert practical psychologists' and the 'wise' psychologist has never failed to accept for illumination and formulation of psychological theories the ideas from their creations. The 19th century psychologists drew away from the

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11. Richard Khuns, *Literature & Philosophy, Structure of Experiences* (1971). See pp. 74, 140-141, 166-167.

12. James Grier Miller, *Unconsciousness*. See pp. 17, 42, 240, 248-249.

13. *The Year book of Psycho-analysis* ed. Sandor Lorand (Vol. 2, 1946). See pp. 143, 154-155.

popular and literary traditions in their endeavour to formulate exact generalisation and explanation of experiences in imitation of other natural sciences, so much so that their psychology bore no relation to human nature or experiences and had no bearing upon practical life.<sup>14</sup> With Freud psychology becomes tightly related to life.

Brief history of psycho-analysis:

Psycho-analysis originated and developed as a treatment of psycho-neurotic disorders. In 1885 Freud becomes engaged in the treatment of hysteria under the guidance of Jean Charcot, the leading neurologist of Paris. And it is here that he becomes familiar with the hypnotic method of treatment.

The history of psycho-analysis starts with hypnotism - a method, first brought to medical and scientific use by Mesmer in 1780 and practised by Charcot, Morton Prince of Boston and Pierre Jannet and others.<sup>15</sup> The patients under this method are accustomed to traverse on the tract of traumatic experiences, entirely forgotten in the waking state.<sup>16</sup>

The cathartic method of psycho-analysis, however, emerges from Freud's collaboration with Joseph Breuer (1842-1925), the famous physiologist of Vienna in the treatment of a

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14. McDougall, An Outline of Psychology, p. 8.

15. Robert S. Woodworth, Contemporary Schools of Psychology, p. 252.

16. Ibid., see pp. 251-256.

hysterical patient - "a woman of some distinction". Freud discards hypnotism in preference of the cathartic method. Expressing his indebtedness to Breur, Freud writes : "the art of psycho-analysis did not originate with me at all, but with Breur,"<sup>17</sup> and that "true psychoanalysis only began when the help of hypnosis was discarded."<sup>18</sup>

The Cathartic method: The cathartic method works, as Woodworth puts it, by eliminating sources of disturbance related to past emotional experiences of the patient.<sup>19</sup>

The psycho-analytic method was thus prior to the theory and the theories developed out of the constant application of the method.

Freud published the results of his practice in 1893 and 1895 in collaboration with Breur. But Breur gave up practising the method for its 'unprofessional inclination', i.e., 'abreaction' or abnormal love-response that the patient especially the women under treatment were accustomed to evince to the analyst. Freud discovered, however, that the 'process of abreaction', where his master found reasons for the rejection of the method was the only access to the rapid and lasting cure of the patient's disorder.<sup>20</sup> This appeared in

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17. B.W. (Sigmund Freud, The Basic Writings abbreviated) Introduction by A.A. Brill, p. 10.

18. M.W. A General Introduction, p. 565.

19. Woodworth, Contemporary Schools of Psychology, p. 256.

20. B.W. Introduction, p. 9.



Freud's interpretation, to be "a substitute for the real and original object towards whom it was directed."<sup>21</sup> The true significance of the patient's love-response, i.e., 'transference' as Freud termed it, came to light when the cathartic method developed into free association. Freud explained free association as a means for "the discovery of the hidden, forgotten, repressed things in the soul life."<sup>22</sup> Under this treatment Freud persuaded his patients to give up all conscious reflections, follow their spontaneous mental occurrences through calm concentration and import everything to him. Freud at first asked his patient to close his eyes for the purpose of excluding visual conception, but at last he rejected the method as inconvenient, in favour of the open-eye-reality.

The most important discovery in the free association method is the unconscious resistance, that the patient is accustomed to display in the process of the analyst's endeavour "to make him conscious of his unconscious."<sup>23</sup> Freud recognised this idea of resistance as the basis, not only of his theory of the psychic processes of hystericals but of the whole of psycho-analytic theories.<sup>24</sup> It was in preference of transference and resistance that Freud had discarded the method of hypnotism. He interpreted transference as an amount of the

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21. Woodworth, Contemporary Schools of Psychology, p. 257.

22. M.W. Origin and Development of Psycho-Analysis, p. 13.

23. M.W. New Introductory Lectures, Lecture 31, p. 835.

24. M.W. Origin and Development of Psycho-Analysis, p. 7.

patient's tender emotion", "often mixed with enmity", directed to the person of the physician. The phenomenon, he continues has no foundation in any real relation, and must be derived from the old wish-fancies of the patient, which have become unconscious.<sup>25</sup> The phenomenon of transfer is created by the influence of the psycho-analytic treatment, and is everywhere in all human relations and in the relations of the patient to the physician the especial bearer of the therapeutic influences.<sup>26</sup> The aim of the analytic treatment is to overcome the unconscious resistance of the patient, because these same forces make him forget and repress from consciousness the pathogenic experiences.<sup>27</sup> This hypothetical process is what Freud called repression.<sup>28</sup>

The assumption of repression is according to Freud, the beginning of psycho-analytic theory and the pillar upon which the edifice of psycho-analysis rests.

Our discussion up to this part of the book has proceeded no much farther beyond psycho-analysis as a method of medical treatment etc. as I have quoted at the beginning. But psycho-therapy or the treatment of specific mental disorders is only one aspect of Freudian psychology. Psycho-analysis has other important aspects. These are, as enumerated by Woodworth,

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25. M.W. Origin and Development of Psycho-Analysis, p. 19.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

Freud's empirical observations on dreams, errors and slips of the tongue, the strong relationship between parents and children of the opposite sex, feeling of guilt and inadequacy etc., and also his theory on the development of person's emotional life.<sup>29</sup>

Psycho-analysis is a dynamic, deterministic psychology which correlates within it the clinical, theoretical and technical aspects of investigation and treatment. The idea of determinism has been introduced in it from 'the scientific postulate' that nothing happens in nature without sufficient causes. By the application of this truth to human organism Freud meant to imply that every act of man, every thought or emotion has sufficient causes for its occurrence. Our dreaming, dozing, accidents, even the minor errors or slips of the tongue are bound to the law of determinism. Psycho-analysis leaves nothing to free will. In Victorian times too much emphasis was laid on man's will-power. Everyman was considered a 'master of his fate', a 'captain of his soul'. This attitude actually belittled life, robbed it of dignity and cheapened human experience.<sup>30</sup> Freud wanted to make a deterministic science based on the image of nineteenth century natural science, which would destroy will, deepen human experience and enhance dignity and respect for human life.<sup>31</sup> Freud thus dethroned once - and for all the Victorian will-power which "turned everything into

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29. Woodworth, Contemporary Schools of Psychology, p. 469.

30. Rollo May, Love and Will, pp. 207-208.

31. Ibid.

a rationalistic, moralistic issue" to deceive the self.<sup>32</sup>

Topographical conception of mental life:

The first topography: The psychical localities of Freud's early topography are the conscious, pre-conscious and the unconscious. This division of mental life is the scientific basis for psycho-analysis, and the way according to Freud, to the comprehension of the pathological processes of the mind.<sup>33</sup> It is again from this division that the psycho-analytic theory steps in.

The unconscious is the true psychic reality, which is partly known to us by the data of consciousness as is the external world by the report of our sense organs.<sup>34</sup> Freud obtained the concept of the unconscious from the theory of repression, and dogmatically limited psycho-analysis to the discoveries of the unconscious psychic life.<sup>35</sup> The repressed is the prototype of the unconscious, but it is only a part of the whole unconscious, shared more or less by all persons, normal and abnormal. Dreams, slips of the tongue, obsessions, even our latent knowledge belong to the unconscious. "We call

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32. Rollo May, *Love and Will*, p. 222.

33. M.W. *The Ego and the Id*, p. 697.

34. B.W. *The Psychology of the Dream-Processes*, p. 542.

35. Woodworth, *Contemporary Schools of Psychology*. The author quotes Anna Freud to have said this. See p. 285.

a process unconscious when we have to assume that it was active at a certain time although we knew nothing about it", writes Freud in New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis.<sup>36</sup> A mental act proceeds according to Freud, through two phases. In the first phase, it is unconscious and it becomes conscious in the second phase. Between the two phases, there is a testing process, better known in psycho-analysis as 'censorship'. When the testing process or the ego allows the act to pass into the second phase, it belongs to the conscious. When it is rejected, it is repressed, and remains unconscious. The mental act remains in the pre-conscious when it passes the rigorous censorship, and shares the characteristics of the conscious.

This is the dynamic conception of mental life.

The consideration of the dynamic relation has distinguished the unconscious from the pre-conscious or fore-conscious as Freud occasionally called it. Freud reserves "the term unconscious to the dynamically unconscious repressed."<sup>37</sup> It can influence consciousness in various indirect ways and can be made conscious only under special circumstances.<sup>38</sup>

The pre-conscious is unconscious in the descriptive sense but conscious in the dynamic sense. Its content is

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36. M.W. Lecture 31, p. 836.

37. M.W. The Ego and the Id, p. 698.

38. Bernard Hart, Psychopathology, Its Development and its place in Medicine (1950), p. 54.

derived partly from the instinctual life and partly from perception.

There are thus two kinds of unconscious in the descriptive sense, but only one in the dynamic sense.

Freud's unconscious differs from Janet's subconscious. The subconscious refers to the phenomenal, and the unconscious to the conceptual processes. This conceptual reality has been fashioned in order to explain phenomenal reality.<sup>39</sup> The unconscious of Freudian psychology is scientific, and is based on the three steps, namely, observation and recording of phenomena, classification of the phenomena observed, and finally, formulation of laws which explain the phenomena.<sup>40</sup>

What Freud calls consciousness is a phenomenal reality. It is "one property of mental life". It is not the essence of mental life, as the philosopher takes it to be. All perceptions from without and 'sensations and feelings' from within are materials of the conscious. It is connected to the verbal images. The pre-conscious is conscious when it is related to verbal images, and unconscious when it remains connected with 'unorganised' material, adjacent to 'memory residues'. The unconscious becomes pre-conscious or conscious by coming into connection with verbal images that correspond to it.<sup>41</sup>

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39. Bernard Hart, *op.cit.*, p. 54.

40. *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

41. M.W. *The Ego and the Id*, pp. 697-700.

The second topography: The simple psychical localities of the early topography proved inconsistent in the treatment of psychic disorders. Freud got confused in deriving neurosis out of a conflict between the conscious and the unconscious. So he substituted for this antithesis another antithesis - that between the organised ego and what is repressed and dissociated from it.<sup>42</sup> The ego is thus both conscious and unconscious. The conscious part is the coherent organisation, which Freud called the ego, and the unconscious, the id. The id and the unconscious are, however, not alike as are not the ego and the conscious. Freud gave certain qualities of consciousness to the ego, and certain qualities of the unconscious to the id. The ego and the super-ego have large portion of the unconscious each.

The ego figures most pathetically in Freud's conception. He describes it as a 'poor creature' menaced by three harsh masters, namely, the external world or reality, the super-ego and the id or libido.<sup>43</sup> The ego borrows its strength from the id by the process of identifications. Identifying itself with the object the ego attracts the libido of id on to itself.<sup>44</sup> In its attempt to keep its existence unchanged in the face of danger from the id, the ego may employ various defenses. This tendency of the ego has been summed up

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42. M.W. The Ego and the Id, pp. 699.

43. M.W. New Introductory Lectures, Lecture 31, p. 839.

44. Ibid.

by Anna Freud in her book, The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense. The ego, she writes, "represses, displaces, denies, and reverses the instincts and turns them against the self; it produces phobias and hysterical symptoms and binds anxiety by means of obsessional thinking and behaviour."<sup>45</sup> When the neurotic conflict arises in a man, the ego becomes unable to control the id, and achieves for itself a "damned up condition". The neurotic symptoms may either be positive or negative. In the positive symptom the ego is attacked by unmotivated emotion and 'anxiety spell'. The negative symptoms are general inhibitions of ego-functions, caused by a decrease of energy in the defense struggle.<sup>46</sup>

The super-ego is formed out of the child's identifications with the parents. Freud calls it the heir of the Oedipus complex.<sup>47</sup> It arises from the Oedipus complex and also represses it. The behaviour of the super-ego is determined by the nature of the Oedipus complex, and that of its repression. Strict discipline, religious teaching, schooling and reading, employed in the repression of the Oedipus complex make the super-ego more exacting over the ego. By the formation of the super-ego, the ego masters the Oedipus complex and subjects itself to the id. Any man failing to master the Oedipus complex falls victim to neurosis. According

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45. Anna Freud, The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense. (The Hogarth Press Ltd., 1946), p. 116.

46. The Yearbook of Psychoanalysis, Vol. 2 (Imago Publishing Co. Ltd., 1946) ed. Sandor Lorand, p. 33.

47. M.W. The Ego and the Id, p. 707.



to Freud the conflict between the ego and the super-ego is the contrast between what is real and what is mental, i.e., between the external and the internal world.<sup>48</sup>

The theme of the second topography is thus the ego, i.e., its dependence on the id, the external world and the super-ego. The super-ego here appears to be a "metaphysical construct" in view of the effect it exerts on the psychical localities of the first topography.

Primary and secondary processes:

Freud discovers two psychic processes in the psychic apparatus, namely, the primary and the secondary processes. In the Interpretation of Dreams Freud states that the primary processes are present in the apparatus from the beginning while the secondary processes only take shape gradually during the course of life, inhibiting and overlaying the primary; whilst gaining complete control over them perhaps in the prime of life.<sup>49</sup> The primary processes or the pleasure principle is primitive and undisciplined. We owe the whole of our phantasy existence to it. Our dreams, ideals, all illusions, religious and spiritual, are creations of the pleasure principle. Victims of obsession, overintellectualisation, schizophrenia,

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48. M.W. The Ego and the Id, pp. 706-707.

49. B.W. The Interpretation of Dreams, p. 536.

melancholia and even day-dreamers are persons who are guided by the pleasure principle.

The pleasure principle (deduced as Freud says from Fechner's principle of constancy) aims at reducing tension arising out of organic excitation.<sup>50</sup>

The secondary processes or the reality principle, on the other hand, regulates the primary processes and enables us to form conception of the real situation of the world around us. It compels us to renounce one aspect of desire after another. The process starts with the renunciation of the mother's breast and autoeroticism, connected with it. The genital stage which marks man as an adult is the stage of its victory, because man here is supposed to be capable of giving up the primitive objects, which intensify narcissism in him. The future of the libido depends on the happiness lost. The reality principle adopts man to time and society.

Freud's view of sex:

In The History of the Psychoanalytic Movement Freud claims three important discoveries as the 'results' of the psycho-analytic works, namely, the principles of repression and resistance and the theory of infantile sexuality.<sup>51</sup> In

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50. M.W. Beyond the pleasure principle, p. 644.

51. B.W., p. 940.

his The Sexual Enlightenment of Children Freud writes that "the new born infant brings sexuality with it into the world, certain sexual sensations attend its development while at the breast and during early childhood."<sup>52</sup> The sources of sexual pleasure are the various 'cutaneous areas'. In puberty the genitals "acquire supremacy among all other zones and sources of pleasure" for the service of reproduction.<sup>53</sup> The persons failing to achieve genital supremacy become perverse and neurotic. The first phase of the libidinal organisations is oral phase, where the sexual pleasure is expressed by the mouth. The second is the sadistic and anal phase, marked by the cutting of the teeth and characterised by the child's aggression. In the third phase, known as the phallic phase, the penis achieves an importance for both sexes. The last phase is the genital phase, which is established after puberty.

Much emphasis has been laid on the sexual latency period in the personality development of man. This period covers the child from three to five years of age. The pre-genital sexual activities remain in this period, but appear 'unusable'. The period is marked, therefore, by the child's displeasure. Freud considers this period very critical in everyman's life, for it is here that sublimation and reaction-formation start for man's higher cultural development failing which he deviates into neurosis.<sup>54</sup>

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52. M.W., p. 120.

53. Ibid.

54. B.W. Three contributions to the Theory of Sex, p. 592.

The basis of Freud's theory of infantile sexuality is the 'polymorphous perverse disposition' of the child. The child having no sense of shame, loathing and morality, i.e., the 'psychic dams' as Freud calls them may under external seduction behave vulgarly like a professional prostitutes, and remain open to all sorts of transgressions.<sup>55</sup> The various perversions, such as looking, showing off, cruelty or aggression appear in the infantile years as separate strivings, which when intensified by external influences may impair the child's educability.<sup>56</sup>

In Lecture 33 entitled The Psychology of Women Freud investigates the way in which women develop out of children with their bisexual disposition, and explains why the development of woman's sexual life appears more complex than that of a man. One complexity in the woman's development emerges from her awareness of the achievement of the vagina, which lies at the root of her femininity. The discovery of the actual female vagina after the phallic phase frustrates the girl into a woman. The vaginal achievement disillusiones her of the mistaken belief of a penis to be grown out of the clitoris.

Another complexity in the girl's development arises out of the nature of her love-object. The first love-object of the boy is his mother, who may remain the object of love

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55. B.W. Three contributions to the Theory of Sex, p. 593.

56. Ibid.

throughout his whole life, in case he forms an Oedipus complex. The object of love for the girl in the Oedipus situation is the father, and not the mother. The girl is forced to renounce her mother, her first love-object. In the normal course of libidinal development the girl, therefore, forms her ultimate choice of object from the father. Thus, the boy keeps both his erotogenic zone and his object unchanged while the girl has to change both of them (the mother and her clitoris which she mistook as the penis). The girl displays strong hostility to the mother at the sight of the genital organs of the boy. The castration complex originates out of this experience. In reaction she falls victim and makes her mother responsible for the lack of it. The mother's repeated advice and warning against the girl's concentration in pleasurable activities centering round the genital organs are also factors to be taken into consideration in the analysis of this hostility.

According to Freud the discovery of the castration may affect the girl in three ways : it may lead her to sexual inhibition or neurosis; to a modification of her character in a service of masculinity complex; and to normal femininity. Under the influence of this complex she is driven from her attachment to the mother into the Oedipus complex where she remains for an indefinite period, and can abandon only incompletely in life.

The theory of instinct:

Freud interprets instinct as a mental stimulation, originating from the body as a force, up for satisfaction. The psycho-analyst concerns himself primarily with the satisfaction of the instincts and their vicissitudes.<sup>57</sup> The instincts are interchangeable and are subject to inhibition. The close attachment of an instinct to a particular object is known in psycho-analysis as 'fixation', which makes the instinct immobile or undynamic.

Freud distinguishes two main instincts against the numerous popular ones, namely, the instinct of self-preservation or ego-instinct and the instinct of the preservation of the species or the sexual instinct, corresponding as he says, to man's two great needs - hunger and love. The sexual instincts are numerous, and act first independently but achieve a more or less complete synthesis by degrees.<sup>58</sup> They then figure as sexual instinct and get apart from the dominance of the ego-instinct. In transference neuroses (hysteria and obsessional neuroses) the sexual instincts come in conflict with the ego-instincts. In narcissism where the ego takes itself as an object of love we experience the demonstration of their contrast.

The ego-instincts and the sexual instincts are the two divisions of the life-instincts. Freud demonstrates through

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57. M.W. Instincts and their Vicissitudes, p. 415.

58. Ibid.

the contrast between the ego-instincts and the sexual instincts  
duelistic standpoint towards the instinct. This duelism  
becomes sharper by the recognition of the death-instincts  
(Thanatos) in Beyond the Pleasure Principle. He now states  
frankly that there are fundamentally two instincts - the life-  
instincts (Eros) and the death-instincts (Ananke). The life-  
instincts aim at propagating and preserving the species, and  
the death-instincts, at destroying or reducing the living things  
to inorganic states.<sup>59</sup>

An instinct may undergo different vicissitudes. It is  
said to have achieved (1) sublimation when sexually motivated  
curiosity is turned to good effect in biological research;  
(2) reversal into its opposite, as when the desire to inflict  
pain on another is replaced by the willing acceptance of the  
passive role of the sufferer; (3) turning round upon the  
subject, of which the morbid depression of melancholia is an  
instance; (4) repression etc. The two kinds of instincts  
commonly appear in such fusions as sadism-masochism, and  
scopophilia-exhibitionism, and may be defused to evoke "most  
serious consequences to adequate functioning."

The instincts dominate our mental life and are  
conservative by nature. They aim at reinstating an earlier  
state of things, giving rise to what in psycho-analysis is  
known as repetition-compulsion, as exemplified by a person who

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59. Walter Hollitscher, Sigmund, An Introduction (Routledge &  
Kegan Paul Ltd., 1947), p. 92.

lives repeating all his life even to his detriment, the same reaction without any correction or who seems to be dogged by a relentless ill-fortune' throughout his life.<sup>60</sup>

Freud's approach to the instinct was romantic. He saw primarily the life-instinct - Eros, and emphasised on man's mal-adjustment as the result of repression of sex or libido. The discovery of the death-instinct turns everything almost to a pessimistic end laying "emphasis on the repression of the aggressive tendencies." "Fortunately", he says, "the instincts of aggression are never alone, they are always alloyed with the erotic ones. In the cultural conditions, he continues, which man has created for himself, the erotic instincts have much to mitigate and much to avert."<sup>61</sup> The co-operation and opposition of the life-instincts and the death-instinct produce the phenomena of life to which death puts an end.<sup>62</sup>

#### The theory of libido:

The libido-theory is one of Freud's conceptions, formed as he says, for the purpose of mastering psychic manifestations of sexual life.<sup>63</sup> He defines it as "the motor force of sexual life", both qualitative and quantitative in

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60. M.W. Lecture 32, p. 851.

61. Ibid., p. 853.

62. Ibid., p. 851.

63. B.W. The Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex, p. 611.



character, - qualitative, because it stands distinguished in origin from the other psychic energy, operating in the psychic processes in general; and quantitative, because it is a force of variable quantity when directed to the object for the purpose of measuring sexual excitement.<sup>64</sup>

The libidinal energy has been differently named by Freud in different states of its existence. It is ego-libido in the child, because the ego itself is the object of love for it; it is object-libido when the libido cathects itself in the sexual object; it is narcissistic libido, when it is, after getting withdrawn from the object, taken back into the ego.

Freud discovers that most of the normal and pathological disturbances proceed from the libido's capacity to direct itself to the outside object and to withdraw itself back to the ego. The sadist, the masochist, the voyeur, the toucher, the exhibitionist are instances of libidinal disturbances.

The most important conclusion, which Freud draws from the formulation of the libido-theory is that the child, the pervert and the normal man have the same source for their sexual activities, the manifestations being different on the accidental factors, created by the environment.

Though in childhood the ego-instincts and the sexual instincts appear in a synthesis, we have no reason to suppose

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64. B.W. The Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex, p.611 (See also footnote, p. 553).

after Freud's repeated assertion to the contrary that his libido-theory is similar to Jung's 'monistic' one.

Theory of neurosis:

"The theory of neurosis is psychoanalysis itself" writes Freud in General Introduction to Psycho-Analysis. Neurosis occurs when the delicate relation between the ego, the super-ego and the id gets out of balance. It is a conflict of two tendencies - one striving for discharge and the other, to prevent that discharge. The tendency for discharge proceeds from the instinct and that for prevention from the ego. A neurotic conflict is thus a conflict between drives, - the ego and the id.<sup>65</sup> The super-ego may participate on either side in the conflict.

Freud holds that the neurotic and the psychotic disorders have the same forces, warring with different reactions on the patient. A neurotic individual represses the instinct and obeys the threatening external world. A psychotic individual, on the other hand, denies the external world and obeys the urges of the instinct.<sup>66</sup>

Freud distinguishes actual neuroses from the psycho-neuroses. There are three pure forms of actual neuroses, namely, neurasthenia, anxiety-neurosis and hypo-chondria, all

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65. Otto Fenichel, The Psycho-analytic Theory of Neurosis, p.129.

66. Ibid., pp. 131-132, 140.

having the common symptoms, viz., headache, sensations of pain, and weakening or inhibitions of some functions.

The actual neuroses are of physical nature. Freud, therefore, leaves the problem for biological and medical research.

The most important discovery of Freud in the investigation of psycho-neuroses is that the hysterical symptoms are derived from the psychic traumas rooted in the patient's childhood, and concerned with his sexual life; or as Freud puts it, "the symptoms are the sexual activities of the patient."<sup>67</sup> He explains that neurotic illness is not sharply separated from the so-called normal behaviour, which comes into being through repression of a certain infantile predisposition, known as polymorphous perverse disposition as we have already pointed out. In Selected Papers on Hysteria, Freud interprets "neurotic behaviour as the result of a marked repression of the libidinous striving."<sup>68</sup> In General Introduction to Psycho-analysis he writes that "all perverse tendencies have their roots in childhood", and "perverted sexuality is nothing else but infantile sexuality magnified and separated into its component parts."<sup>69</sup>

Another important discovery of Freud in this field is that "the neurosis is ... the negative of the perversion."<sup>70</sup>

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67. B.W. The Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex, p. 573.

68. M.W., p. 114.

69. M.W., p. 573.

70. B.W. The Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex, p. 575.

Psycho-analysis being a dynamic discipline rejects any description of pathological character types as 'confusing'. Nevertheless, Freud's erotic narcissistic and compulsive types are close approximations to the id, the ego and the super-ego persons. His creation of the 'mixed type' made out of the above three is a clear instance of his awareness of the limitations of typology. Oral characters, torn in conflict between the ego and the super-ego, phobic characters characterised by a strong tendency to avoid situation, originally wished for, and hysteric characters with emotional archaic behaviour are types apart from these, mentioned above.

Character as it is viewed in psycho-analysis:

The ego is the integrating part of man's personality, i.e., his character. A 'masterful ego' can with many assets and considerable power, control the id and make the super-ego co-operate with it in its adjustment to the external world. But a masterful ego is a rarity in psycho-analysis. Psycho-analysis has always a neurotic ego, - a poor ego in service of three cruel masters, as we have pointed out earlier in the chapter. The ego is the only seat of anxiety. It produces anxiety, feels it and defends itself against an instinctual danger with the help of the anxiety reaction.<sup>71</sup>

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71. M.W. Lecture 32, p. 842.

Anxiety:

Sigmund Freud explains anxiety as the prototype of birth. Anxiety forces us into a state of helplessness, similar to that of an infant, forced by birth into a new environment, where it is quite defenseless. This is what Freud means by defining it as the "original reaction" to helplessness.<sup>72</sup>

Freud distinguishes three types of anxiety, namely, objective or real anxiety, which is caused by the ego's dependence on the external world; subjective or neurotic anxiety, caused by the ego's dependence on the id; and moral or normal anxiety, caused by the ego's dependence on the super-ego.

The Mechanisms of Defense:

Anna Freud explains in her The Ego<sup>and</sup> the Mechanisms of Defense, ten mechanisms among which the theory of repression has been stated as the pillar of psycho-analysis. The ego defends itself by means of repression against the intrusion of a reprehensible impulse or idea into consciousness.<sup>73</sup>

Repression as a whole aims at eliminating instinct from having effect in action. Dreams, slips of the tongue, erroneous acts, symbolic behaviours etc. occur in the failure to repress. In regression, the inadequate ego adopts primitive behaviour in

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72. M.W. Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety, p. 751.

73. Ibid., p. 720.

its failure to satisfy an instinct in its drive for direct satisfaction. The ego derives a substitute satisfaction by this defense. Sublimation, another important mechanism of defense starts with the ego's renunciation of the desired object. It is the desexualisation of an instinct, which the ego absorbs into itself.

According to Freud many of our character traits are derived from pregenital libidinal formations. The process is known in psycho-analysis as reaction-formation. A hysterical mother displaying an extreme affection for a child she unconsciously hates is an instance of reaction-formation.

Two contrasting defense mechanisms are projection and introjection; the former means externalisation of other man's defects for torturing and the latter, internalisation of other people's thought with the purpose of torturing the self. A child, unhappy over the death of a kitten, declaring himself to be the lost kitten has been quoted by Walter Hollitscher as the typical instance of introjection.<sup>74</sup> The persecutory delusions of a paranoid person, animism, neurotic distortion of reality are characteristics of projection, where the ego is damaged by narcissistic regression.

Identification and rationalisation are two of the most common mechanisms of defense. Mourning, melancholia and hysteria, especially the last two disorders show the

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74. Hollitscher, Sigmund Freud, An Introduction, p. 66.

pathological varieties of identification.

Otto Fenichel divides the mechanisms of defense into two groups - successful defenses and pathogenic defenses. The pathogenic defenses, he points out, originate from childhood, and are recognised by their use of counter-cathexes. He classifies the psycho-neurotic defenses as pathogenic, because they fail to defend the ego by preventing the eruption of the 'warded off impulses'. The successful defenses, on the other hand, succeeds more or less in defending the ego by preventing the warded off impulses from eruption. Sublimation is one of the successful defenses.<sup>75</sup>

Freud's view of art and the artist:

Freud's view of the artist and of the nature of the creative process, scattered in The Major Works and in several brief essays has been explained and substantiated by Claudia C. Morrison in his book, Freud and the Critic. The artist holds a unique position in between the conscious and the unconscious. He is, like the neurotic close to the unconscious, but he is apart by his ability to express what he shares with the neurotic. Creative ability is virtually a process of healing through autoanalysis. Though the artist is not a neurotic, he is not even a normal person. The normal person is guided by the reality principle unlike the artist who is

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75. Otto Fenichel, The Psycho-analytic Theory of Neurosis, pp. 141-143.

guided by the pleasure principle. The artist can, by virtue of his special endowment, discipline the unconscious. The psychotic, on the other hand, is exclusively possessed by it.

This brief sketch of psycho-analysis has been reproduced mostly from Freud's writings included in The Major Works and The Basic Writings. What is stated here as comment or annotation by the way has mostly been borrowed as I have referred to from books on psycho-analysis by Freud's critics and appreciators. It is humbly acknowledged that my study of psycho-analysis has not been adequate to the extent that I can be expected to make comments on it. The first reading of a subject is, so to say, either for admiration if one likes it or for aversion if one dislikes it but hardly for an impersonal judgment. As for myself, I have an unmixed admiration for the psycho-analytic discoveries, particularly for those about whose truth I am fairly convinced. I am not meanly critical about those, which are only incompletely comprehensible or not at all comprehensible to me. I have no searing contempt for the mystic experience of sex in psycho-analysis. The importance of sex in the development of human personality has been explained so convincingly that it leaves no misgiving about its truth.

Psycho-analysis is a difficult science. Some of its fundamental discoveries are the minutest study of the most delicate aspects of the mind. A complete Oedipus complex, for example, as it appears in Freud's writing is very difficult for comprehension. But we have no reason to sense doubt about



their truth. We are now distantly away with the experiences of the truth of psycho-analysis. We have come through the rampant diffusion of the new knowledge through literature in the teeth of all religious oppositions. We have observed men experiencing these truths in their own life during the wars. Psycho-analysis dramatises just the prototype of a mind that wars or any abnormal situations are apt to release. The modern life with its acute awareness of instinctive needs and the banality of their gratification, of perpetual tension and insecurity is worse than the war itself.

As a method of treatment psycho-analysis aims at adjusting man to his situation by ridding his mind of tension. The process of analytic cure is unlike that of religion, and even offensive to it. Religion seeks to make man happy through suppression of instincts which it considers, are enemies of life and salvation. Psycho-analysis has no fault to find with them as they are. Men are as the instincts make them. Psycho-analysis holds that the happiness of man is dependable on the scientific or rational conduct of the instincts. It is wrong to believe that psycho-therapy insists on downright satisfaction of instincts as cure from man's insidious diseases.

The fundamental therapeutic concern of psycho-analysis is with the ego (self) of man. It seeks to eradicate the ego from the energy-cathexis on its pathogenic defenses and to strengthen it by bringing the unconscious to light. Still the question arises - Does it succeed in settling the problem of the mind? If not why? Psycho-analysis is the science of

determinism - a systematic training as it has been complained, toward the negation of will. Heredity and environment determine our character. The ego, which psycho-analysis seeks to restore is an alien in its own house. Sex as it is revealed in psycho-analysis has nothing comic about it, nothing idealistic or philosophical.

## Chapter II

### Contents:

A Survey of Freudian Influence with emphasis on the change and extension it has brought in the scope of literature (other than Assamese).

1. Psychological orientation of literature.
2. Plead for a compromise between literature and psychology.
3. The psycho-analytic revolt and its impact on the matter and technique.
4. A psycho-analytic fiction defined, and the psychological method as applied by the 'respectable' novelists.
5. Freud is not the originator of the psychological method in fiction.
6. The two fundamental aspects of Freudianism, which have gained literary currency, and fictions and plays demonstrating them.
7. A rapid survey of psycho-analytic influence in the continental literature and Indian.
8. Conclusion.

## Chapter II

### A SURVEY OF FREUDIAN INFLUENCE ETC<sup>etc</sup>

An attempt at evaluating the full extent of the influence, i.e., examining the different aspects of psycho-analysis applied in particular works of art would certainly exhaust volumes. Our emphasis on the change and extension in matter and technique of fiction, psycho-analysis has brought in, is for no purpose other than to attenuate, if possible, the labour and to extenuate or make the task in hand look less ambitious.

To begin with, one may think as much as to say that there is very little distinction between a modern psycho-analytic - episodic novel and the psycho-analytic literature. Some of the aspects of psycho-analysis, illustrated by Freud in The Major Works and The Basic Writings are as artistic in description and explanation as a novel, and appear even more interesting. This development of fiction is surprising indeed. But it is real. It is not even accidental (as it is considered occasionally to have occurred as a result of the wars). The germ of this development is already in literature. It was incidental first; it is now deemed essential in the exploration of life. In spite of the appreciable degree of difference between the two, literature has embraced psychology in its drive as a faithful portraiture of life, both in the realistic and the romantic or idealistic treatment as an indispensable source of information about life even before psychology had

emerged as a scientific branch of knowledge about the mind. The old masters of art sought incidentally to realise "the liberty of the inward man" through actions in their poetic dramas, just in the way as directed by Freud in his psycho-analysis. A glance at the works of the Greek poets, dramatists and philosophers enumerated by Coleman in his Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life would show the extent of psychological insight, they used to investigate the emotional problems of the mind and its behaviour. These books are indeed literary documents in proof of a profound psychological and intuitive understanding of the multiple uncertain human motivations.<sup>1</sup> It is surprising to note, for instance, how the attitudes of Euripides and Sophocles toward life were accompanied by the psychological insight at a time when psychology was still to be theorised on a scientific basis.

Dostoevsky's attitude towards evil as embodied in Ivan Svidrigailov in *Crime and Punishment*, and particularly in the characterisation of Fyodor Pavlovitch is profoundly psychological, although his insight into the mechanisms of defense and hostility was not supplanted by psycho-analytic theories. The Karamazov family represents from the beginning one version of the doctrine of original sin. Men are born of fathers and mothers, and the sins of parents are visited upon their children from generation into generation. The lusts and

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1. Coleman, *Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life*, chap. "Ideas carried over by literature" (Vol. 3), p. 652 ff.

passions of Fyodor Pavlovitch are passed to his children, and they cannot escape them.<sup>2</sup> Dostoevsky's sense of man, torn asunder by competing elements has been stated to be on a par with that of Plato and Freud.<sup>3</sup>

The tendency of the modern writers of fiction has been towards the effacement of the gap between psychology and literature in the interpretation of life. This is evident from the achievement of the experimentalists (namely, Conrad, Woolf, Joyce, Lawrence). In their passionate attempt to give fictional expression to their interior flux, i.e., states of consciousness these writers concentrate on the loose formula of the mental habit and try to give full account of human experience, ignoring the limitations of the world of art.<sup>4</sup>

In his An Outline of Psychology William McDougall underlines the difference between psychology and literature and that between literary and popular psychology. McDougall, however, pleads for a compromise between literature and psychology in the investigation of life. There can be no antagonism, he states in the way of one imitating the other. Literature and psychology are 'supplementary'. Literature is a vast source of information about life, and can be a respectable resource for the wise psychologist, he argues. In the same way

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2. Stephen D. Ross, *Literature & Philosophy, An Analysis of the Philosophic Novel* (Appleton Century Crafts, 1969), p. 138.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 144.

4. Paul West, *The Modern Novel* (Hutchinson & Co. Ltd.), pp. 3-7.

a prying man of letters in his search of truth about life can rely on psychology to rid him of 'illusion' in the artistic representation of the actual experiences of life.<sup>5</sup>

Our theme in this chapter is not, of course, to explain and substantiate whether the use of psychology in literature is justified but to make a rapid survey of the extent of influence Freudian psychology has exerted in modern fiction.

The revulsion in the fictional trend starts towards the end of the World War I. Since then, fictions, long and short, have become stuffed with searchings into motives and dream - symbols of psycho-analysis. In the centuries, prior to ours, life was secure, full of order and simplicity, was predictable or fixed to a definite end. Or, it appeared to be so in man's pleasing ignorance and love of illusion. The motives of the character in a novel were open. Readers felt secure in their company, for their 'knavery or foolishness' made sense for them.

The psycho-analytic revolution has brought in a radical change in man's attitudes towards the values of life, including art and beauty. The change in art has been towards a growing complexity in matter and treatment. The complexity in literary art is not, of course, wholly the result of a psychological imposition. A considerable portion of it

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5. McDaugall, An Outline of Psychology, pp. 3, 6.

proceeds from the general complexity of life itself. Freud writes in his Civilisation and its Discontents : "Men have brought their powers of subduing the forces of nature to such a pitch that by using them they could now very easily exterminate one another to the last man. They know this, - hence arises a great part of their current unrest, their dejection, their mood of apprehension."<sup>6</sup> Human life, now is not, as William James points out, a bundle of qualities but a certain states of consciousness that stream like a river, "now fast, now slow, now clear, now turbid". Or as Freud puts it, the mental processes are essentially unconscious and those which are conscious are merely isolated acts and parts of whole psychic entity, and sexual impulses "play a peculiarly large part ... in the causation of nervous and mental disorders."<sup>7</sup> The new psychologists have expressed evidently our ignorance, and taught us that clarity of human motive as we were accustomed to believe in, is an illusion. Seeing how complicated human behaviour really is, we prefer now to read about the incompletely comprehensible heroes of Hawthorne, Melville, Kafka and Dostoevsky. The long and short fictions of these writers and those of Proust, Joyce, Woolf, Conrad, Lawrence are insignia of strong individualism and disillusionment. Their enigmatic heroes - unheroic, unsocial, unsociable heroes as they are often called, are more enjoyable for us even in their unintelligibility, because we are fated to live like them in an indefinable feeling

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6. M.W., p. 802.

7. M.W. General Introduction to Psycho-Analysis, p. 452.



of insecurity, desolation and continual tension, caused as Frederick Hoffman puts it either by unexpected violence or by the expectation of violence that does not occur.<sup>8</sup> We experience no God to protect us, no religion to accommodate us. In the absence of any doctrine, adequate to explain our situation, we find us alienated or violent either positively or negatively.

This is the real condition of human existence in the present century. Modern fiction writers, committed to tell this truth about life have discarded the traditional techniques of telling a story (which was a straight forward realistic narrative wherein action determined meaning and the theme was clearly and explicitly stated). They have given up any attempt to conform to the society, which was the perpetual attempt of the 'respectable' novelists, like Fielding, Smollet, Dickens and Thackeray, but which proved perfidious to their 'artistic integrity'. The modern writers feel no urge for holding "a complacent view of life". The novels and short stories of Joyce, Lawrence, Hux<sup>le</sup>ly and Woolf have no heroes in the traditional sense. There is nothing heroic about them; nothing memorable in the sense in which <sup>the</sup> Becky Sharps and Heathcliffs are memorable. The absence of memorable and outstanding characters constitutes the chief difference between the Victorian and the twentieth century psychological novels. The psychological novelists want to demonstrate what people are like, and record the flaws and currents of their subconscious

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8. F. Hoffman, *The Mortal No, Death and the Modern Imagination* (Princeton University Press, 1964), p.

mind. Their primary concern is with the inner life of the characters, with the strife between the conflicting elements in the same person rather than with the vivid strife between persons. For this end in view, they have evolved a new technical device, new procedure in the form of fiction. These fictions are not determined by plot, by the simple dramatic issue as in the 'well-made' novels. They like diversity and complexity instead of simplicity and conformity. "They are eccentric rather than concentric, prefer discontinuity rather than continuity, evince no particular care about neatly finishing off a given action ... ." By attenuating plot, reducing action, and fracturing chronological order of time, writers in this century have, as Douglas A. Hughes puts it, shifted the focus of the fiction from the conclusion to the middle or a moment before the end of the stories. Most of them occasionally rely, he continues, on 'epiphany', i.e., on a sudden revelation near but not at the end of a story, which clarifies the seemingly pointless action and pedestrian thought of the character. In departing from the traditional method of characterisation, and concentrating intensely - even exclusively on the inner experience of men, they were merely using the new knowledge discovered by Freud and his followers, - knowledge not available in the 19th century.<sup>9</sup>

A psycho-analytic novel is not now difficult to understand, and even to define. J.W. Beach defines it as one,

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9. Douglas A. Hughes, *Studies in Short Fiction, Five Short Novels and Twentyfive Stories* (2nd edition), p. 145.

which consists in the author's explaining what, in general or at a given juncture, were the motives determining the person's action, especially when the motives are complicated or obscure and require some ingenuity to disentangle or bring to light.<sup>10</sup>

The psycho-analytic methods is stated to have occurred occasionally in the philosophical novels of Fielding. Fielding's analysis of Blifil's behaviour towards Sophia Western, in Tom Jones has been referred to by Beach as an illustration of the method.

The method also occurred in the novels of the Victorian novelists inspite of their irritating moral bias. George Eliot's Adam Bede and Middlemarch go behind the apparent motive to something lying deeper in the consciousness, which is the main determinant of conduct. Eliot was not only aware of the physiological bases of behaviour, but also of the Freudian theory of unconscious. This is evident in the characterisation of Bulstrode : "But many of these misdeeds were like the subtle muscular movements which are not taken account of in the consciousness, though they bring about the end that we fix our mind on and desire."<sup>11</sup> The theory of the unconscious found expression even in novels of Meredith and Butler. The mechanism, which man in his unconscious preoccupation employs for securing results that his conscious self does not approve is demonstrated in The Way of All Flesh : "Here Ernest's

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10. J.W. Beach, The Twentieth Century Novel, p. 26.

11. Ibid.

unconscious self took the matter up and made unconscious resistance to which his conscious self was unequal, by tumbling him off his chair in a fit of fainting."<sup>12</sup>

It is not true, therefore, to suppose that Freudian psychology is the origin of the psychological method in fiction. In the same way it is erroneous to believe that Freud was the only psychologist to intensify the twentieth century counterpart of it. The role of Herbert Spencer, Hegel David Hume and William James in the illumination of modern writers and in the eradication of modern men's superstition and illusion cannot be exaggerated.<sup>13</sup> The novels of G.H. Moore, Virginia Woolf, Roger Fry have been commented upon as illustrative of Hume's analysis of the relations of mind and object on action. According to James Grier Miller, Spencer's 'unknowable' is, as we have referred to earlier, strangely similar to Freud's concept of the unconscious.<sup>14</sup> William James, and not Freud is the originator of the stream of consciousness method in 20th century fiction. Still, it must be conceded that psycho-analysis is the most important force in the new literary revolt. In no field has the search after meanings and values by light of Freudian principle been carried on with such painstaking labour and such extraordinary restraint as in the sphere of imaginative literature. Wilbur P.

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12. J.W. Beach, *The Twentieth Century Novel*, pp. 31, 33.

13. F. Hoffman, *The Mortal No Death and the Modern Imagination*, pp. 66, 67.

14. Miller, *Unconsciousness*, pp. 17, 42.

Birdwood is quoted to have said that Freudianism gave the novelist a new scope in the fictional interpretation of character and almost unlimited possibilities for new themes.<sup>15</sup>

The fundamental concepts of Freudian psychology, which have attracted the novelists and short story writers are the unconscious and the psychic conflict. We have explained how the unconscious events influence our behaviour even in their original state of existence and have referred to the works of the great Greek artists to illustrate the same. We are just discussing within our limits how modern artists, inspired by Freud's scientific discoveries about the mind have used to create in close touch with the unconscious. Their arts exhibits, so to say, a latent and a manifest content - the processes that operate in dreams.

A psychic conflict is, as we have explained earlier, the conflict between the id that seeks to get released and the ego that checks that release. It arises out of the discordance between what a man wishes and aspires and what stands in the way of accomplishing his wishes and aspirations. Some conflicts are easy for us to solve by the application of self-insight, sublimation and social amelioration; but inward conflicts - conflicts as demonstrated in Euripides's *Media*, Sophocles's *Oedipus Rex*, *Electra*, *Orestes*, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, Ibsen's *Ghosts* need psycho-analytic treatment for settlement. The tragedy in Ibsen's *Ghosts* as well as in Doestoevsky's

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15. Morrison, *Freud and the Critic*. See pp. 40, 42, 43.

Brothers Karamaz<sup>-QV5</sup>, proceed from curses of heredity. "Heredity is the fate of our present day existence." A typical Freudian conflict has been demonstrated in Hardy's <sup>The</sup> Dynast, Galsworthy's Strife, Sophocles's The Antigone, Goethe's Faust and Lampedusa's The Leopards. In a conflict of this type the hero is forced into an identification with an abstract or collective force in a concrete form. This symbolical conflict has been stated to have originated with Hegel. Hoffman mentions Rimbaud, Eliot, Pound, Joyce, Gide, Graham Greene as demonstrating conflicts of self which have been derived from William James's "pure practical consciousness, and intensified by Freud's psychology."<sup>16</sup> Some of the novels, mentioned by Hoffman in his book, utilising conflicts, added and intensified or aggravated by the ideas of Freud, James, Hume, Jung and Spencer are Henry James's The Princess Casamassima, Conrad's The Secret Agent, Forster's Howard's End, Melville's Moby Dick, Malraux's Chen of Man's Fate, Man's Hope, J.G. Gray's The Warriors, Faulkner's A Fable, Dreiser's The American Tragedy, Dos Passos's Camera Eye, Hemingway's Nick Adam, Proust's A la Recherche, Lawrence's Sons and Lovers, The Rainbow, Virginia Woolf's To the Light House, and the expressionistic novels like The Adding Machine, The Subway, The Great God Brown, etc.

Hoffman states Rimbaud's surrealistic expressionism as a fine penetration to the Freudian unconscious. "Expressionism", he says, "is a direct representation of the inner life - a formalised, spatial integration within a fixed

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16. Hoffman, The Mortal No Death and the Modern Imagination, p. 17

unmoving time of the total self."<sup>17</sup>

Joseph K.'s arrest in Kafka's *The Trial* can be explained in the light of Freudian psychology. Freud warned in his later writings against the danger of a too powerful super-ego, which being internalised controls the dangerous instincts of the id. He also says that all men cover their mothers so that they remain even in adulthood guilty of incest - for an eternity of peacelessness. Joseph K. is a man condemned by too powerful a super-ego. His arrest is the condition of life itself - a life trapped in a world not merely hostile to it, but apparently impervious to human action.

The children in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* are a typical representation of the Freudian id.

Some memorable plays written in demonstration of different abnormal phenomena are : Eugene Ionesco's *The Miller*, Jean Genet's *The Maids* (1947), *The Blacks* (1958), Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, *Death of a Salesman*, O' Neil's *Morning Becomes Electra*, *Long Day's Journey into Night*.<sup>18</sup>

Freudianism became most popular in American literature. The young Americans deemed it a cultural need and accepted Freud's doctrine of sexual liberation enthusiastically, and vigorously attacked the hypocrisy and repressiveness of American puritanism.

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17. Hoffman, *The Mortal No Death and the Modern Imagination*, p. 365.

18. Bomber Gascoigne, *Twentieth Century Drama*, pp. 118, 119, 190.

The first American writer who made use of Freudian psychology is Sherwood Anderson. His revealing stories are *I'm a Fool, and I want to Know Why*.<sup>19</sup> His *Winesburg Ohio* is a collection of psychological sketches. With kindly insight he presents the inner struggle of troubled persons, who, broken by forces they cannot understand, imprison their life in cages of false values.

The most successful studies of character were made in America by Conrad Aiken. His *Silent Snow, Secret Snow* are 'touchy studies.'<sup>20</sup> The influence of Freud's determinism is obvious in his *Skepticism*. Aiken literally accepted Freud's pleasure and reality principles, and his attitudes towards art and the artist. His *Blue Voyage* is a stream of consciousness novel with a hero, who is a victim of schizophrenia, caused by a childhood trauma.<sup>21</sup>

Another American writer who was fascinated by the novelty of Freudian psychology is May Sinclair, who stuffed her novels with incest, Oedipus infantility, repression, psychoses and what not? Her *Three Sisters* demonstrates the evils of undue devotion.

J.W. Beach considers D.H. Lawrence to be the only English novelist, who took the psychology of sex, and mentions

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19. *A Grove Day, The Greatest American Short Stories*, p. 16.

20. *Ibid.*

21. J.W. Beach, *The Twentieth Century Novel*, p. 25.



his *Sons and Lovers* (1913) to be the first Freudian novel in English.<sup>22</sup> Lawrence is said to have become familiar with the popular aspect of psycho-analysis through Frida Lawrence in 1912. But *Sons and Lovers* is a novel, which has used Freud's Oedipus complex in its 'classic completeness'. The autobiographical novel analyses Lawrence's neurotic attachment to his mother. It has been described as a 'catharsis achieved by relieving of an actual experience.

All the representative novels of Lawrence are erotic; they abound in psycho-analytic phenomena, most of which can be recognised as the unconscious processes of "self-maximisation" through love, transference, sublimation and the inferiority complex.<sup>23</sup>

Lawrence believed in the knowledge of the blood, i.e., in truths felt by the body rather than comprehended by the mind.<sup>24</sup>

Lawrence first hated Freud to be an advocate of incest - of "a huge seamy serpent of sex" and treated psycho-analysis as "an immoral endeavour". But he gradually learnt to appreciate Freud as one who "pulled us somewhat back to earth, out of our clouds of superfineness". Morrison speaks about Lawrence's temperamental sympathy for the theories of

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22. J.W. Beach, *The Twentieth Century Novel*, p. 376.

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 377, 378.

24. Morrison, *Freud and the Critic*, p. 205.

Jung, and also about his rejection of Jung's mysticism and libido in preference of Freud's sex.<sup>25</sup>

The three novels of Joyce, namely, *Ulysses*, *The Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*, and *Finnegan Wake* are Freudian. *Ulysses* has been interpreted as a subjective drama of psychological disintegration. The novel is without a definite plot. The influence of depth psychology is deeply felt in the characterisation of Bloom, who is betrayed in complete nakedness of body and soul. Bloom is a womanly man - a masochist with tendencies at self-torture.

In all the three novels, the novelist stresses on the problem of adjustment and on intimate relationships in familial situations. The family world is real and the problem of adjustment is psychological.

The psychological problem in the *Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* takes place within the mind of Dedalus in an atmosphere of morbidity, and ends with his adjustment to art.

In both the novels the mother plays a role, similar to that of Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, and the novelist himself is the hero.

Joyce's *Finnegan Wake* has very little to say about the objective world. It is the dream-phantasy of old stuttering Humphrey Chindden Earwicker. His wife, Ann is too young for him.

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25. Morrison, *Freud and the Critic*, p. 204.

The erotic phantasy and feeling of guilt in him are roused by his daughter, Isobel. The idea of incest between him and his daughter, and homosexual motive between him and Kevin and Jerry, his two sons are developed in dream.

The dream in the novel can be explained as Freudian in its completeness. The Freudian censor is made to intervene to change Isobel into Iseult la Belle.

According to Freud the impulses of men are set free in sleep. The sexual instincts of man and woman, the child-instinct, the masculine and feminine principles - all come into play in confusing way, shadow forth disturbing relationships, which yet spring from the prime processes of life.

Of all the English novelists Virginia Woolf was the most conscious about her method. About her method in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Light House* she wrote : "the sights and sounds that have been of most interests to you swam to the surface ... and remained in memory; what was unimportant sank into forgetfulness. So it is with the writers . . . In fact, his undermind works at top speed, while his uppermind drowns. Then after a pause, the veil lifts, and there is the thing - the thing that he wants to write about - simplified, composed."<sup>26</sup> About life she says, "Life is not a series of gig lamps, symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, semi-transferent envelope, surrounding us from the beginning

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26. Richard Clay, 100 Great Books, p. 528 (cited).

of consciousness to the end."<sup>27</sup>

It is needless to explain what she meant by this. All the 20th century novelists, committed to the psycho-analytic exploration of life stress on the psychical or symbolical reality rather than on the exterior one. The exterior objective reality, that is directly reported in a novel serves only as an occasion; its sole concentration being on things, which the occasion releases.

In France, the analytical novel discussing individual problems and emotional conflicts became prominent throughout the 20th century under the leadership of Andre Gide (1869-1951).

The French writers enjoyed a more favourable condition for the use of Freudian psychology, than the English writers. They were free from any moral discipline or illusion of truth. They felt no misgiving in expressing the idea of determinism - the idea of a world indifferent to man. Marcel Proust's Remembrance of Things Past bears testimony to this. It is a novel of acute psychological analysis. The novel enumerates the reflection of a young boy over a cup of tea. In Baron de Charlus, Proust takes homosexuality as the main theme. He has been remarked as the first great novelist to give inversion a place in fiction.

The new literature came into being in India in the wake of the Russian revolt for communism, and the psychology of

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27. W.R. Goodman, Quintessence of Literary Essays (5th edition, 1977), p. 33 (cited).

sex and other abnormalities explored by Freud, and deciphered by Havelock Ellis. Both had almost the same effect on the Indian youths. The two theories have, inspite of their very many differences on the surface an inward resemblance inasmuch as, both are concerned with diseases issuing from basic insecurity.

Among the Bengali writers, Buddhadev Bose and Achintya Sen Gupta were pronounced Freudians at that time. They were prolific writers, who, teased by what their local masters did had resorted to Freud and Marx for inspiration and enlightenment.<sup>28</sup> The influence of Lawrence and Huxley is well apparent in the problem novels of Buddhadev Bose. The emphasis here is shifted from the plot to the analysis of character's motives. Achintya Sen Gupta was attracted more by Hamsun as is evident from his *Bed*, where a young man loves six women since his boyhood, but marries none of them. In *Bibāher Ceye Boro* (1931) he challenges the institution of marriage through sexual connection between the hero (Prabhat) and the heroine (Ashru). Love here is hurled to the lower level of sex; but sex is treated as a force, responsible for all greater feelings of man.

Psycho-analytic investigation of human relationship in the true Freudian way starts with the novels of Manik Bandopadhyay (1908-1956). There is no trace of idealism that embellished the writings of Rabindra Nath Tagore in his

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28. Contemporary Indian Literature (Sahitya Academy), p. 28.

attitudes towards sexual and other human relationships. His Bhikhu in Prageitihāsik symbolises primitive darkness where sex engrafts no conflict, no torture in the mind. His Hāt demonstrates a psychological phenomenon of sadism. Failing to control her disobedient hand that revels in tearing dress, and pulling flowers without her awareness, Mahamaya forces it into the weaving machine. The polarity of love and hate is illustrated in the person of Charu and Pari. Bhezāl demonstrates the inner ugliness of love within its surface endowment. The father-daughter and mother-son relationships occur in Mahākālar Jātar Jat in oedipal significance.

Bandopadhyay was first a warm admirer of Freud, but towards the later part of his career, he turns out a critic of psycho-analysis. As a matter of fact, he wanted to rid himself of the monotony of psychological oversimplification and onesidedness of which D.H. Lawrence became the victim.<sup>29</sup>

Like Bandopadhyay, Banaphul, a physician, applied the psycho-analytic interpretation in the study of the middle class life. In Tinkhanda (1935) he writes : "Outwardly we are so gentle but inwardly so rude! That primitive cave-man is alive in us even to-day. All efforts of civilisation too have left him an animal ... ."

Some of the psycho-analytic writers of fiction, long and short are Dhurjatiprasad, Dr. Bhabani Bhattacharya, Nirode Choudhury, G.V. Desani, Ilachandra Joshi, etc.

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29. Ranendra Nath Dev, Bānglā Upanyāse Ādhunik Paryyāy (Book Land Pvt. Ltd., 1964), pp. 274, 275.

Of the Freudian novelists in India, Shri Joshi (Hindi) has been subject to incisive criticism for his artistic imperfections. He is like the American Waldo Frank a symbol of writer's obsession with Freudianism. Except Sanyasī, his early novel, all his fictions, long and short are repetitive and episodic.<sup>30</sup>

Freudianism furrowed no great influence in modern Indian literature. Indian literature used to thrive in the absence of the two vital things, namely, the psychology of sex and the experiences of poverty. This is evident from the great writings of Rabindra Nath Tagore and others. But the young writers who became familiar with Freud and his discoveries indirectly through Havelock Ellis's Studies in the Psychology of Sex (1897-1928) and also through the applications of them in English literature got enraged at the teasing idealistic preoccupation and self-sufficiency of the major Indian writers. They considered Freudian searching into life and its values a cultural need for riddance of traditional illusion and idealism. Still, it must be said that Freudianism could not operate in any Indian literature so well as was expected. The accompaniment of Marxism with it served as an alternative in the choice of the writers. They found reason to be ambivalent in their attitude towards one in preference of the other to the effect that both suffered setbacks in their

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30. Contemporary Indian Literature, p. 92.

way of flourish.

This brief survey of modern fiction leaves no doubt however about the fact that of all forces psycho-analysis has been the most prominent and decisive force in its present progress. Our survey has, of course, been too general and abstract to give an impression of the detailed picture of its impact. A searching study would lead us to believe that no aspect of Freudian psychology has been left unutilised in modern creative literature. Circumscribed, as we are, we should, without further digressions remain content simply displaying the influence of psycho-analysis. And finally, while this survey seeks to stress on the change and extension in the matter and technique of fiction, it does not intend to qualify the nature of the changes. The artistic imperfections that have occurred as a result of the applications of the scientific discoveries have been reserved for chapters to start, and will be illustrated through our fictions.



### Chapter III

#### Contents:

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### Chapter III

#### TRENDS OF POST-WAR ASSAMESE FICTION ETC etc.

The years after 1918 are a period of bewildering complexity. The disastrous effect of the Great Wars and the several minor ones has been expressed in the language of a poet (Yeats) in the following way :

"Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold,  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world."

Man experienced life as 'cursed spite' in "time out of joint". Shock, confusion, desolation, depression and disillusionment are the characteristic expressions of this realism in the writings of Frenz Kafka, Thomas Mann, T.S. Eliot and other sensitive writers. The wars released the Pandora's Box of evil, and man everywhere felt like experiencing the oppression of being evicted from his so-called harmonious existence. Soldiers and civilians alike became victims of some form of nervous disorder or other.

The effect of the wars, of course, was not outwardly so damazing in India as it had been elsewhere. The wars effected India indirectly, and left her a nervous wreck. The influx of thousands of hungry people from Burma made the general condition of living uncongenial. Devaluation of money and exigency of food eventually followed. The situation was further aggravated by the alarming rise of the People's Movement of 1942, which shook every nook and corner of the subcontinent.

After a period of sentimental or patriotic restlessness India achieved independence. But neither the end of the wars nor the achievement of independence brought her peace. We were left, as it were, to be torn in tenterhooks of a mass of unrealised and tantalising hopes.

In Assam, the poverty, consequent upon the wars was not confined only to food and clothing; it went so far as to impair our cultural and literary life. Our most popular literary magazine, 'Āwāhan' (1929) and the other two monthlies, namely, 'Jayantī' and 'Surabhi' had to be discontinued for a pressing want of paper and partly for want of literary men. We bitterly experienced the rise of a group of people who were crazily up for money. The labourers in the factory, the starving cultivators in the field and the poor women were victims of their exploitation.

But this is only one aspect of the war-effect. There are other, and more important facets of the new realism. Chaos and devastation without, and suffering within gave men a heightened awareness of his own environment. He learnt to act and think anew in the different directions which the new situation opened before him. Disillusioned as he was, he felt the meaninglessness of the traditional values. The mass of immoral occurrences which he himself experienced made him sceptical about God, religion, the sanctity of sex and morality. The study of Marx and Freud established the facts of his experiences.

The new realism is, therefore, not hard to picture now. It is a kind of no-God, no-hero realism, distinctly opposed to the 'conceptual' or idealistic one, that was prevalent in the ages prior to this. It did not concern itself with man as he should be; it was content to discover man as he is. The new realism primarily based itself on Marxian materialism and Freudian determinism and evinced a decisive inclination to disbelieve, and even to disregard all traditional values centering round the 'conceptual hero'. The Marxian side of this realism made our young writers and readers socially and economically aware and taught them to remain preoccupied with the ordinary man, i.e., his ordinary likes and dislikes, hopes and sorrows. They wanted to haul the ordinary man up the evils of capitalism. The Freudian side of this realism made the writers sensitive about their individual situation, i.e., about the evils of the mind of man in general. They learnt to study "man as a victim of environment/ or biology", as one in bondage to his libidinous compulsions or to the repressions, society forced upon him, and also as 'the dupe of natural and preterhuman forces.'<sup>1</sup> Dr. Birinchi Kumar Barua writes that those short-story writers who wrote after Lakshmidhar Sarma and up to the Second World War were influenced by Sigmund Freud."<sup>2</sup> Under the impact of the new knowledge the writers "tried to give a new interpretation of the primal relationships subsisting

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1. Wilbur Scott, *Five Approaches of Literary Criticism* (Collier Macmillan Ltd., London, 1962), p. 69.

2. B.K. Barua, *History of Assamese Literature* (Sāhitya Akādemi, New Delhi, 1964), p. 181.

between man and woman against the new social and individual background and in a broad Freudian context."<sup>3</sup> The breakdown of age-old inhibitions, and the preoccupation with sex and the exploration of the subconscious and unconscious are the most characteristic literary consequence of this impact. Some of the stories demonstrating the application of the new discoveries are Lakshmidhar Sarma's *Cirāj*, *Vidrohini* (The Rebellious Woman), Bina Barua's (Birinchi Kumar Barua's) *Āghoni Bai*, *Lāpeli*, Haliram Deka's *Alakālai Cithi* (Letters to Alaka), Dr. Hem Chandra Barua's *Jaharā* (The illegitimate), T.N. Goswami's *Jāraj* (The bastard), *Jiyā Mānuh* (The Living Man), Rama Das's *Barsā Yetiyā Nāme* (When It Rains), *Prem āru Pṛthiwī* (Love and the World), Krisna Bhuyan's *Bedanār Smṛti* (A painful recollection), Munin Barkataki's *Aprakāsar Bedanā* (Pain of the hidden) and others. Close observation, attention to detail, stress upon fact, and bold analysis of feelings are more or less characteristic of these stories. Their interest lies in the dark places of psychology, in 'elucidation of the eternal riddle of man' - his nature, mind and spirit. The writers are conscious of something in human mind of which the average mortal are not aware. They attempt to extend sensibility from "the consciousness of personality we all possess to that hinterland of raw vitality from which personality springs." Reading Freudian psychology these writers had come to believe that the activities of the unconscious mind are of the true personality.

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3. B.K. Barua, *History of Assamese Literature* (Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1964), p. 181.

The note of pessimism is characteristic more or less of these fictions. The lowest level of this pessimism was struck in Radhika Mohan Goswami's *Niyatī* (Destiny), Prabosh Goswami's *Yantra* (The Machine), and J. Ahmed's *Āgantuk* (The Imminent).

The drawbacks of these fictions are many. They suffer from a general cumberdom of poetic exuberance.<sup>4</sup> The writers were not aware of the distinction between novel and short story, as a result of which the stories appear as bald narratives or abbreviated novels.<sup>5</sup> T.N. Goswami remarks upon Bina Barua's *Āghonī Bāi* and those of Dr. Hem Chandra Barua and Uma Sarma as short novels rather than short stories.<sup>6</sup> In Dr. Birinchi Kumar Barua's opinion, T.N. Goswami's *Jiyā Mānub* is a short novel.<sup>7</sup>

While these writers wrote profusely and vigorously about sex and aberrations of instinctive rural life, they felt inhibited by some foreign masters, who lived in social and cultural environment, unfamiliar and unholy, if not quite unnatural to us, and stuffed their fictions with contents, which the forms often failed to discipline. Dr. Prafulla Goswami marks Hem Barua's *Jahara* as a typical illustration on

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4. Dr. Prafulla Goswami, *Galpa Desī Āru Bidesī* (1960) (Stories Indigenous and Exotic), p. see the preface to the collection.

5. Nagendra Narayan Choudhury, "Bhāratār Swadhīnatār Picat Asamiyā Sāhitya" (Assamese Literature after Indian Independence) (*Āmār Pratinidhi*, 1969) an article.

6. T.N. Goswami, *Ādhunik Galpa Sāhitya* (Modern Story Literature), 1972, pp. 167, 178-179, 193.

7. B.K. Barua, *History of Assamese Literature*, p. 179.

the model of the French Maupassant. But Maupassant, he explains was not concerned with ordinary psychology. His realism was embedded in the psychology of sex; and he laid more stress on the matter of his fiction and less on the form of it.

Modern Assamese fiction (short story) grew under the influence of the west, where the Russian Chekhov, and not Maupassant was preferred as the model, because the former was accepted as model by the English writers of the time. And Chekov was a writer who shifted the importance of the story from its content to the technique. Significantly enough, Assamese fiction, right from Rama Das up to now, has been paying serious attention to the form rather than to its content. Rama Das's stories are consummate blends of art and analysis. "Vividness of description, charm of dialogue, solidity of thought, and an extraordinary capacity to record nicely discriminated and artfully proportioned differences of feeling in language - all these make his short stories some of the very best we have in Assamese. Most of his stories deal with departures from accepted social canons and aberrations of conventional love, and to this task the writer has brought psycho-analysis and sympathy."<sup>8</sup>

Dr. Birinohi Kumar Barua points out that after the Second World War, the Freudian attitude undergoes a change;<sup>9</sup> and the change in the writers' attitude towards life and art makes it a new epoch of literature.

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8. B.K. Barua, History of Assamese Literature, p. 179.

9. Ibid., p. 180.

The new fiction is replenished with a new variety of experience, a new level of awareness. The individual and environmental awareness illuminated by Freud's discoveries and intensified by the psychological occurrences during the wars continues vigorously more often in discordant associations, and at times, in efficacious assimilations with other supplementary ideas, - the dynamic ideas of Marx, Darwin, the existentialistic ideas of Jean Paul Sartre, Heidegger, Kierkegaard and those of Hegel, Hume, Kafka, Dostoevsky, Yeats, Eliot, Huxley, Maugham and others. The literary climate, however, seemed more conducive to the flourish of the socio-economic ideas of Marx.

Marxism which triumphed in Russia played a vital and far-reaching influence in Russian and English literature. Post-war Assamese writers were greatly influenced by the Russian Gorki, Sholokhov, Alexie Tolstoy, and the English George Bernard Shaw, H.G. Moore, Auden, C.D. Lewis and Stephen Spender.

A considerable portion of Syed Abdul Malik's fiction is inspired by Freud's psychology and Marx's dialectical materialism. Romanticism continued in his writing. But it is not romanticism with its love for the elemental in man, and its loving adoration for nature and woman in particular. Malik continued the romantic tradition in a markedly different way. Love is not here as it is in the stories of Rama Das a play-thing and a special privilege of the aristocratic. It is a sentiment common to all. Malik's flavouring young persons are beset with the problems of food and clothing. He has hurled all the flavourings of romance to the sore world, where they



get substantiated by the accumulation of the psychological and sociological awareness without literally being either Freudian or Marxian. Dr. Birinohi Kumar Barua mentions four of his stories as "devoted to psychological dissection of the female mind."<sup>10</sup> These are Śeṣ Upakūlar Śeluwā Pār (The Mossy Bank on the last Edge of Land), Prān Herowār Pācat (After the Soul was Lost), Jowār āru Upakūl (The Tidal Bore and Coast), and Marahā Pāpari (The Faded Petal). Some other stories written to demonstrate the truth of the new knowledge and frequently mentioned by critics are Bibhatsa Bedanā (Pain of obscenity), Gahwar (The Cavern), Mukti (Deliverance), Tribenīr Swapna (Dreams of the Ganges, the Jumna and the Saraswati in their Confluence), Dumukhlyā Sāp (A Snake with Mouths at both Ends). Ramani Kanta Sarma mentions Parasmani (Touch Stone), Ejanī Natun Chowālī (A new Girl), Marahā Pāpari (The Withered Petal), Śil āru Śikhā (A Stone and a Flame of Fire)<sup>ds</sup> illustrative of his sociological and psychological awareness.<sup>11</sup> Malik's Acināki Arghya (An Unknown Offering) and Kabitār Janma (Birth of a Poem) are stated to have been written under the influence of Joyce's stream-method.<sup>12</sup> His Sio Maril (He too died), Annesan (A Quest), Marisālir Maran (Death of a Burial) are autobiographical stories with emotional (psychological) exuberance.

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10. B.K. Barua, History of Assamese Literature, p. 181.

11. Ramani Kanta Sarma "Sabhāpatir Abhibhāsan, Sāhitya Alochana Chakra" (an article, 1976).

12. Gunadhar Sarma Pathak, "Ābdul Mālikar Galpa" (Stories of Abdul Malik) an article.

Assamese short story achieves in the hand of Malik a limitless range and a new standard in a conversational style, which replaces the plot prominent and pictorial stories of the previous era. Malik has, of course, faced the music of such literary voracity. His lack of concentration, his failure of psychological penetration into the depth of the emotional problems of life, and his artistic failure by comparison with Haliram Deka have been ascribed by T.N. Goswami to the limitless range of his subject.<sup>13</sup>

Dinanath Sarma who started writing before the war and has since been writing vigorously has added to the pattern of Assamese fiction the influence of Zola and Maupassant. The stories included in the collection entitled *Kowā Bhāturīā Othar Talat* (Behind the False Lip) are illustrative of this. His stories are all plots with little artistic endowment, where wild, elemental people, women in particular, emotionally starved, revel. They are upset by situation around them, and the fiction writer generally, though not always remains content to solve their problems through the accumulation of events rather than through psychological investigations. "There are, however, a few noble exceptions, where the fears and silent sufferings, the helpless wanderings in the labyrinths of a woman's life, the complexes and conflicts are brought out impressively in a psycho-analytical aesthetic study."<sup>14</sup> The theme, common to most of them, is 'illegitimate

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13. T.N. Goswami, *Ādhunik Galpa Sāhitya*, pp. 213-214.

14. B.K. Barua, *History of Assamese Literature*, p. 182.

love' with somewhat like a misogynist's attitude towards women, who are 'ugly and revolting.'<sup>15</sup>

The Ramdhenu era of Assamese fiction starts with Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya as its editor (1928). Bhattacharya is one of our most popular writers of fictions, long and short, who has contributed a great deal to the three trends of our fictional development - sociological, psychological and supernatural, as construed by Jogesh Das in his article entitled "Asamiyā Galpar Tinitā Suti" (Three trends of Assamese short stories). Bhattacharya's bias for both the sociological and psychological trends is much more conspicuous than Malik's. He evinces no disregard as Malik often does, towards the two trends of thought even when he is convinced of the limitations of both in the solution of man's spiritual problems. In stories like Ward No Dui (Ward No Two), he strongly advocates the truth of psycho-analytic psychology; but the problem of Makani in Mākanīr Gosāī (Makani's God) is one that cannot rely on depth psychology for its solution. Marxian materialism is sure even to prove more inadequate in this. This is what T.N. Goswami implies when he says that in both novels and short stories Shri Bhattacharya occasionally leaves his persons in conflicts between Freudian truth and life's ideal, failing to hammer out a solution of their problems.<sup>16</sup>

This neurotic behaviour in the settlement of spiritual theme is common to all our writers of fiction. When they take

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15. B.K. Barua, History of Assamese Literature, p. 181.

16. T.N. Goswami, Ādhunik Galpa Sāhitya, pp. 215-216.

to write honestly under the influence of Freud or of Marx, they are seen to play havoc with all traditional values, but at other times when they write under an afflatus, they seem to atone for this by an exaggerated devotion to the God of our father - to all traditional values.

Shri Bhatta's *Sio Ekhan Jagatare Katha* (That too is the event of a World), *Ejanī Jāpānī Cowālī* (A Japanese Maid), *Mēya Mancur*, and *Idar Jone* (The Moon of the Id) are illustrative of his devotion to human interest. In all his stories, sociological and humanistic, his method is analytical. He has followed Malik in the psychologising of romantic love in *Cirālā āru Cinduin*. His *Pitani* (a stale, thick grass covering on the still water) is a story, built on a pattern of supernatural awareness, - a trend introduced by Rama Das in his *Marā Sutī* (The Dried up Channel), the best of our short fictions in this genre.

The present trend of Assamese short stories is towards psychological analysis of man's behaviour, social, sexual and cultural.

Assamese writers of fiction with pronounced Freudian bias are Homen Bargohain, Bhaben Saikiya, Saurabh Kumar Chaliha, Jogesh Das, Kumar Kishore, Nirode Choudhury, Sada Saikiya, Padma Barkataki, Nava Barua, Chandra Prasad Saikiya and others.

A host of short stories has been created on the subject of man's love and sexual relationship with woman, where the writers aim at realising that sex lies at the root of all human

abnormalities and also all creative activities. Dr. Birinchi Kumar Barua has brought to our notice the abundant use of sex and factual realism in Bargohain's stories, and his pre-occupation with the Freudian theory of libido.<sup>17</sup> Persons with unusual behaviour abound in his fictions. They are hard to recognise conventionally. To identify them we must first be acquainted with the psychology of Freud, Jung and Adler, the existentialism of Jean Paul Sartre and with many more -isms. The two collection of short stories, namely, Bibhina Korāc and Prem āru Mrtyur Kārane (For Love and Death) and the collection of essays, namely, Dhūsar Diganta (The Dim Horizon) are psychological studies of persons' behaviour through sexual relationships between them. Bargohain's Mahāswetar Biyā (Marriage of Mahasweta), Pardā (The Screen), Oktopās (The Octopus), Narakat Basanta (Spring in Hell) are novel <sup>short story</sup> creations on psycho-analytic discoveries of Freud. The influence of existentialism is well apparent in Hrdayar Prayojanat (In Need of the Heart), Yauvan (Youth). His Cikār (Hunting), Sisur Hāhi (Smile of an Infant) and Etā Matun Bhikhāri (A New Beggar) raise social problems in conspicuous leaning towards Marxism, and are replete with a deep feel of humanism. His Hātī (The Elephant) and Silpa (Industry) are successful experiments on symbolic pattern.

Inspite of the artistic failure of his fiction ascribed by T.N. Goswami to his faithful adherence to the modern philosophical and psychological data (which we have reserved

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17. B.K. Barua, History of Assamese Literature, p. 182.

for the concluding chapter for discussion in detail), his daring experiment on the study of phenomenal or abnormal behaviour on the basis of the truths of depth psychology is unique in our literature. His symbolical stories chart out a new future for our fiction.

Bhaben Saikiya's stories represent the other extreme of the psycho-analytic method and are more promising perhaps than any fiction in our literature. He is Freudian, but not in the way Shri Bargohain is. Bargohain concerns himself exclusively with unusual sexual behaviour of men and women. His people are either eccentric or insane, far apart from the world of sunshine and rain. Shri Saikiya never moves away beyond the bounds of what is normal or natural in psycho-analysis. No Assamese writers of fiction have expressed so suggestively and significantly the small cravings of normal life like him. He is acquainted with the common problems of life. Persons lose in his treatment all regional colours and take a universal significance in his heart-felt pity. His *Bāna Prastha* (the stage of life when a man leave the world for meditation in the woods), *Barnabodh* (Sensations of Colour), *Upagraha* (The Satellite), *Upapatnī* (The paramour), *Lāj Lāge* (I'm shy), *Gangā Snān* (Bath in the Ganges) and *Satkār* (Service) are successful blends of art and psychology. For a study of the sexual behaviour of prostitutes, Bargohain shifts the canvas to a whoredom, but the credit of comprehending the truth that "every woman by the logic of her nature is a prostitute" is Saikiya's. Most of his stories are experiments on patterns. Mention may be made of his *Dhorāsāp* (a kind of snake, not very poisonous),

Sendur (Vermillion), Bārandā and Daridra Kuwer (The poor God of Wealth) as illustrative of a triangular pattern, which he employs for the purpose of analysing persons' emotional behaviour.

T.N. Goswami notices a general lack of depth in his fiction.<sup>18</sup> This is certainly because of his almost exclusive preoccupation with the minutest detail of human behaviour and his insistence on art or appreciation of the beautiful. His stories are amusing, for they are artistic analysis of normal man, who suffer slight disturbances in the heart or head; but they are not so impressive or captivating as those of Homen Bargohain, populated by hysterics lying fainted beside the alley. And here his stories suffer by comparison not only with those of Bargohain, but also with those of Malik and Padma Barkataki. But his fusion of normal psychology with consummate art is much more than a compensation for what he has lost by comparison, - a unique contribution to our fiction.

With the stories of Saurabh Kumar Chaliha Assamese short story trends trenchantly towards impressionism. The ramshackle mentality of the 'age of restlessness', the obscure dreams and ideals have nowhere been so beautifully symbolised as in the impressionistic stories of Chaliha. His *Asānta Elektron* (The Disturbed Electron), *Dupariyā* (Noon), *Deutā āru* *Āmi* (Father and We) are difficult experiments on scientific, symbolic pattern. "A new pseudo intellectual eloquence" is

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18. T.N. Goswami, *Ādhunik Galpa Sāhitya*, p. 241

characteristic of his stories, says Bargohain.<sup>19</sup>

Some of our psychological stories worth mentioning are Mahim Bora's Bahubhuji Tribhuj (A many sided Triangle), Keyā Ānguli (The little Finger), Jogesh Das's Ābiskār (Discovery), Sonār Harin (The Golden Deer), Ekhan Sarga (A Heaven), Baruānī (Mrs. Barua), Parakīyā (Other Man's woman), Chandra Prasad Saikiya's Edin (A Day), Rohini Kakati's Mṛttikā (The Earth Dug-out) etc. An attempt to raise real problem to the psychic level is evident in some of Lakshminandan Bora. Some of his persons are very sensitively reactive to the stresses of environment. Dr. Nilima Sarma seems bent on portraying women in her psychic enigma. Morbidity and obsession are characteristic of the few stories of Gobinda Sarma. His stories are autobiographical, deffuse in style, a near approximation to those of Dinanath Sarma in their aesthetic inaccuracy.

A number of short stories with predominance of sex and analysis has been written by Iuran Shah, one of our promising young writers. The stories of Mamani Goswami - a few of them at least, are worth mentioning (though not mentioned here) for demonstration of a variety of conflicting experiences of normal woman.

The output of Assamese novel immediately after the war is scanty. After a teasing gap of literary inactivity

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19. H. Bargohain, "Biswa Sāhityat Asaniyā Cutigalpa (The place of Assamese short story in World Literature), an article.



since the fall of the literary magazine, *The Awāhan*, we, however, abruptly arrive at an adult level with Birinchi Kumar Barua's *Jīvanar Bātat* (On the Highway of Life) towards the end of the fifth decade of the present century. It is the first and perhaps the greatest of our psycho-analytic novels. *Jīvanar Bātat* is a realistic novel 'on the rural life of Assam', built against the background of all political, economic, social and moral agitations caused by the 2nd World War and the Peoples' Movement of 1942. The novel is free of any regressive illusionment for the past, which abounds in the historical romances of Rajani Kanta Bardaloi, it also discards the sentimental idealism of Muhammad Pear's novels, so popular among a section of our readers from 1947 to 1950.<sup>20</sup> Pear's plot-prominent novels, however important they are from the historical point of view as social portraitures, suffer pathetically by comparison with *Jīvanar Bātat* by their almost complete lack of analytical investigation of emotional and intellectual problems.<sup>21</sup>

Psycho-analytic novels, i.e., novels with minute or detailed explanations of person against environmental background, and novels dealing with the intricate problems of emotional life are very limited in our literature. The two novels mentioned as on a par with *Jīvanar Bātat* are Prafulla Datta Goswami's *Kecā Pātar Kapani* (The Quivering Foliage), and Radhika Mohan Goswami's *Cāknaiyā* (The Vortex). They are acute penetration

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20. Hemanta Kumar Sarma, *Assmīyā Sāhityat Dristipāt* (A Glance at Assamese Literature), p. 253.

21. *Ibid.*

into the problem of adjustment in the new situation. The first demonstrates the ideological unrest of a young man and the second portrays the life of a frustrated young man who could not adjust himself to the present day society.<sup>22</sup>

Dr. Hemanta Kumar Sarma includes Premadhar Rajkhowas's *Bhular Samādhi* (The Interment of Errors) and Dandinath Kalita's *Sādhanā* in the psycho-analytic group. *Seujī Pātar Kāhini* (Story of Green Leaves), the second novel of 'Bina Barua' (pseudonym of Birinchi Kumar Barua) is a fine picture of the modern socio-psychological restlessness. Jogesh Das's *Dāwar āru Nāi* has been described as the portrayal of the disruptive effects of the last world War upon the ethics and manners of our society.<sup>23</sup> Dinanath Sarma's *Nadāi*, *Sangrām* (Struggle), Mathura Deka's *Humuniāh* (Sigh), Saumer's *Kerānīr Jīvan* (Life of a Clerk) etc. can be classed to form another group. These are social novels, not on a par with the likes of *Jīvanar Bātat* or Navakanta Barua's *Kapilipariyā Sādhu*, another psycho-analytic novel of some distinction, in point of analysis, but are meticulous pictures of rural as well as urban life.

Assamese novels synchronising the clatters of socio-political injustice on the down-trodden and common restlessness in an analytical 'flavour' are now numerous. The characteristic note of these novels is the call for a world "in which sweet and toil must lead to the vindication of the right of the worker

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22. B.K. Barua, *History of Assamese Literature*,

23. *Ibid.*, 172.

in field and factory."<sup>24</sup> The novels of Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya and Syed Abdul Malik merit attention for their psycho-analytic treatment. Bhattacharya's Rājpathe Ringiyāi (The Call of the Highway), and Iyāruingam are two socio-political novels in analytical style. The first depicts the life of a young revolutionary, who wants to set right the wrongs of society. It claims again the credit of being the first of our stream novels. The second is analytical in a more complex way on a theme of the Tangkhul Nagas.

Some of our socio-political novels, which merit to be called psycho-analytic in treatment :

- (1) Syed Abdul Malik's Ban Jui Khedi (Pursuing the Wild Fire), Rajanī Gandhār Cakulo (The Rajani gandha in tears), Ādhārśila (The Foundation-stone), Rathar Cakari Ghure (The Chariot Wheels Move), Chabi Ghar (The Picture House), Aghari Ātmār Kāhinī (The Story of the Alienated Self);
- (2) Kumar Kishore's Emuthi Tarār Jilimili (The Twinkling of a handful of Stars), Kinkinīr Kalanka;
- (3) Padma Barkataki's Bicārar Hābe (For Judgment), Eti Kshan Māgo Mai (I Want a Moment);
- (4) Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya's Pratipad (The First Lunar Day), Mr̥tyunjoy (One Who Wins Victory Over Death);
- (5) Jogesh Das's Dāwar āru Nāi (Clouds No More), Jonākīr Jui (The Flame of a Firefly);
- (6) Chandra Prasad Saikiya's Edin, Mandākrāntā and Meghamallār;
- (7) Nava Kanta Barua's Kapilipariyā Sādhu (Story on the Bank of the Kapili), Kakā Deutār Hār (The Necklace)

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24. Contemporary Indian Literature, p. 290.

of the Grandfather); (8) Homen Bargohain's *Pitā-putra* (Father and Son), *Kuśīlaw* (The Actor), *Hāladhīyā Carāye Bāo Dhan Khāya* (The yellow Bird is loose on the Crops) etc.

These novels, most of which have been listed from Ramani Kanta Sarma's *Abhibhāṣaṇ* (1976)<sup>25</sup> are Freudian in technique and treatment of matter, i.e., they depict the subconscious motives and urges of the human heart in a realistic technique. Social interest in them is an artistic inevitability.

Dr. Satyendra Nath Sarma mentions a few novels as written solely under the influence of Freud's Abnormal psychology.<sup>26</sup> Malik's *Trisūl* (The Trident), *Kabitār Nām Lābha* (Poetry, a Stream of Lava), Padma Barkataki's *Dusmantar Cuma* (Kiss of Dushmanta), and *Najalā Dhupar Itikathā* (The Last Words of an Unlit Incense), Nirode Choudhury's *Banahansa* (The Wild Duck), Kumar Kishore's *Emuthi Tarār Jilimili*, *Banyā Dhout Ba-Dwip* (The Coral Island on the Flood-wave), *Kinkinir Kalanka*, Rohini Kakati's *Rad āru Kuwali* (Days and the Dews), Homen Bargohain's *Tāntrik* (a follower of the Tantra) are included in the group. The novels of Padma Barkataki and some few of Malik can also be added to enlarge the list on the merit of their possessing one or more phenomenal persons.

Dr. Hemanta Sarma mentions a number of novels, where the novelists' concern is exclusively with the sentiment of love. These are Premnarayan Datta's *Pranayar Suti* (The

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25. See infra, p. <sup>61</sup>99 (11).

26. S.N. Sarma, *Asamīyā Upanyāsar Gatidhārā* (Trends of Assamese Novels).

Channel of Love), Kumar Kishore's Śikhār Kapani (The Vibrating Flame), Cāyāpath (The Shadowy Path), Kapili Nirave Kānde (The Kapili Weeps in Silence), Kawar āru Kankāl (Skeletons in the Grave), Arun Das's Sapon Yetiyā Bhānge (At Break of Dream), Adya Sarma's Jīvanar Tini Ādhyāya (The Three Chapters of Life), Hitesh Deka's Ācal Mānuh (The Real Man), etc.

Love here is treated seriously; and in some of them, even psychologically, though not in a specifically Freudian method; and some attain to that height as a result, which is characteristic of Nava Barua's Kapiliparīyā Sādhu and Bina Barua's Jīvanar Bātat.

Dr. Maheswar Neog criticises some of our fictions without specifically mentioning any one of them as

The chance romances of the street  
The Juliet of a night.<sup>27</sup>

Such fictions as these, he continues, have no greater interest than sickening the readers by their exotic impositions. Dr. Neog may by this remark have referred to those fictions where the writers attempt to restore them from what may appear obscene is almost absent. These novels are stuffed with sexual superfluities, - 'dalliance' and 'dandysm', exposed without psychological observations of persons and environment.

A marked deterioration in the treatment of love is characteristic of present day Assamese fictions, long and short.

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27. Maheswar Neog, Ādhunik Asamīyā Sāhitya (1965) (Modern Assamese Literature).

Love at its best, i.e., love as an ideal of higher life, once so popular, is not at all inspiring to the present day writers. Love as sex, once a literary taboo, is the material of the new realism. Young boys and girls loitering amidst splendid sights and frivolous talks to the cinema hall or to the river-side, young brides suddenly revealing on their wedding beds that their husbands are impotent, are some of the common stuffs of our light fictions.<sup>28</sup> The writers in their frank but frivolous treatment of sex often obliterate the difference between fact and 'truth' or between the mere semblance and form of things and the essence of truth, which life so often hides.<sup>29</sup>

Dr. Hiren Gohain attributes this deterioration or profanation of love's traditional grandeur and chastity to the pressing rise of capitalism.<sup>30</sup> But the remark seems prejudicial. The more convincing explanation of the situation has been given by Sigmund Freud through his remark : "The most pronounced difference between the love life of antiquity and ours lies in the fact that the ancient placed the emphasis on the instinct itself while we put it on its object. The ancient extolled the instinct and were ready, to ennoble through it even an inferior object while we disparage the activity of the instinct as such and only countenance it on account of the merits of the object."<sup>31</sup>

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28. Hiren Gohain, *Bāstavar Swapna* (Dream of reality), p. 64.

29. S.N. Sarma, *Asamīyā Sāhityar Itibrtti* (History of Assamese Literature), p. 323.

30. H. Gohain, *Bāstavar Swapna*, p. 64

31. B.W., p. 563 (footnote).

The general deterioration in the fictional treatment of love is, thus the inevitable result of a shift of importance from the instinct to the object of love, - from the ideal to the real. A faithful portraiture of the object as it is, is sure to become varied but aesthetically infidel. Precise art is possible to incise only on the ideal, and not on the real or exact picture of an object.

Assamese fictions like all provincial fictions in India is an exotic product and has more or less comprised within itself the ideas at work in the continental literatures. V.K. Gokak in an attempt to illustrate the opulent and integral nature of the Indian Renaissance, and of Kannada literature in particular has mentioned eight trends, perceptible in all modern Indian literature, namely, realism, progressivism, traditionalism, scepticism, ethicism, humanism, aestheticism and gnosticism. A curious reader would never fail to find these ideas flowing singly or in confluence in Assamese fictions, long and short. Traditionalism, ethicism, realism, even humanism are characteristic of our early modern fiction; progressivism, scepticism, aestheticism and gnosticism of our present day fictions. We have stressed on the appreciation of beauty in the stories of Rama Das, Bhaben Saikiya, Chandra Prasad Saikiya and Saurabh Kumar Chaliha, and on traditionalism, humanism, progressivism and realism on those of Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya, Malik and Bargohain. Most of Shri Bhattacharya's fictions are experiments on revaluating the old ideas, i.e., on a compromise between the old and the new ideas. Scepticism, which was first

sounded in the stories of Haliram Deka is, more than anything else, characteristic of such experiment.

A recurring tendency of modern fiction has been to concern itself with the subjective aspect of the writer's experience. The fiction-writer, most often, expresses his sentiments and ideas or philosophy directly in his fiction. The autobiographical novels of Lakshminandan Bora and Sila Bhadra, namely, *Uttar Purus*, *Madhupur*, *Āgamanir Ghāt* are demonstrative of this trend in Assamese fiction.

There is another kind of subjectivism, i.e. 'dramatic subjectivism', in which the writer concerns himself with the states of mind of his characters, to be more specific, with the motives of their action, and the action itself. The novelist passes no comment or explanation on it, nor does he intrude himself in the scheme of his story.

Assamese fictions achieving this ideal is hard to find out. Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya is too prominent with his progressive and analytic and traditional bias to achieve effacement of self-intrusion in the characterisation of his persons. Homen Barghain's persons gasp under the heavy weight of psychological and philosophical impositions from sources hard apparently to identify. Malik's urban people are too much vocal with their creator's sophistication to betray their own identity. The fictions of Hhaben Saikiya, Chandra Prasad Saikiya, Rama Das, the impressionistic stories of Saurabh Kumar Chaliha are fictions bent on exploring without any apparent bias, the psychological motivations of characters or 'the



atmosphere of the mind'. Theirs are an approach to if not an achievement of the dramatic ideal of subjectivism, I think. Their persons have both social and individual existence.

## Chapter IV

### Contents:

Whether Freudianism was inevitable or imposed?

1. The controversy among the critics and the creative writers.
2. The two groups of critics.
3. The distinction between the continental attack and appreciation and that of ours.
4. The first cry of emancipated women and its reaction.
5. The most exoriated stories and article.
6. The critics of Freudianism.
7. The upholders of the literary application of Freudian psychology.
8. Conclusion.

## Chapter IV

The question whether Freudianism was inevitable or imposed evoked strong reaction among our critics and creative writers, as it did elsewhere, and the nature of response or reaction more or less the same everywhere. We have critics of different taste and temperaments. The Vaisnavite critics, i.e., the worshippers of Visnu, with their devotional leaning to a tradition of purity feel sickening at the thought of sex in human form. Literary discussion of sex in human indulgence is a taboo for them. As a matter of fact, these critics spite as unholy at all that is exotic, sexual, or materially exuberant. We have another group of critics, who spare Freud and his discoveries but exoriate the unqualified literary applications of psycho-analytic findings by the young enthusiastic writers. Psycho-analysis as a branch of science is no object of abhorrence for them. But they cannot stand as it is applied in literature with its "enticing claim that nothing exists in human being except sex" or that "sex underlies and dominates all human motives, and is the basis of all creations." Freudianism with an Oedipus complex (i.e., every person's conjugal fate turning on his parent of the opposite sex) at the root of all abnormality, and infantile sexuality and other immoral implications on its back, they think, is as aprobricious and terrifying to our literary tradition as was a Tāntrik to a poor virgin in a Buddhist temple.

Strong denunciation and admiration followed in America and England after the emergence of Freud and his discoveries in the translations of Boris Sidis, Havelock Ellis and A.A. Brill. But a distinction can be made between continental reaction and that of ours. The critics in America and Europe generally attacked or appreciated Freud and his psycho-analysis but in India or Assam the attack was generally, though not always, directed not to Freud and his science, but to the literary application of it by a group of writers. And what is disparaging is that our attack and appreciation suffer considerably by comparison with their foreign counterparts in point of prudence and sophistication. This is undoubtedly for the reason that while our critics were loud in their denunciation of its literary application, they paid little attention to know Freud and learn profusely about his discoveries. The same is, I think, no less true of our admirers of Freudianism.

The influence of Freudian psychology was first felt in the stories of Haliram Deka. But the truth of the psycho-analytic impact was brought to a revolting climax in the stories of Lakshmidhar Sarma. He is the first of our writers who declared that "the women need not always keep their mouth shut and their wombs open." His *Vidrohini* (The Rebellious Woman) is "a fearless statement of the sad plight of the girl widow, Lalita, and her courageous defiance of the cruel and rigid conventions of society, which thwart satisfaction of primary instincts."<sup>1</sup> His *Vyarthatār Dān* (The Gift of Frustration) and

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1. B.K. Barua, *History of Assamese Literature*, p. 178.

Cirāj and Lilā have women, who display the same spirit of revolt against the suppressing conventions of society and civilisation.

Lila, Lalita, Usha and Subhadra are our first enlightened women in fiction who enjoyed sex but suffered no remorse from sin. A vigorous reaction was to follow from our custodians of traditional chastity of women. But they were seen to remain silent. They might have read about these impulsive women, smelt their blood and sneezed but ignored them probably either as exceptions of the conventional type or suffered in silent resentment, assuming them as beginners of the new. But the real cause of this silence was ignorance or lack of inquisitiveness. Although our writers' interest in the relationship between men and women, their inquisitive probing into the problem of the mind, their sceptical attitude to all values of tradition - god, religion, sex, chastity, and their sympathy for sexual emancipation of women were sufficient to prove their psycho-analytic bias, still they rarely wrote about phenomena with clinical terms. They felt shy indeed to pronounce themselves either as Freudian or Marxian or both, for they had been brought up under the tradition, and had shared more or less its virtue and vice in the blood. This reticence of traditional decorum was, however, soon brushed aside by the writers who were next to follow. The new writers frankly utilised the discoveries of science to challenge the truths of religion in their fiction.

The reaction against the application of Freudian psychology was strongly burst out immediately after the

publication of Dr. Hem Barua's *Jaharā* and Birendra Kumar Bhattachārya's *Kalā Dāwarar Cāp* (The arc of Dark Clouds). Our votaries of Viṣṇu are said to have shut their eyes when they chanced suddenly to see the heroine of *Kalā Dāwarar Cāp* raise the 'mekhelā' up to her knees fearing to get it wetted while she was moving across the stream.<sup>2</sup>

The neplus ultra of reaction reached when Homen Bargohain published his article, "Asamīyā Sāhityat Navayuga" (The New Epoch in Assamese Literature) encouraging the young writers to avail themselves of the new knowledge. A swarm of articles arose in praise and denunciation in the years following the publication of Abdul Malik's famous story, *Bibhatsa Bedanā*.

In two long and learned articles<sup>3</sup> Dimbeswar Neog explains the purity and perfection of the sexual tradition in the classical Sanskrit and the medieval religious literatures and incisively criticises the modern Assamese writers of fiction who have been up in an unholy race of breaking the old taboos in the name of emancipating men and women from inhibition and oppressions. Neog explains the purity of our literary convention and displays its unreceptivity to modern sexual

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2. Jnanadananda Sarma Pathak, "Sāhityat Yauna Ābedan" (Representation of Sex in Literature), pub. Rāmdhenu, Vol. IX, No. 3, 1878 śaka.

3.(1) Sāhityat Aślilatā Avāntar (Obscenity in Literature is irrelevant), pub. Rāmdhenu, XVIII, No. 11, 1887 śaka.

(11) Asamīyā Sāhitya āru Sāhityikar Ādarsa (Assamese Literature and its ideal), pub. Rāmdhenu, Vol. XVIII, No. 3, 1867 śaka.

realism which is destitute of any spiritual or religious touch in it. Sex being the vital thing of creation cannot be ignored or neglected in literature. Indian religion in all its forms, Śaivism, Śaktism etc., and literature and painting are alive with sex or eroticism. But sex without its connection to our soul-life (not mental life as the psychologists comprehend it) was inconceivable to these institutions. Neog continues that what Freud and his followers have done today in the direction of sex and other aspects of the mind was discovered thousands of years ago by the Indian scholars, who while explaining the nature of sex and its importance to life were not bent on separating it from religion and life's final beatitude. Religion, wealth, sex and salvation were treated as of equal importance in the achievement or accomplishment of life's perfection. There was no bar in the way of holding learned discussion on the treatise of sex by marriageable girls and boys in ancient times, Neog continues. He refers to the strong debate on the treatise of love, held between Sankaracharya and the learned wife of Madan Mishra. Discussion on sex with spiritual association is virtuous; any talk on it without divine link is a vice. The aim of literature and art is not to negate sex or to drag it into lust or concupiscence, but to refine it or subdue, i.e., to transform it to a culture. Sex being refined through religion and art or literature extals us to divinity.

Dimbeswar Neog ascribes modern literary anarchy to the use of sex as a detour of indulgence. Sex, so private and so solemn has in the modern realistic fictions been a topic of

banal discussion among the writers and readers. He calls Freud their god of sex and Marx, their god of hunger, in whose blind imitation our literature has been a store-house of all possible aberrations or abnormalities.

Neog concludes that he does not seek to deny life by denying it of its dynamic nature. The change of life with the change in the environment and society is inevitable. But even in the name of universality, it is misleading and self-destroying to treat the European society and the Indian or Assamese society alike. It is not bad of our writers to accept the good ideals from others. But before doing that it is instructive, even imperative to learn to imitate with respect and adoration the good ideals of India; for he warns that the blind imitation of the fallen ideals (as he calls them) of the West would lead thus far (to worship sex in human form), and no farther (to adore spiritualism). The character of this handful of impudent writers, he says in another criticism, brought up in English behaviour cannot be the character of the nation.

Against modern writers' recourse to Freudianism, Benudhar Sarma, one of our renowned critic and creative writers, pits his appeal to a 'Brahmachārya' in literature. He considers sexual realism an imposition on our unresponsive tradition and urges the writers to follow a Brahmachārya, i.e., a classical ideal to eradicate the vice of free sex from literature.<sup>4</sup>

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4. Golap Khound, "Sāhitya Prasanga", Navayuga 29, 1968.



Hem Barua, one of our great poets denounces obscenity in literature in a learned article.<sup>5</sup> The article contains no mentioning of Freud or his psycho-analysis but is not without indication that Freudianism is responsible for the abundance of sex in fiction and for the causation of present social anxiety. While he stresses the difficulty of defining obscenity in literature and the risk of obstructing the publication of obscene literature by legal imposition, he approves free environment as the condition, requisite for great literature. Again while he denounces obscenity in literature, he points out that the impression of obscenity can be wiped out by an artistic representation of sex, the point which has been stressed by all our critics denouncing the application of the psychological discoveries regarding sex, as a remedy.

In a letter to the editor,<sup>6</sup> Navayuga Sashi Sarma writes that modern literary venture in the exploration of tabooed sex prognosticates no good to life. Literature is inconceivable in the absence of the sexual problems of life. But sexual science and sexual literature, he continues, are two different things. A literature, bent on transforming the theory of science is no literature; it is a caricature of literature only. Nakedness is not foreign to human civilisation, and to literature as well. But literature, even when it aims at sexual profusion or profligacy should be able to discipline sex

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5. Hem Barua, *Aśilīl Sāhitya* (Obscenity in Literature), Navayuga, Vol. 2, No. 13.

6. Sashi Sarma, "Sampādakalai Cithi" (a letter to the editor), Navayuga, Vol. 1, No. 6.

through art into delight, which is the aim of all ideal literature. Sex, thus turned into artistic delight is not banal sex, that excites desire or creates tension, but 'rasa' (sentiment) or divine delight that releases man of tension or subdue his passion.

In another letter written in reaction against Homen Bargohain's "Asamiyā Sāhityat Navayuga", referred to earlier in the chapter one of our minor writers<sup>7</sup> ascribes the present fall in sexual equilibrium in Assamese society to the sex-centred fictions of Malik, Sada Saikiya, Kumar Kishore, Homen Bargohain and others. What more can we expect than an aura of unholiness about these obscene fictions? he questions.

All the critics, major and minor of the use of psycho-analysis in our literature have been of opinion that the indiscreet use of sex has really been an imposition on our fiction, for, it is offensive to the tradition. The psychology of sex and neurosis has, no doubt, widened the scope of literature. Assamese writers have gone too far in the choice of subject and technique beyond the bounds of tradition. The heaps of new materials have enhanced the significance and sweetness of our fiction, but this has been achieved only at the elimination of our national character from literature. Instead of disciplining society and instructing it, the new literature has only instigated the readers to feel strongly about other things (i.e., about the violation of the moral taboos) to the

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7. Kanak Mahanta, "Sampādakalai Cithi (a letter to the editor), Navayuga, Feb. 5, 1954.

detriment of their health and delight, which our traditional literature was accustomed to beget.<sup>8</sup> It is a moral responsibility of a writer to aim at regenerating society. But regeneration does not, of course, mean freely or impertinently exposing the seamy side of the respectable social life. Progressivism does not mean distorting the real or making it appear awkward. No responsible writer should destroy our family relationships in blind imitations of foreign ideals. Our brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law are free from any touch of sex or obscenity in their affection and endearment. Psycho-analysis of these relationships would cause serious harm to the peaceful equilibrium of our social and normal life. A writer should choose plots for his stories from the society, of which he is a responsible member. Even when he imagines a plot in imitation of a foreign model he should be discreet enough to forbear patterning his characters on the foreign model. Some of our realistic fictions seem more fictional even than the old romances. Realism exceeds the bounds of romance when a writer takes to indicate the evening sky through a menstruating woman or a woman in labour, and compares the morning rays of the sun to the blood-spots of a woman in her monthly course. To write against tradition does not virtually mean writing something novel or progressive. No responsible writer should treat sex as representative of modern realism. Taking it as such is like taking the shadow or dream to represent the man. Such a writing

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8. Priyanath Das Talukdar, "Rāmdhenur Galpa Sāhitya", Rāmdhenu, Vol. IX, No. 8, 1878 śaka.

only serves the purpose of self-indulgence; does not instruct or edify.<sup>9</sup>

A long article<sup>10</sup> of some merit by Amal Chandra Goswami criticises the Freudians for the rude change they have brought in the life of our society. Equipped with a superficial knowledge of psycho-analysis, - its id and libido specifically, these writers seem crazy in the pursuit of sexual release of their fictional persons, caring little for its consequence on the readers. Like Freud they hold that the suppression of sex lies at the root of all human abnormalities, and demonstrate gratification of sexual desire as the cure from these diseases through their persons. In their psycho-analytic sympathy for the persons, they only suggest means of instinctual gratification; and very rarely of retribution or punishment even when punishment is usually deserving on social consideration.

Shri Goswami argues that Freudianism ought to be rejected on ground of the ambivalence it has created in the aim and ideal of literature. If sex-centred literature, - literature which explains the minute details of sexual life - kisses, embraces, amorous sights of men and women, the nature and behaviour of their coituses and what not? - be the criterion of great literature on grounds of its popularity, then a considerable portion of the great literature would be deprived of its due. We

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9. Priyanath Das Talukdar, "Rāmdhenur Galpa Sāhitya", Rāmdhenu, Vol. IX, No. 8, 1878 saka.
10. Amal Chandra Goswami, "Sāhityat Yauna-Bodh" (Sex in Literature), pub. Rāmdhenu, Vol. XVIII, No. 3, 1883 saka.

must not be optimistic, Shri Goswami concludes, about the survival of a literature, which seeks to sprout and grow like fungus on the grave of a religiously, culturally and even philosophically self-sufficient tradition.

In a small article Jamiruddin Ahmed calls the sex-centred novels as parasite on our pure tradition and warns the young readers against their being infected. A good novel, he says, inspires us to activity and idealism, but a bad one deprives us of individuality and ideals and paralyses us into utter inactivity.<sup>11</sup>

In a long and searching article, Ramani Sarma criticises Freudianism on grounds of its materialistic preoccupation. Literary applications of psycho-analysis with its exclusive stress on sex as the leading motive is, in his consideration, a parasitic overcharge on our spiritual inheritance.<sup>12</sup>

The upholders of Freudian psychology are generally the creative writers, most of whom have won credit as writers of fictions, long and short. They regard Marxism and Freudianism as two grand phenomena, and consider the literary application of them - inevitable. It is, of course, not unnatural that some of the writers here as in elsewhere would in their first unqualified enthusiasm, prefer one until patience, experience

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11. Jamiruddin Ahmed, "Upanyās" (Fiction), Rāmdhenu, Vol. XIV, No. 3, 1883 śaka.

12. Ramani Kanta Sarma, "Sāhitya Aloohana Cakrar Sabhāpatir Abhibhāsan (Speech of the President of the Literary Discussion Circle).

and insight convince them to worm their ways to the other. We have, as a matter of fact, more writers than one who have been Freudian first, and critics of Freudianism next - leaving one in preference of the other, like Manik Bandopadhyaya in our neighbouring Bengali fiction.

The views of Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya, one of our most popular writers have been almost similar to that of Bandopadhyaya in his creative writings and criticism. He is one of the writers who adores our tradition without a conservative leaning towards it. Most of his writings have, I think, grown in an attempt at assimilating the old values with the new. His liberal attitude is evident in his modest rejection of Benudhar Sarma's insistence on the 'Modern Assamese writers' following a classical ideal, - 'Brahmachārya' as he calls it. In consideration of the progress our literature has made in the different directions, particularly in fictions, he argues, Shri Sarma's criticism is not acceptable as criterion of judgment in to-day's situation. Literatures elsewhere, have been up and doing in adjusting man to the new situation, created by the occurrence of the wars and the improvement of science. We have, therefore, no reason, he continues, to rot or riot in vain allegiance to a traditional ideal, based on the conservatism of an age. The ideal that Śankardeva evolved for his religious literature was ignored or disregarded by his contemporary poet, Pitambar on ground of its denial of life. The gap between Sankardeva and us is even greater than that between Shakespeare and Emile Zola or Maupassant. This gap is not bridgeable by a mere allegiance to a religious ideal.

A sentimental approach, such as this, would enable a writer to achieve nothing, and would only stand an impediment in the path of achieving universal literature.

Ours is a period of experiment, Shri Bhattacharya argues, not of judging what is good and what is bad. Two groups of writers have, he points out, been experimenting in two different directions - the psychological (Freudian) and sociological (Marxian). The former works in conflict of the mind against the environment for an individual's readjustment, and the latter, for a socio-economic equilibrium. Both, however, deal with the ordinariness of life against the romantic complexity and extravagance, classical simplicity and restraint and medieval renunciation and resignation of life. Realism and progressivism, the two terms, he explains, indicate freedom of thought and experience, and need a radical change of the whole social pattern for a proper functioning of science and experiences, he concludes.

Though Shri Bhattacharya suggests in his article<sup>13</sup> nothing against the inevitability of Freudianism, his preference as a creative writer weighs towards a sociological ideal of literature.

In two other editorials,<sup>14</sup> Shri Bhattacharya expresses the inadequacy of romanticism in general and of Assamese

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13. Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya, "Sāhityat Brahmaohārya" (Brahmacharya in Literature), pub. Rāmdhenu, Vol. IX, No. 9, 1878 śakā.

14. "Mānavatār Viśvakarmā" (The Architect of Humanism) and "Prem" (Love), pub. Rāmdhenu, Vol. IX, No. 11, 1878 śakā and Vol. 9, Nos. 5,6, 1878 śakā.

romanticism in particular. He does not question the inevitability of Freudian psychology, with the application of which the second phase of our romanticism began; but makes it responsible for reducing love and spiritualism into the psycho-analytic libido, and suggests Kristopher Cadwell's ideas of love as the proper basis of our future literature.

In another article, Shri Bhattacharya argues in favour of a free discussion of sex in art and literature, and for the overthrow of legal imposition on the literary exposition of it. The Lady Chatterley's Lover of D.H. Lawrence, he states, was banned by a verdict of the Supreme Court on ground that the book was "too phallic for the gross public (as it was interpreted to have broken the 292 Section of the Penal Code). The verdict of the Supreme Court stirred up a swarm of reactions among the intellectuals. Shri Bhattacharya quotes the reaction of Dr. Mulukraj Anand who said that the verdict would set a limit to any public discussion on sex, and particularly on the literary explanations of the real relationships between men and women; and with this, he continues, a large part of women's freedom in society would be curtailed. Besides, it would incur a great loss to India<sup>in</sup> other directions. The Indian people would be deprived of the enjoyment of the great works of art and literature.

Shri Bhattacharya states that Dr. Mulukraj Anand is justified, and continues that the time is ripe for uncovering the traditional reticence on sex. He urges the critics of literature to effect a clear explanation of the word 'obscence'



before literature is made to suffer from an aesthetic loss in its deprivation of sex by a legal enforcement. Literary discussion of sex is not disagreeable to aestheticism, he concludes.

In warm support of Homen Bargohain's article mentioned earlier some of our minor writers, while they have warned against low obscene venture, have encouraged the urgency of venture for the achievement of great literature. Homen Bargohain's *Subālā* has been mentioned as a great achievement in fiction (long) in its abundance of sex. Sex here is properly disciplined and is no source of displeasure. Homer's 'making man glad', Aristotle's 'pleasure', Coleridge's 'complacency', Schiller's 'joy' and Longinuse's 'ecstasy' are the different forms of artistic delight achieved out of disciplined sex.<sup>15</sup>

It is, however, pointed out that the exercise of venture is dependable on the economic and social environment, of which our writers are pathetically deprived. Economic conditions streiten the Assamese writers into poverty, and social environment into suffocation, both being detrimental to sound health and freedom of experience.<sup>16</sup>

We have a number of articles written in defense of Homen Bargohain's article and Malik's famous short story *Vibhatsa Bedanā* by our minor writers. These articles even in their access of passion and persuasion are full of arguments

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15. Dambaru Gogoi, "Sampādakaloi Cithi", *Navayuga*, 1st yr., No. 6.

16. Ibid.

and information and can be summarised to establish our point.

The predominance of sex in literatures of the last two centuries is consequent without doubt upon the new knowledge explored by Freud and his followers. The literary use of this knowledge is inevitable; but our writers should be warned against distorting literature in imitation of cheap models. The great writers in all ages have demonstrated the tragedy of all instinctual cravings. Balzac's *Venial Sin*, King's *Sweetheart*, *Fair Impiria*, *Pretty Maid of Partilon*, Zola's *Nana*, *Human Beast*, *Teressa*, *La Curre*, Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, Pearl Buck's *The Good Earth*, Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* etc. were once criticised for their sexual exuberance.

But sex or solution of sexual problems in these novels is deterrent neither to social nor to individual interest. Love between a mother and her step son (as in Zola's *La Curre*) looks immoral but not unreal. The *Rénis* and the *Nanas* have no long life to live. The death of *Nana* who sold sex for money, and that of *Reni* who sacrificed life for illicit love are lessons for us to learn. The abundance of sex in Dostoevsky's novel is not for a luxury of indulgence, i.e., for creating the juggling of untruth. His novels are quests of truth. Dostoevsky was no shallow preacher. His women are forced to atone at the call of reality, not on religious or moral imposition from without. The ugly, loathsome story of a whore cannot excite concupiscence in a sound reader; it moves him with sympathy and warns against the pursuit of impulsive gratification. She is no appeal, but a warning.

Malik's *Bibhatsa Bedanā* is readable and even worth imitating on the same ground. Padma and Uma in the story are abnormal women, although ~~only~~ attempt at identifying them on the basis of a psycho-analytic theory of abnormality is apt to fail. Even if Malik was influenced by Freud in the characterisation of the two women (there is no doubt that he was), there is nothing wrong about it, for, Freudianism taught him to face reality boldly and even dexterously. If *Bibhatsa Bedanā*, *Kalā Dāwarar Cāp*, *Jaharā*, *Jāraj* are rejected on grounds of obscenity, it is hard to imagine how our readers would enjoy reading *The Good Earth*, and <sup>The</sup> *Sanctuary* of William Faulkner.

Art and morality are two things. If morality is allowed to establish its domain on reality, art will get paralysed. The great writers of the world overthrew this domain on reality and directed their quest to a perfection of life, that glows in fusion of art and life. Lawrence termed this perfection of art and life 'divine otherness'; Huxley experienced a 'divine mystery' in the physical union of lovers. What did the great Sanskrit poets and the medieval religious poets achieve in 'rasa' if not something like this? Is it not perfection of life, won in conglomeration of art and love?

Assamese fiction is poor in the physical description of man's sexual life. Malik's *Bibhatsa Bedanā* is a mile-post in the line.

The reign of the Mahāpurusas (i.e., the God-incarnated who, preoccupied in the idea of 'bhakti' remained content in the godliness of men, and used to dislike art and life itself)

being over, we have leisure to rediscover human nature. The exposition of sex in literature is not in the opinion of these writers a violation of taboo as it was considered by our religious writers, nor is it a symptom of disease. It is, in truth, the "rediscovery of nature". The last two centuries pushed the essential nature of man into artificialities. The present age is the time for eradicating life and sex out of these artificialities. The process of rediscovery would, of course, entail the labour of removing dregs. The first feeling of loathsomeness in the treatment of anything in relation to sex is due to the dregs. Few days after, it is hoped, this ugly confoundment, half seen, half hidden would disappear, and we would learn to worship sex with a surprise in the way we are accustomed to worship the sun just out of the clouds.

We have very little, indeed, now to add to the chapter, which is already too long. As for the despisers of sex, I am impressed that what they have said about Freud's discoveries of sex and their literary application, and what they have argued in favour of a 'Brahmacharya' in consideration of social peace and national integrity is most genuinely and wisely said, although they are themselves convinced that they have said something in the manner of a preacher in an age where they have few people to listen. These critics believe firmly and even sincerely in the existence of an ideal sexual tradition in ancient literature, which taught men to subdue sexual desires instead of rousing them. In their idolatry for it, and insistence on its continuation, they make modern psychology responsible for all obscene and immoral, material exuberance

in the new realism.

The upholders of the new realism, most of whom are our creative writers, on the other hand, are sceptical about any such ideal as could suit the literary requirement of today. And in consideration of what has been up around them in the bounds of civilisation, particularly in that of literature, they feel it urgent for freely and fearlessly exposing any problem, pornographic or puritanical, if it concerns man as an individual and as a member of the society. They hold themselves responsible to tell the truth about life, without caring much to consider if it delights or disgruntle the audience. Their art grows undoubtedly out of life, is fed by life. But their responsibility seems to end in exposition of how life appears to them against a particular situation, which environs it. These realists concern themselves with the psychic part of life. Life - as an ideal whole, i.e., life with its roots beyond life is without the scope of their art. As a matter of fact, their art, while it dissects life, does not bear the responsibility to see how it bleeds. Modern science and their own situation of life have taught them to disregard any moral or ethical responsibility to it. No national and traditional outlook profit them as they are convinced, any way in their situation. It is a life without order, integrity, without anything heroic in it. And to depict it, they bare art of any ideal in form and spirit. They mock at those who display a passionate leaning to the past.

But neither the despisers of modern sexual realism, nor the warm supporters of it are free of a romantic illusionment. Both sets are victims of two infantile disorders of more or less same nature - one of regression and the other of aggression.

Literature has long ago been invaded by the new forces, and the reign has been established firmly. Our creative writers have marched far along the exploration of the new possibilities, and have got audience ever on the increase to accept as natural whatever is presented. None has leisure, as it were, to look back. The question if what is being done was done by our distant predecessors, if what is being done partakes of the characteristic spirit of the nation seems to be rationalised away. I think the critics who now cry for national literature, ethioal or moral and aesthetic responsibility of the modern writers are only Lamas living safe in a spiritual fortress when Tibet has already been declared a foreign land.

It is too late of us indeed to question the inevitability of Freudianism. Psycho-analysis as a science of regulating the mind, - the human relationships is a cultural need in to-day's civilisation. If psycho-analysis cannot settle the emotional problems of life none else can. What is amiss is not with psycho-analysis as it is, but with psycho-analysis as it has been made to operate. The new discoveries have been applied in literature as a 'curiosity', i.e., as a "desire after the things of the mind simply for their own sake and for the pleasure of seeing them as they are", which looks

in practice somewhat "frivolous and unedifying". The social motives, i.e., the love and sympathy for the patient, "the desire for removing human error, clearing human confusion, and diminishing human miseries" are often ignored in it. To heal the wounded the literary artist should stress on analysis rather than on exposition.

## Chapter V

### Contents:

**Sex-tradition in Assamese Literature : Its response to and reaction against Freudianism.**

1. Complexity of the social and cultural life in ancient India, and the amorphous nature of the sexual tradition in literature -  
  
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2. Treatment of sex in the romantic plays and Kāvya of Kalidasa and his contemporaries.
3. The age of 'bhakti' (devotion) and the treatment of sex in the works of Śaṅkaradeva and his contemporaries.
4. The decline of Vaiṣṇavism and the rise of Śākta literature : trend towards realism.
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6. Difference in treatment of sex between an ordinary realistic fiction and a psycho-analytic novel.
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## Chapter V

### SEX-TRADITION IN ASSAMESE LITERATURE ETC etc

A superficial knowledge even, of the sources of the tradition makes it obvious how complex the social and cultural life in ancient India was. The complexity in social and cultural life was, as Dr. Banikanta Kakati quotes Mewar to have stated in his *Sexual Life in Ancient India*, consequent upon the mixture of the Ārya and the Anārya races.<sup>1</sup> Sexual life in ancient India that can be featured from our knowledge, handed down to us through the Vedas, the Purānas, the epics and the treatises, religious and secular or scientific was amorphous, imbalanced; sometimes highly sacred and sometimes meanly obscene, but always confusive in either extreme. Unrestrained sexual freedom was sanctioned in the Vedic ages for both men and women. Yajñya Valka held that women being instinctively pure get polluted by no sexual intercourse. It was on this ground that conjugal fornication was in vogue in ancient India. The Mahābhārata refers to its operation in the northern Kuruprades.<sup>2</sup> The epic also records strong reaction against such sexual liberty, as a consequence of which all sorts of fornications came to be treated as irreligious and indignant, and women were brought under the subjugation of men through strict social inhibitions.

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1. Dr. Banikanta Kakati, "Prem Nibedanat Nāri" (Woman in the supplication of Love), *Navayuga*, Nov. 18, 1964.
  2. Dr. Girindra Sekhar Basu, *Yauna Bijñān (Science of Sex)*, p. 490 ff.

Ancient Indian literature as it is embodied in the two great epics, the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata is replete with the eulogy of good women, and abhorrence for the fallen. It is a literature "treasured <sup>up on</sup> upon purpose to a life beyond life"<sup>3</sup>; its exclusive stress being on soul and chastity of man and woman, particularly the latter, as criterion of life's perfection. It was a life, subject occasionally to a forceful reduction and occasionally to a wálful renunciation.

Dr. Banikanta Kakati's article<sup>4</sup> in review of the sexual tradition in the Brahmavaivarta Purāna describes Bhāratavarsa as a land of purity and 'bhakti' (devotion) - the land of the Āryas, governed by the Vedas. Dr. Kakati quotes Mewar to have stated in his Sexual Life in Ancient India that Manu, the supreme authority and care-taker of the ancient Ārya society conceded a woman having an impotent husband the liberty to approach a relative of her for procreation, though not for pleasure.

What we can conclude from our study of the epic and Purānas is that in ancient India the biological function of sex was treated as sacred - 'a ladder of salvation', and marriage was considered a very respectable institution for its fulfilment. Love or the psychological manifestation of sex was current only in Heaven among the gods. In Brahmaloaka (Heaven)

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3. William Henry Hudson, An Introduction to the Study of Literature, p. 15 (Hudson quotes Milton to have said this).

4. See infra, p. <sup>99</sup>149(1).

prostitution was in vogue. Heaven has in it, prostitutes who lived for the pleasure of the gods. It is a land where the Vedic inhibitions were not in operation.

The literary tradition of sex in ancient India is thus wrapped up tight in a spiritual blanket, a considerable part of which seems woven of superstition. The fact that India has a long tradition of suffering women and suppressed sex in a way unlike anywhere else is no doubt ascribable to the predominance of superstition in the idea of sex and chastity of women. The Ramāyana is scintillating with the tear-gems of two women suffering pathetically in the ordeals of chastity. Both Sita, and Urmila are rare instances of women, who have become victims of poetic justice for no fault of their own. Draupadi in the other epic has suffered no less in her attempt to restore chastity in the abductions made by the Asuras (demons). She is forced into nakedness in the court in the presence of her five husbands. The upholders of modern realism frequently quotes this scene of nakedness in their attempt to explain obscenity in the tradition, and to substantiate our traditional receptivity to modern realism. They often refer to the fact of her having five husbands as a proof of her instinctual liberty.

There is a farago of abundant eroticism in the romantic plays and Kāvya of Kalidasa and his contemporaries, represented in a rather confusing way to the effect that both the upholders of the literary Brahmachārya and the despisers of it quote them strategically to substantiate their point. The

erotic behaviour of Hara and Gauri in Kalidasa's Kumārsambhava, the illicit love between Dusyanta and Sakuntala in the hermitage of the preceptors in Śakuntalā, the sexual exuberance in Puspabana-Bilāsa, Śringāra-Tilaka, Śringār-Rasastakam - each a masterpiece of lyricism - have often been quoted to illustrate obscenity in the tradition and to display its responsiveness to modern realism. The same is interpreted by the Duritan critics to illustrate the spiritual preoccupation of the great poets. They would reason that in abounding his plays with erotic abundance, Kalidasa had only worshipped 'rasa' which is the other name of God. And rasa is such an achievement of art that it is free of any touch of human indulgence. Kalidasa extolled sex (i.e., the sexual instinct, here not the object involved) through artistic discipline to divine or spiritual delight. Dimbeswar Neog states that all charges of obscenity appears unsubstantial when one comprehends fully the line, "Kāmārtā hi prakṛti kṛpā oetanā<sup>at</sup> tenesu". To free the poet from the vice of indulgence in Śakuntalā he stresses on Sakuntala's victimisation of Dur<sup>v</sup>asa's curse.<sup>5</sup>

Some of our writers (minor writers) are seen to have been curious to establish a relation between the ancient mode of erotic treatment and the modern one, and in their attempt they prefer to the scientific basis<sup>6</sup> of Kalidas<sup>c</sup>'s treatment of

5. Dimbeswar Neog, "Sāhityat Asṭilatā Avāntar" and "Asamīyā Sāhitya and Sāhityikar Ādarsa" (two articles mentioned earlier).

6. Kalidasa and his contemporaries based their plays and poetry on Vātīyayana's Kāmasūtra which has been recognised as a scientific treatise on sex and marriage. Koka's Rati-rahasya, St. Nagarjun's Siddha Binodan, Kalyanamalla's Ananga-Ranga and many other treatises, religious and secular, had set the

sex, the abundance of physical eroticism, illicit love etc.

' It is, however, a long way from ancient Indian poetry to the modern fiction. The limitations of the classical Sanskrit poetry in comparison with those of the age of Shakespeare and of the great Greek poets (as pointed out by A. Berriedale Keith in his The Sanskrit Drama, Its Origin and Development, {Theory & Practice}) are many. Without going farther into the limitation we are content here to conclude that the classical age was not for specific reason suitable for psychological investigation of sex and other aspects of life. It was socially a life of 'hush' and individually one of agonising whisper. The poets with their preoccupation in rasa were towered too high to be in touch with the common soil. Modern realism falls far apart from rasa or spiritual sex. Rasa is a divine delight; modern sexual realism in its psychological level is a disease which infects and profanes the body and the mind.

This is, I think, the real explanation for the difference between old rasa and modern sexual realism. Kalidasa and his contemporaries could discipline sex through art and poetry; the moderns in their turn, make it appear obscene with their low and realistic prose.

Life in the middle ages was even more imbalanced. It impresses sometimes as one of exuberance and obscenity; sometimes

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rules of sex and marriage.

as one of uncomplaining endurance and even of renunciation in preparation of a peaceful death.

Eroticism in all its forms, physical, emotional and religious or mystical, abounds in medieval Indian literature and painting; but the question of obscenity was not raised, perhaps due to the fact that Sudras and women were sanctioned no place in them.

This is more or less the general trend of literature and arts in medieval India. Particular literatures merit particular treatment. What is applicable to the rest of India must not with equal warmth be applied to Assam or Assamese literature in the middle ages. Our conclusion that religious literature during the middle ages was characterised by a wilful renunciation of life in preparation of a peaceful death has been drawn in consideration of Assamese religious poetry, particularly that of Sankardeva and his followers. Vaisnavites poets in the other provinces of India wrote most erotic poetry, where it is hard to surmise whether the erotic hymn is for self-indulgence or for soul's salvation. All eroticism has in the opinion of Georges Balaille, a sacramental character.<sup>7</sup> But the eroticism of these poets is so fussy with physical and emotional violence that it can hardly be thought to have achieved spiritual quietism beyond everyday reality. Religious eroticism is concerned with the fusion of beings with a world

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7. Georges Balaille, *Eroticism*, trans. Mary Dalwood, p. 16.

beyond everyday reality. It is hard to go any farther along Balaille for fear of missing our point.<sup>8</sup> We have, therefore, limited our consideration of mysticism to the mystical experience linked with the positive search of God's love only, which is most characteristic of the religious works of Sankardeva and his devout disciple, Madhavdeva (The part of it, connected to the systematic "assenting to life up to the point of death"<sup>9</sup> as exemplified by Sankaracharya or in Buddhism is deemed without our range).

The poet in Sankardeva has, for both sets of our critics, been of grave concern. In his writing, poetry and preaching get so merged as to efface any possibility of marking out their separation. He wrote for edification and also for soul's enjoyment - religious preaching and real poetry in the one and the same writing, to the astonishment and misgiving of his worshippers and critics. The greatest of the Assamese Vaisnavite preachers was the greatest of our poets.

The Vaisnavite critics interpret his treatment of sex as subduer of desire and the modern realists, as arouser of it. The root of this confusion lies in the nature of his creative activity, which glows with rampant eroticism. The three plays, namely, Keli Gopāla, Rukminī-Harana and Rām Bijoya and the great Kīrtana Ghosā, particularly the Hara-Mohana section of

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8. Georges Balaille, *Eroticism*, trans. Mary Dalwood, pp. 18-23.

9. *Ibid.*

it have frequently been referred to by the critics either to illustrate the purity of sexual tradition or to display its responsiveness to modern realism.

Dr. Maheswar Neog and Dr. Satyendra Nath Sarma, have remarked upon the Hara-Mohana section of the Kirtan Ghosā, based on the Bhāgavata Purāna as one of the finest pieces of poetry in all Sankardeva's writings.<sup>10</sup> The picture of Mohini and the illusion of the garden where she appears to the infatuated Hara are all imagination, and shows what Sankardeva could do in the way of painting with the colour of erotic sentiment - Dr. Neog states. But at the end of the poem the poet warns against the dire illusion created by women. He concludes the poem with a clear hint at Sringara as purgatorial of the mind, i.e., subduer of the erotic tension.

Sankardeva's spiritual disposition here as well as in the plays is crystal clear. Sex has no place in his poetry in the ordinary human sense. This is further proved by his contempt for his contemporary poet, Pitambara who wanted to drag divine love into human indulgence.<sup>11</sup>

Pitambara's rejection of Sankardeva's 'bhakti' ideal is a significant step on to the platform of real life. Perhaps

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10. Dr. M. Neog, Sankardeva and His Times, Early History of the Vaisnav Faith and Movement in Assam, pp. 171-172, 198-199, 255. See also Dr. Sarma's The Epics and Puranas in early Assamese Literature, p. 167.

11. Sankardeva reproached Pitambara for making Rukmini lament like an ordinary human beloved the separation of Krishna in his Rukmini-Parinya Kavya.



in so doing the poet was following a 'Brahmachārya' more widely defused and more liberally accepted in the other provinces of India. As a matter of fact, all the Assamese Vaisnavite poets took in some form or other poetic liberty in the portrayal of characters' sentiment and setting of their Kavyas. Sankardeva's Rukminī-harana Kāvya is imaginative <sup>in</sup> details. Anantakandali's Kumār-Harana is too full of Usa<sup>1</sup> and Aniruddha's erotic sentiment in their union and separation to mark it all detached. Madhav Kandali's treatment of Krishna and Rāma in the different versions of the two epics is not balanced. In his poetic indulgence he sometimes drags the God of his devotion to an ordinary lover of woman. The scene of Rama's conjugal reaction in receipt of the news of exile has been referred to by Dr. Satyendra Nath Sarma as an instance of this deviation.<sup>12</sup> Rama laments and curses himself as an ordinary human being for not being able to enjoy Sita. And Sita's reply to her husband's reaction is so humanly or ordinarily dealt with that we have reason to fear if a modern realist would spare exploiting a situation like this in his convenience. Sita may in her morbid excitement be taken for close correspondent to Malik's Padma and Uma.

Again the unholy desires of Mantharā to seduce Bharata, successor of Rama in his absence, as a concubine in her superannuation (intended though for popular humour by the poet) may be picked up by a Freudian realist as a phenomenon of clinical observation.

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12. Dr. S.N. Sarma, *Epics and Purānas in Early Assamese Literature*, p. 29.

Sex has without doubt a dignified place in medieval Assamese poetry, for it is generally and almost always treated devotionally to a spiritual end. But there had also been poets like Pitāmbara who were up to set fire to the spiritual fortress for cravings as low as life itself. Sankardeva had to revolt against the debased practice of the Tāntrik, which continued undisturbed till his rise.<sup>13</sup> Assam is described here as a land of natural instinct, free from all rigours of self mortification. "Infinite variety of sexual relationships ... were in vogue among the Kirata people. The companionship of a woman is the prime requisite of a Vāmācāri devotee; when ... women are not available for love, they are procured by money or force."<sup>14</sup>

Sankardeva succeeded partially in compelling the Vāmācāri to abandon these practices. But the possibility that these will rise at a time in a different form was twinkling in the literary horizon. This is a substratum of life where men are men with their strength and weakness - at best Pitāmbara's and at worst, Vāmācāri's. They are without the region of the visionary preachers and inspired poets. Pitāmbara's poetry represents the lowest ebb of religious eroticism, and Sankardeva's, the highest flow of it. Sankardeva branded him an unvaisnavite for his human indulgence in divine love in the

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13. See for the sexual practice of the Tāntrik Kālikā Purāna and Yoginī Tantra as explained by Dr. Banikanta Kakati in his Mother Goddess Kāmākhya, pp. 47-48.

14. Ibid., p. 47.

way as a puritan critic brands a modern novelist a 'worshiper of sex'.

An observation of Assamese literature during the reign of the Āhom monarchs shows a different trend. With the adoption of the Śākta religion by the later Kings, and the development of the Śākta outlook on life, the influence of Vaisnavism declined. Books with the predominance of erotic sentiment with a decisive inclination towards human indulgence came to attract more and more attention. The Purānas are a rich store-house of love anecdotes. The Āhom monarchs encouraged poet and authors to render them into Assamese for their amusement. They made it a practice to engage scholars to read out to queens, princesses and high-born ladies popular Kāvya, love-romances and erotic śāstras. Even in the Jikir and Jari written in Assamese on the model of Sufi religious teachings, the original Sufi ideal was completely shorn off. In place of the soul's love and aspiration for God and its ultimate union with Him, the Assamese poets emphasised earthly and human love both in union and separation. "Naturally, in the Assamese Kāvya erotic tendencies predominated, and they are replete with passages describing intimately every feminine charm and treating of love dalliances with an easy frankness."<sup>15</sup>

Thus we notice a decisive change in the sexual tradition in Assamese literature during the reign of the Ahom

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15. Dr. Birinchi Kumar Barua, History of Assamese Literature, p. 94.

monarchs. The life of poverty, austerity, sincerity and repression that the Vaisnavite were accustomed to live passed away; and that of pomposity and artificiality began. To quote Dr. Birinchi Kumar Barua, "a notable distinction between the Vaisnavite and the Āhom period is that whilst in the former the spirit divine was the subject of literary treatment, in the latter man is the centre of literature. Literature now ceases to be other-worldly and idealistic. The shift is towards realism, Even in poem and romances, men and women of the common work-a-day-world now engage the poet's attention."<sup>16</sup>

Now, from where we are, we have, a few steps to pace towards where we are bound. It is not a very long way from romance to fictional realism.

Modern Assamese fiction, long and short, has no trace in it of any direct bearing or borrowing from antiquity. It grew under the influence of the west in the period culminating in the first World War, and it differs widely from the old Assamese stories, tales, myths, fables, parables and anecdotes in both matter and technique. A novel by which we mean "the long story of contemporary life and manners"<sup>17</sup> is a new form of literary art which offers the writer a fresh field to work independently. It is democratic in its free treatment of the characters and doings of all sorts and conditions of middle-class and low-life.<sup>18</sup> It was not so with our old epics, with

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16. Dr. Birinchi Kumar Barua, History of Assamese Literature, p. 80.

17. William Henry Hudson, An Outline History of English Literature, p. 70.

18. Ibid, p. 149.

the romantic plays of Kalidasa and his contemporaries and the religious plays of Śankardeva and even with the romances of the Āhom period. The characters in the epics and the dramas are supernatural beings who enjoy love and perform their activities with men below as dutiful but uncritical audience. The romances though not as are the epics and dramas, other worldly and idealistic are almost consistently aristocratic in their range of interest.

Our historical novels of Rajani Kanta Bardoloi do not differ much from the romances. These are old in a sense, the treatment of sex in them has been very idealistic. These novels written under the influence of the English Scott are not strictly historical with historical events and characters, but are romantic stories with an historical background. Bardoloi has great reverence for the past and for Assam's cultural and literary heritage and was always inspired by lofty idealism, particularly in the delineation of female characters. His women, namely, Manomati, Rangili, Rahdai Ligiri, Aghoni etc. are all 'satis', noted for their sexual restraint, pure "love, fidelity, tenderness, mental resourcefulness, resolution and extraordinary courage" in the face of heavy odds.<sup>19</sup> In the depiction of some of them he seems to have been inspired by the ideal of 'rasa' in his concentration in the extollation of the instinct for the purpose of elevating the object (the woman involved). Dr. Birinchi Kumar Barua states : "The good and

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19. Dr. Birinchi Kumar Barua, History of Assamese Literature, p. 170.

distinguished lady Rangili has her earthly love, but this love is gradually sublimated to divine love."<sup>20</sup> The union between Dhaneswar and Aghoni in the novel, *Tāmeswari Mandir*, which is crossed mostly among other factors by the Tāntricism of the temple itself is "finally effected by the victory of Vaisnavism over it - "of all embracing love over blind ritual."<sup>21</sup> When tyranny becomes oppressive, Rahdai takes to yoga and thereby not only saves herself but also changes the mind of Dayaram" (her lover).<sup>22</sup> Nirmal Bhakat does not despair of life. He becomes a Vaisnavite devotee and spends the rest of his life in religious peace, whereby, according to the Upanishadic Seer, "what has not been heard of becomes heard of, what has not been thought of becomes thought of, what has not been understood becomes understood."<sup>23</sup>

The historical novels of Bardoloi have a number of phenomena of classic sublimation, but hard to conclude whether these are the result of a psychological supplement or that of his genuine or unmixed devotion for the values of antiquity.

In the rest of our pre-war fictions the treatment of sex and other aspects of life is realistic, though not psycho-analytic in the way a novel written under the impact of Freudian

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20. Dr. Birinchi Kumar Barua, *History of Assamese Literature*, p. 169.

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Ibid.*

psychology is psycho-analytic. A psycho-analytic novel is distinguished from an ordinary realistic novel by its attention to details, to the investigation of the vital relationships between man and woman, of motives, feelings and all the phenomena of the inner life of characters. It is free of the illusion of chastity, divine delight (rasa) and moral peace (bhakti) in the exploration of life.

This process of investigation has indeed been very exacting. Life has lost in consequence, its poetry and the illusory notion of its perfection, i.e., its link to a life beyond life. But we have with it come down to life as it is, realised the importance of sex in it. The deviation has taught us to experience what we were accustomed to adore, to assess in prose, medium of our speech, what we idealised in poetry, medium of our prayer.

## Chapter VI

### TREATMENT OF SEX AND OTHER ASPECTS OF FREUDIAN PSYCHOLOGY IN POST-WAR ASSAMESE FICTION

Freudianism started in our fiction by wiping out the common trust in God or religion and in the romantic approach to love. The novel which first strikes the note of this unkempt, ungodly realism is *Jivanār Bātat*. It is a much more systematic and sophisticated study of the mental problem than a popular Freudian fiction, which is hardly more than a mere abundance of sex and aberrations. Here is, for the first time, an unflinching attempt to realise the importance of sex in the development of man's personality. The novel implies through its digressions and details that sex is the very source of our being, of our "satisfaction and self-realisation, and also of our anxiety and self-devaluation". It considers that man's motives, his tensions, phantasy, morbidity, conflicts and complexes proceed from his libidinal frustrations in some form or other. It bases itself on the psychological finding that the truth of life is to be sought in the intimate relationship rather than in the social pageant. Sigmund Freud discovers that there are three sources of man's suffering - the body, the external world and in the main his relations with other men.<sup>1</sup> The happiness of married life depends on the fidelity to one's spouse. Abstinence from sexual relation, prior to marriage and

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1. M.W. *Civilisation and its Discontents*, pp. 772, 776.



from adultery after marriage are, according to our traditional mores, the conditions of happiness in married life. But though none of us are averse to the traditional pattern of love-life, our married life has practically been anomalous for causes unknown ordinarily to us. The psycho-analyst's job is, according to Freud to discover how people become ill, how they take up the characteristic neurotic attitude towards life and finally, how they develop the morbid symptoms under the stress of the mental dynamics or forces. In brief, the psycho-analyst transfers all that is unconscious in the person's mind to his or her consciousness, filling up the amnesic gaps in the memory.<sup>2</sup>

Birinohi Kumar Barua (author of the novel) achieves no less than what a psycho-analyst does in the investigation of the old widow's libidinal problem in the novel, inspite of his artistic preoccupation as a novelist. The old mother's unconscious attachment to her only son before his marriage, and her pathological hatred towards him after the intrusion of his wife into her love-life forms a libidinal problem with Oedipal significance, which cannot be settled without the aid of psycho-analysis, i.e., without a proper cathexis of the woman's detached libidó.

One important discovery of Freud is that the libido of the neurotic is attached to no real object; it remains attached

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2. M.W. General Introduction to Psycho-analysis, p. 561.

to the symptoms which offer it the substitutive satisfaction, that is all it can obtain as things are. The task of the analyst consists in the task of loosening from its previous attachments, which are beyond the reach of the ego; and in making it serviceable to the ego.<sup>3</sup> In the solution of the old woman's problem through Kamalini, her grand daughter, the novelist has shown profound understanding of the problem of health.

B.K. Barua's second novel, *Seuji Patar Kapani* is even louder in the exposition of sex and its deviations. By sexual deviations, we mean here only the sexual behaviour which is opposed to the prevailing patterns sanctioned by law and social or traditional mores. The novel does not contain such deviations as rape, incest inversions or perversions which are detrimental to society, nor does it contain such abnormal behaviours as are inherently harmful to the individual and also to the society.

The inhabitants in the novel evince two types of behaviour. The males are drawn in their biological sequence. Their surrounding, their ideas, requirements are all natural. They are not subserviant to a social structure where marriage, chastity, religion, even humanism are of account in the regulation of man's instinctual requirements. Mr. Saimur's sole enjoyment is wine and women. Young Naresh loves Miss Sonia but does not care to marry her. The problems of

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3. M.W. General Introduction to Psycho-analysis, p. 634.

Mrs. Saimur and Miss Sonia have been made complicated by psychological factors imposed on them by sexual restrictions from within and without. Mrs. Saimur remains cloistered in her neurotic yearning for sexual gratification with Naresh who is not environed to satisfy her. Birth complex stands in the way of Miss Sonia's love with Naresh. She reacts by flying away from the garden for fear of continuing love and intercourse without marriage. Sonia's behaviour is a typical instance of 'neurotic avoidance'.

The novel ends with clear suggestions that "a love affair is not the same for a man as it is for a woman."<sup>4</sup> Women are so environed that they cannot conceive of love without relating it to marriage, which has been traditionally and even psychologically treated as the sublimation of love for pleasure and also for procreation.<sup>5</sup>

In *Asamāpikā* (The Infinite), a short story, Birinchi Kumar Barua portrays death as a force of annihilation in exactly the same way as indicated by Freud in his Thoughts on War and Death. "Man could no longer keep death at a distance" though "at bottom no one believes in his own death."<sup>6</sup>

Dinanath Sarma's *Dulāl* is on a par with *Asamāpikā* in the demonstration of death as a force of annihilation.

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4. *Women* (ed.), A.M. Krich, "The Unmarried" by Laura Hutton M.D., p. 207.

5. *Women* "On Love" by Oswald Schwarz M.D., p. 310.

6. M.W. *Thoughts on War and Death*, pp. 761, 763.

Sarna's Sānti, the heroine in the novel entitled after her name is a victim of frigidity. Her sexual illumination is achieved by employing a widow to demonstrate the psycho-analytic truth. "Women in whom sexual desire is slight may through repeated stimulations and experiences be made sexually powerful and easily aroused."<sup>7</sup> The elopement of the widow with her tutor, her father's sanction to their marriage are some of the events in the novel which bespeak the novelist's illumination and belief in the new knowledge which aims at emancipating or curing men and women from neurotic inhibitions, traditionally imposed. The young hero's struggle for self-assertion in Sangrām, another novel, is a psycho-analytic process of emancipating consciousness. Sangram's final achievement that living here satisfactorily or successfully means renouncing one's best self is just equivalent to the psycho-analytic discovery that "to live in accord with one's diamond ... is difficult but profoundly rewarding."<sup>8</sup>

In featuring Usa as passive and Binu as active in Usa, another novel, the novelist seems to stress on the bisexual nature of women as pointed out by Freud in "The Psychology of Women."<sup>9</sup> Bipin in this novel, torn in love for his beloved, and duty for his wife with the resulting 'incapacity of achievement' and 'emotional stupidity' is almost a clinical

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7. Men (ed.) A.M. Krich, "The Art of Love" by Kenneth Walker, p. 271.

8. Hallow May, Love and Will, p. 139.

9. M.W. New Introductory Lectures, Lecture 33, p. 854.

picture of neurotic depression. The impact of heredity and environment makes Arup in Śānti behave like a typical psycho-neurotic phenomenon, who can only be cured with the aid of an analytic treatment in a foreign land.

In three stories, namely, Prem (Love), Mamatār Prem (Love of Mamata) and Napungsaka (The Eunuch), Sarma investigates the pathological behaviour of some persons in love. For love of Jadav, Rupali personates herself a widow even when her husband, the magistrate, is alive, and dies of utter depression. Jadav achieves spiritual sublimation after her death. The widowed sister-in-law of Jadav serves him as a protective mother with "parental love" as Freud calls it.<sup>10</sup> Napungsaka is, on the other hand, the demonstration of a psycho-analytic process of a neurotic girl's libidinal emancipation into object love. In New Introductory Lectures, Freud writes that the development of the little girl into a normal woman is more difficult and more complicated than that of a boy into a normal man, for the girl requires a good deal of activity to achieve into a passive aim.<sup>11</sup> The story is just the realisation of what Havelock Ellis points out in "The Sexual Impulse and the Art of Love".<sup>12</sup> Gunawati's adjustment in the story entitled after her, - after her child birth, just demonstrates the psycho-analytic truth that for both husband and wife the birth

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10. M.W. On Narcissism, p. 406

11. M.W., pp. 854-855.

12. Women (ed.) A.M. Krich, p. 26 "Love is primarily narcissism ...".

of a child means reaching a new level of integration in personality. The experience helps the mother to overcome her insecurities and establish her motherliness with her first child as well."<sup>13</sup>

Most of Dinanath Sarma's women are instinctive, that is, drawn in their biological sequence, and remain unburdened by any psychological inhibition in their quest of sexual gratification. In depicting women, the fiction-writers seem inclined to their constitutional nature rather than to the environmental impact on them. Frustration of gratification creates no conflict in them as it does in those of Lakshmidhar Sarma, in his *Lalita*, for instance, but leads them to seek sexual gratification more vigorously elsewhere.

While one set of our critics rejects Malik's fictions for their sexual abundance, some of his admirers are disappointed to find him too shy to structure so immeral a phenomenon as Oedipus complex. He has been criticised for his moral pre-occupation, his 'shallow optimism' and also for his exposition of sex out of complaisance or by an unworthy submission to the wishes of the readers. Malik is not of course, so finely gifted to details of human experience as Rama Das, so bold in the exposition of sex as Jogesh Das and Padma Barkataki, so voracious for philosophical and psychological digressions of truth as Homen Bargohain. Malik's anti-Freudian bias is evident in some

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13. Women "Some Problems of Motherhood" by Therese Renedak, p. 187.

of his fictions. In Tribenīr Swapna, he indicates that Freudianism singly or any branch of psychology is inadequate to study human nature. In the treatment of the father-son relationship between Suryaprakash and Ananda in Rajani Gandhār Cakulo, he seems neurotic in handling the id-land of Ananda's mind to an oedipal prairie. A little more courage or insight into the problem of the mind would have filled his fictions with abnormal persons - psycho-neurotic, psychotic and what not?

Malik is not vainly psychological, but it is wrong to suppose that his experiences are not supplanted with the aid of depth psychology. The frequent use of conflict and complexes, his digressions on women in particular are sufficient to prove his acquaintance with the writings, not only of Freud but also with those of Adler and Jung, his followers.

The father-son-relationship in Suruj Mukhīr Swapna and Rajani Gandhār Cakulo are certainly indicative of the Oedipus pattern. "It is not really a decisive matter whether one has killed one's father or abstained from the deed; one must feel guilty in either case, for guilt is the expression of the conflict of ambivalence, the emotional struggle between Eros and the destructive death-instincts ... " writes Freud in Civilisation and its Discontents.<sup>14</sup>

In Agharī Ātmār Kāhini Malik realises one of Freud's fundamental discoveries, most humiliating to civilisation that

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14. M.W., p. 796.

the ego of each one of us is not even master in his own house.<sup>15</sup> Sasanka's realisation in the novel that 'we are all Beduins' is indicative that all the characters suffer from "an impoverishment of the ego ... due to the injury sustained by the ego through sexual trends which are no longer subject to control."<sup>16</sup> The neurotic frigidity of Mrs. Barua and perversion of her husband in *Prācīr āru Prāntar* is just the demonstration of Freud's discovery that the neurosis is, so to say, the negative of the perversion.<sup>17</sup> Sexual frigidity produces domestic infidelity, suffering to the wife and disappointment to the husband who is tempted to seek more congenial relationship elsewhere. In such cases, there is rather defective desire for sexual union or defective pleasure in union and commonly both and either may call for the exercise of art in love."<sup>18</sup>

In one of his stories, namely, *Daukhīyā Sāp Malik* studies the secret of a multiple personality in just the way as pointed out by Freud that "the secret of the cases of so-called multiple personality is that the various identifications seize possession of consciousness in turn ... ." <sup>19</sup> In two stories, namely, *Jīśukhrīstar Cabi* (The Portrait of Jesus) and *Maram* (Affection) Malik realises the Freudian truth of "cruelty turning into pity".

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15. M.W. General Introduction to Psycho-analysis, p. 562.

16. M.W. The Ego and the Id, p. 409.

17. B.W. Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex, p. 575.

18. Women, "The Sexual Impulse and the Art of Love by Havelock Ellis, p. 54.

19. M.W. The Ego and the Id, p. 704.



The three artists in the three stories, namely, Tribenīr Swapna, Mahi Māstar and Kahitār Nām Lāvā have been created and developed in the light of Freud's discovery that "art affects us but as a mild narcotic and can provide no more than a temporary refuge for us from the hardships of life; its influence is not strong enough to make us forget real misery."<sup>20</sup> Malik's Bibhatsa Bedanā, the most exoriated of his stories is a dumb-founding projection of a troubled ego in confrontation with a head strong impulsive id. His Gahwar has two incestuous primitive creatures (father and daughter) and a neurotic young son, unable to check them and even to commit suicide.

Most of Malik's persons are featured as elemental, as Tagar in Rajanī Gandhār Cakulo. A few of them, like Parijat are aggressive. His Ananda, Tara are introverted. Some of his women are seen to have turned psycho-neurotic for their husbands being impotent. Gratifications of the biological urge for motherhood only lead a woman in his fiction to neurotic aggravation. "The gratification of instincts is happiness but when the outer world lets us starve, refuses us satisfaction of our needs, they become the cause of very great suffering", writes Freud in his Civilisation and its Discontents.<sup>21</sup> Malik's Sonālī Sutāre Bandhā (Tied to a Golden Thread) is a memorable realisation of this truth. Exaggerated love for her husband and affection for the child (she got through Dr. Kakati) whom

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20. M.W. Civilisation and Its Discontents, p. 774.

21. M.W., p. 775.

she actually hates are characteristic of this suffering.

In one short story entitled *Ward No Dui* (Ward No. 2) Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya makes almost a clinical study of a psycho-neurotic phenomenon, and pleads for the application of depth psychology in all practical aspects of modern life. In his *Iyāruingan*, the best of his novels, perhaps, Shri Bhattacharya virtually accepts the truth of depth psychology in the characterisation of the two women, namely, Charengla and Khutingla in their love for one man as pointed out by Freud in "The Psychology of Women".<sup>22</sup>

The influence of psycho-analysis is well-apparent in all his fictions, long and short; but the psychological interest is always subservient to his sociological interest. His first novel, *Rājpathē Ringiyāi* was written under the influence of Joyce's *Ulysses*, but psychological interest is here limited to the setting only. The characters except Mohan are drawn by way of reference. Even Mohan is a flat character. Political or sociological patterning of Mohan has left no scope for the emancipation of his individual instincts. In *Rangā Megh* (Red Clouds), abnormal behaviours are referred to in digression, and are characteristic only of some minor characters. Gunawati is referred to as a nymphomaniac girl, - victim of organic neurosis of a psychological origin.<sup>23</sup> The eldest daughter of Mr. Choudhury can be recognised as a victim of

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22. M.W. New Introductory Lectures, Lecture 33, p. 863.

23. Otto Fenichel, *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis*. See pp. 242-244.

anxiety hysteria, - one who develops a phobia of having sick child by sexual contact with her husband, who is suspected a victim of diabetes. Priyaram is obsessed by an awful feeling of beating his addicted son to death exactly in the way as pointed out by Freud in General Introduction to Psychoanalysis.<sup>24</sup>

Kachenmati chooses Ananda, her husband as the prototype of her father, certainly in demonstration of Freud's discovery that "the girl remains in the Oedipus situation for an indefinite period; she only abandons it late in life, and then incompletely."<sup>25</sup> There is, of course, nothing neurotic or pathological about her behaviour, as there is in the Oedipal behaviour of Anath in Shri Bhattacharya's *Cināki Suti*, another important novel.

The subject of *Cināki Suti* is love or an experiment on the sociologisation of love as the novelist expresses it towards the end of the novel, which finally concludes marriage as the most satisfactory possession that a woman can adopt, and fidelity of the husband and the wife as the only basis of a happy marriage. "Sex has this same everlasting groping, this quenchless craving, this restless turning to the future. At last marriage can soften the discord of conflicting motives and tone down the aggressiveness of adolescent expectation."<sup>26</sup>

All the characters in the novel are featured as psycho-neurotic, who seek happiness positively or negatively, but are

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24. M.W. "Seventeenth Lecture", p. 551.

25. M.W. *New Introductory Lectures*, Lecture 33, p. 861.

26. Men, "Sex Psychology of the Unmarried Adult" by Ernest R. Groves, pp. 192-193.

unable to enjoy love, what with their inherent inadequacy and what with their psychological or to be more specific, neurotic inhibition. Only Aparna is made to achieve a spiritual sublimation.

The psychological digressions in *Pratipad*, another important novel, are full of references to grave phenomenal behaviour of men and women. Mashiruddin explains two types of lovers in persuading Ismail to marry Jebunishwa, - extrovert and introvert. Miss Mcerson is referred to as a nymphomaniac woman. One Farguson is stated to have turned suddenly neurotic in the discovery of his wife's Siphillis. He also relates the story of a jealous husband who leads his wife to suffer hallucinatory hysteria through the merciless behaviour towards her lover. The Scottish soldier in the novel is victim of a metaphysical terror of being alone, in defense of which he resorts to wine and women. The other soldier (Taoler) is also a hysterical phenomenon trying to avoid the fear of having a sudden telephone call for war.<sup>27</sup>

In *Sataghni*, Bhattacharya demonstrates in the characterisation of his persons the impact of heredity and environment. The novel has one woman for two men, who are brothers as against the two women for one man in his *Iyaruigam*. Hypertensions are characteristic of the situation in the way as implied in "Hypertensions are characteristic of an extreme unconscious instinct-tension; a general readiness to

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27. See for explanation General Introduction to Psychoanalysis, pp. 551, 572 (Seventeenth Lecture).

aggressiveness as well as a passive receptive longing to get rid of the aggressiveness."<sup>28</sup>

Chattacharya's attitude towards life, love and marriage as expressed through the heroes and heroines of his fictions is Freudian, i.e., free of illusion and superstition. Apurva and Dimbeswar are upholders of a no-god-philosophy; who plead for a scientific regulation of human relationship. The aid of psychology and sociology or 'applied psychology' as Freud calls it, is essential in determining the relationship between man and woman. Divorce is not a taboo in case, the relationship does wane in warmth. It is not manly to renounce sex, love, affection and even irritation (Pratipad, p. 40).

All the novels of Jogesh Das start as a process of disillusionment. Destiny places the heroes and the heroines in a position where their disillusionment becomes possible in a state of psychio 'daming up'. This is true of Sikha in Jonākīr Jui in the same way as it is of Krisna Ram Kalita in Kācak Lāgi.

The process ricurs in another novel, namely Naresh, Mālati āru. Some psychological aspects in operation in it, are rationalisation, inhibition, slips of the tongue, ordinary but apocalyptic accidents.

The most profusely psychological of Shri Das's novels are Nirupāya and Satadal, and his stories, Paradāresu, Aparadh

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28. The Yearbook of Psychoanalysis, Vol. 2 (ed.) Sandor Lorand, Imago Publishing Co. Ltd., 1946, p. 41.

and Hrdaynāthar Samasyā (Problem of the Heart).

Jogesh Das shows unmixed belief in heredity and environment as the sole factors, responsible for the development of human personality. His Kamala, Bimala, Bikash, Lalita, Palash, Pranati, Trisna, Krisna, Maresh, Jetuki and Satadal are all creatures of environment; some few of them, of both environment and heredity. The conflicts and complexes are the results of the anomalies in their familial atmosphere.

All the women in Shri Das's fictions are instinctive with pre-marriage sexual experiences. But sexual intercourses enjoyed prior to marriage do not stand in the way of enjoying their love-life after marriage. This does not create any psychosexual frigidity in them. Instead, they enjoy unconscious gratification in their nocturnal recollection. With greater maturity they come under the dominance of the reality principle. But the transition is not marked by any moral conflict, by any feeling of guilt, shame or anxiety. A few women and most men in his fictions suffer from diverse neurotic 'affections' for anomalies in their love-life. His fictions have rarely a person who suffers from the gravest form of abnormality, such as melancholia, mania, paranoia or dementia-precoc. The neurotic persons in his fictions are rarely disconnected from reality.

Padma Barkataki's psycho-analytic novels with phenomenal behaviour of persons (which we leave here for discussion in the chapter to follow) are Dusmantar Cumā, Najalā Dhupar Itikathā and Eti Khan Māgo Mai. The fundamental aspects

of depth psychology developed in them are father-fixation, guilt-complex and repression respectively. His *Natun Pratiti* (A New Truth) centres round heredity as "the fate of our present day existence". In *Dārsanik* (The Philosopher) a short story, included in the collection entitled *Aślil*, Shri Barkataki demonstrates the limitation of philosophy in the solution of the problem of the heart in just the same spirit as in Freud's remark on the philosopher : "The benighted traveller may sing aloud in the dark to deny his own fears, but for all that, he will not see an inch further beyond his nose."<sup>29</sup>

One of our most successful fiction-writers in the analysis of psychological motivations in faultless art is Chandra Prasad Saikiya. His *Edin* and *Suryasnān* (The Sun-bath) are two stream of consciousness novellas. Dr. Satyendra Nath Sarma calls his *Meghamallār* (Music from the Clouds) a unique attempt at revelation of the mind.<sup>30</sup> In it Shri Saikiya treats revenge as "a special type of the old magical undoing", of "frustrating or humiliation based on an identification with the aggressor". The novelist gives up an ethical conclusion in it for an analytical purpose as he has renounced sensationalism in preference for psycho-analytic investigation of the complexity of urban life in *Mandākrāntā*, the most modern of his novels. In his *Yātra*, a short story, he demonstrates an obsessional phenomenon perhaps in imitation of Robert Shaw's

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29. M.W. Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety, p. 722.

30. Dr. S.N. Sarma, *Asamīyā Upanyāsar Gatidhārā*, p. 137.

(1961) *The Sun Doctor*. His *Rekhā* studies the Oedipus problem of an only son. His *Eikyatān* (The Concert) takes three women to demonstrate the bisexual disposition of human nature. The subject of investigation in *E Bhava Gahana Bana* (This World, a Grave Forest) is the pathology of hysteria.

The men and women who inhabit the fictions of Malik, Biren Bhattacharya, Chandra Prasad Saikiya, Jogesh Das and even of Padma Barkataki are more or less familiar to us even if not friendly always. We, however, feel shy or uneasy in the company of Homen Bargoain's persons, because they are not men and women, as conceived by our tradition, religion and even humanism. They are "a new species of the natural man, dovetailed into a biological sequence and a social structure" - "a thinking animal" as featured by Edwin Muir.<sup>31</sup> They are at the worst our id, the unfriendly self, the chaotic, primitive self.

The picture of the new world is given in the short story, *Narakat Basanta*. Manimala and Joy are inhabitants of this world. Society, civilisation and the delicate human relationships count little for them. Here is man, founded on his "elemental instincts, neither good nor bad in themselves" - "instincts aiming at satisfaction of certain primal needs", e.g. selfishness and cruelty.<sup>32</sup> The natural young men as portrayed in *Yauvan* (Youth), another short story, are determined to

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31. Edwin Muir, *Essays on Literature and Society*, p. 151.

32. Walter Hollitscher, *Sigmund Freud, An Introduction* (1947), p. 77.



finish life before it naturally comes to an end. In Sambodhan (The Relative) Shri Bargohain studies the sexual behaviour of an uneducated, unmarried woman in reaction, active and passive against a rape accomplished by her brother-in-law on her. The neurosis of the woman is evident in her objective reflection on the elemental instincts, like sex, hunger and sleep and in her subjective inability to accept them easily on account of social disapproval. Lalita is the prototype of the new spiritual person, 'grafted' as he or she is (featured by Edwin Muir) "on the natural man", whose "co-existence with the old implies a moral struggle" - "a struggle which determines in all sorts of ways his struggle to adapt himself to society or society to himself."<sup>33</sup>

The natural man appears in a more complicated form in Jīyāi Thakār Yukti (Why to live) where he is educated but sick, for he finds no meaning in life. He is sexually impotent, even when he is not physically inadequate. His suffering proceeds from the <sup>u</sup>serfeit rather than from starvation of sex. Marriage means for him a loss of variety, and love is only a prelude to a monotonous pattern of life for procreation which involves responsibility he is unable to shoulder. He also shows other difficulties in the course of the psycho-sexual development, he was unable to surmount successfully and has, as a result developed fear of marriage - of normal sexuality in general.

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33. E. Muir, *Essays on Literature and Society*, p. 153.

In this and many other fictions Shri Bargohain deals with problems of love, sex and marriage. "Sex for many people has become meaningless as it is more available, and love has seemed tremendously elusive if not an outright illusion", writes Rollo May in his book, Love and Will.<sup>34</sup> In *Mahāswetār Bīyā* Bargohain concludes that what a woman needs is not love but marriage which is no more than a legalised prostitution. Occasionally he is seen to realise marriage as a sublimation of love in the way as Oswald Schwaab points out. Marriage absorbs love in the totality of the relationship of man and woman and thus endows it with permanency.<sup>35</sup> In *Cināki Gāon* and *Octopus*, love is a source of violence. The problem of love recurs in a more analytic way in *Pardā*. The story features three men in love of one beautiful woman, one of whom derives spiritual pleasure, one sexual pleasure and the third, narcissistic pleasure out of her accompaniment and accomplishments.

The problem of evil nowhere so gravely appears as in the fictions of Bargohain. Some of his persons are victims of evil and some, workers of it. Gopinath Mahanta in *Kuśīlav*, and Sanatan Sarma in *Hāladhīyā Carāye Bāodhān Khāya* are contrivers of evil. Rajeswar, Subala and Lalita are innocent preys of other men's evil.

Bargohain's attitude towards evil is both traditional and psychological. In the two novels just mentioned, evil is

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34. Rollo May, *Love and Will*, p. 14.

35. *Women*, "On Love", p. 310.

the product of economic forces or socio-political injustice, something created by man. Evil proceeds in *Timir Tīrtha* (The Dark Pilgrimage) as a political temptation and causes psychic disturbance.

But he also portrays a mysterious evil as distinguished from the traditional one issuing from the external world or the surrounding environment. This evil is inherent in the nature of man. The evil as portrayed in *Bob, the Negro Soldier*, is "the residual data of human nature." For *Bob* and *Haranath*, killing one woman after another is an instinctual gratification.

*Bargohain's Pitāputra, Epitāph, Sanātorium and Mahāswetar Biyā* portray oedipal evil, - evil that proceeds from the anomalies in man's intimate and interpersonal relationships. Evil here is not as dark and dreary as that in *Bob* or *Haranath*, it is luminous.

Women *Bargohain* has written a number of fictions to express modern man's feeling of alienation by means of dream, allegory, symbolism. His *Hātī* and *Silpa* are two symbolical patterns on the psychological antithesis between the old and the new generations, characteristic of the period of transition. His *Yauvan* demonstrates the impact of Sartre's godless existentialism on modern man's disintegration.

Sex and perversions occur in abundance in the fictions of *Gobinda Sarma*, one of our minor writers. Inversion, pedophilia and prostitution in *Dusita Subās* (The Adulterated Perfume), illegitimate pregnancy and abortion with their

resulting psychological disorders in Rātir Tāpasī (The Night-Hermit), delusional psychic alienation and suicide for love in Prithivī (The Earth), normal fetichism, masochistic phantasy, incestuous motivation, exhibitionism, voyurism in the novel, Pradyumna Tritatta.

Some of our fiction-writers who have distinguished themselves in the investigation of the normal aspects of the mind are Ehaben Saikiya, Mrs. Nirupama Bargohain and Sneha Devi.

The most subtly psycho-analytic short stories of Ehaben Saikiya are, I think, Daridra Kuber, Bārandā, Sendur, Dhorā Sāp, Antarāl, Gangā-Snān, Śringkhal and Suryodoya.

In Antaral Shri Saikiya evokes pity in a woman for a poor wife, her neighbour, in exactly the same way as pointed out by the psycho-analysts. Pity is, from the psycho-analytic view point, the other name of sadism. It is a trait connected with original sadism. Sometimes pity seems to be a sublimation, the sadism really being supplanted by it. The basic mechanism seems identification with the object of the original sadism.<sup>36</sup> In Daridra Kuber he expresses in its triangular pattern "the constitutional essence" of some persons through their sexual behaviour. The content of the story corresponds to what Freud says in his Origin and Development of Psychoanalysis.<sup>37</sup> In Ganga-Snan he studies a woman's behaviour in reaction to her guilt-complex and in Śringkhal, a widow's sexual behaviour in

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36. Otto Fenichel, *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis*, p.476.

37. M.W., p. 18.

reaction of a man's amorous approach. Saikiya's Suryoday is just the artistic reproduction of the psychological truth: "It is of no avail to try to deny the father's overflowing gratification if his new born child is a son, or to attempt to minimise the emotional adjustment that is necessary if it is a daughter."<sup>38</sup> In Durnām (Defamation) and Satkār, the stress is on the impact of heredity and environment. His Ākās (The Sky) and Lāj Lāge are memorable stories of action and reaction.

The three short stories of Sneha Devi, namely, Nirbhejāl (The Innocent), Anu-Sandhān (The Quest) and Bar-Mā (The Grandmother) have in each of them a reactional pattern, the reaction being evoked either by a situation as in the first or by a chance address as in the second, or by a chance question as in the third. "Is she really happy?", questions Bar-Mā within herself in reaction to a pressing remark from one of her grandsons that Bar-Mā is very happy. As she starts recollecting the events of her past life, she sees the white insect on the flower-petal being replaced by a dark, dreary one. The story moves on in a symbolic process of neurotic aggravation.

Mrs. Nirupama Bargohain has published a few novels and short stories, which are unique in the exploration of the subtleties of her persons' emotional problem. There is apparently no person in her fictions with such phenomenal behaviours as make him or her alienated from reality. Still, they are not the study of women's health (for her primary

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38. Men, "The Meaning of Fatherhood" by Theresa Benedak, p. 183.

concern is with women), but of their diseases. Hiren in *Bibarna* (Pale) is the eldest of her eight sisters with an unconscious feeling of guilt for not becoming a son. In *Mauna Ākās* she studies a father's heart that errs and aches for atonement. In *Kektācar Phul* (Flowers of the Cactus) a novel, she places three girls in an unusual situation, and studies their reactions. Feeling of loneliness and insecurity, of inferiority and guilt, characteristic of their behaviour have most aptly been expressed in the novel.

(A thorough survey of Assamese fictions published up to now, would certainly impress us that no aspect of the new knowledge has remained unutilised. But such a study would exhaust volumes. The subject of our thesis is the impact of Freudian psychology, not the analysis of it in our post-war fictions. Considering our limitation we have picked up the representative novels and short stories of some of our writers to show the impact, normal and phenomenal.)

## Chapter VII

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## Chapter VII

### CHARACTER-GROUPS IN THE LIGHT OF FREUDIAN PSYCHOLOGY

(As regards this chapter, I have a few remarks which I like to preface here instead of at the beginning of the thesis. It is in a sense, the continuation of the chapter that precedes, for the purpose of detailing the nature of some specific psychological phenomena, which I have simply mentioned or left unmentioned at all. Still, it merits to be called a new addition to the volume, inasmuch as it aims at specifying the different patterns of nervous disorders in their symptomatic resemblances and differences as featured in the fictions).

The most obviously psycho-analytic fictions in our literature are those, which devote themselves to the investigation of persons, maladjusted on account of their anomalies in the parental relationships. The psychic inadequacies consequent upon this relationship manifest themselves in the love and hate for their parents, or their reliance on and obedience to the parents for self-maintenance and preservation, which are in the interpretation of Freud the characteristic marks of the Oedipus complex, and which lie more or less at the root of all psycho-neuroses. The moral and mental development or expansion of the man check these dispositions by means of repression, from directly manifesting themselves. Psycho-analytic investigation, however, shows that the original tendencies may persist in crude form in the unconscious, and exert profound influences in person's mental life. They may, even after repression, indirectly come out in



dreams, fancies and other activities. In Freud's interpretation, the healthy man too is virtually a neurotic who is affected by the discharge of his unconscious in dreams. The difference between 'nervous health' and 'nervous illness' is that the former is capable of a sufficient degree of capacity for enjoyment and active achievement in life.<sup>1</sup>

The Oedipal significance in the mother-son-relationship, i.e., that between Dharani and his old widowed mother, with which our novel comes to be qualified as psycho-analytic has been discussed in some detail in the previous chapter. I leave the problem, simply adding for a better comprehension that the libidinal disposition of the poor widow is just alike to that of the neurotic girl and the hysterical young woman described by A.A. Brill in his Introduction to the Writings of Sigmund Freud.<sup>2</sup>

Father-fixation occurs in Dinanath Sarma's Napungsaka in the form of a strong masculinity complex as explained by Freud in New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis.<sup>3</sup> Maichena's search of a man, as prototype of her father underlies all her disappointment. The fiction starts as a process of Maichena's sexual enlightenment or as one of transforming a father-fixated girl into a normal woman, and the process makes

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1. M.W. General Introduction to Psycho-Analysis, p. 635.

2. B.W. Introduction, p. 17.

3. M.W. Lecture 33 entitled "The Psychology of Women", p. 861.

her experience the three types of anxiety as pointed out by Freud in his New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis.<sup>4</sup> The teasing approach of the amorous school boys directly or through love-letters becomes a source of objective anxiety to the egoistic girl. Her discovery of a lack of virility or manliness, she aspires after, in the husband of her father's choice is a defeat of her egoism which begets neurotic anxiety in her. Shame, hatred and disappointment are characteristic of this defeat. Her refuge at her father's house as a relief from the man she dislikes is accompanied by a moral anxiety. She becomes painfully aware of a feeling of guilt and also of the urges from the id. The arrival of the military friend of her brother, the sight of manliness in him resembling that of her father make her emotionally adequate for sexual surrender to him. Freud writes in his On Narcissism : "A strong egoism is a protection against disease, but in the last resort, we must begin to love in order that we may not fall ill, and must fall ill, in consequence of frustration, we cannot love."<sup>5</sup>

In *Sansanka* (Aghori Ātmār Kāhinī) and *Gulach* (Suruji Mukhīr Swapna) Malik portrays the hate aspect of the Oedipus complex. *Sasanka* is a sensitive or a neurotically predisposed young son of an M.L.A. Hatred for his father, and an unconscious feeling of guilt for this hatred have been very

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4. M.W. Lecture 32, p. 842.

5. M.W., p. 404.

aptly detailed in his behaviour.<sup>6</sup> The origin of this hatred is an accidental discovery of his father's illicit contact with Aparna's mother. This is intensified by his father's authoritative refusal to let him see Aparna one of whose eyes has been destroyed by his stone-throw in childhood. His last words bear the trace of a pathological obsession. The whole world appears to him a harbour of sin; his father, Aparna's mother, his brother and even himself, all subsist on sin (p.158). He remains the morbid observer of everybody's sin, powerless to save anybody, even himself.

In Gulach Malik features the negative form of the hate aspect of the Oedipus complex. Gulach severs all relationships with his father and leads an amoral life, but he cries bitterly at the death of his father.<sup>7</sup> The unconscious wish that his father should come to some harm has been repressed in him. The death of his father, therefore, afflicts him with an added or exaggerated anxiety. In Anand's (Rajani Gandhār Cakulo) attachment, the super-ego participates on the ego's side and incapacitates him to intrude in the Oedipal prairies of his id-land.

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6. M.W. Civilisation and its Discontents, p. 793 (see for explanation) Freud speaks of "the two sources for the feelings of guilt - that arising from the dread of authority, and the later one from the dread of the superego ... the superego."

7. In New Introductory Lectures (33) Freud writes that "the regular reaction of a neurotic to the death of some one intimately connected with him is to accuse himself of being the cause of the death", p. 858.

In Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya's *Kachenmati* (Rangā Megh) father-fixation is an identification,<sup>8</sup> which means for her an 'enrichment' and not an "impoverishment of the ego", characteristic of fascination or infatuation,<sup>9</sup> as is evident from her statement : "I have a mind - a self of my own. I know what is what, good or bad for me" (p. 98). Anath (Cināki Suti) is portrayed as to have grown in a typical Oedipal ambivalence, occasionally identifying with his amorous father, and then revolting with a feeling of guilt for that identification. His sexual impotence and ego-alienation are consequent upon a conflict of this nature. Identification with a prostitute mother, and an unconscious feeling of punishment for self are characteristic of Somer's (Dāinī) behaviour.<sup>10</sup> Somer used to carry a dah (a weapon, bigger than a knife, but less pointed than it); as he grew up he replaced it by a dagger. Now he styles himself as a 'Gunda' (raffian) and addicts heavily to wine and woman.

Gautam Barua's (*Nirūpāya*, *Nirūpāya*) idea of rescuing his dead mother from the oppression of his father, his behavioural distortion at the arrival of his sister as prototypical of his dead mother, whom his father had deprived of

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8. M.W. *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, p. 678.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 682-683.

10. In *Civilisation and its Discontents* Freud writes : "we cannot disregard the conclusion that man's sense of guilt has its origin in the Oedipus complex and was acquired when the father was killed by the association ... of guilt", p. 795.

his love and affection and his present hatred towards women in general, and for Chitrlekha in particular are all suggestive of a repression of incestuous fixation; of an unconscious begetting (i.e., 'process of cohabitating with her').<sup>11</sup>

Jogesh Das portrays Bikash (Paradāresu) in demonstration of the truth that many persons who have lost one of their parents early in childhood show signs of an oral fixation, and tend to establish along with their object-relationship proper, extensive identifications, that is, to incorporate their objects.<sup>12</sup> Young Bikash, motherless in childhood, obsessed by a painful feeling of belonging to none, establishes an affectionate relationship with Mrs. Baruani, who misconstrues this attachment as suggestive of sex. The situation comes to a head when one evening her sexual aggression is repulsed by his mother-yearning.

Palash's refusal to marry anyone of the two sisters (Koneo Nubuje) and his neurotic flight or avoidance of love for fear of an overprotective, authoritative father is suggestive of a repression of the Oedipus complex.

Fear of punishment at the hand of the jealous parents and unwillingness to cause injury or sorrow to these parents because of a genuine affection the two motives proceed from the

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11. Psychologically it is a "tendency to put himself in the place of his father, and fulfil in a symbolic manner his incestuous desire."

12. Otto Fenichel, *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis*, p. 394.

repression of the Oedipus complex.<sup>13</sup>

The rescue phantasy occurs in a pathological form (in Hridaynāthar Samasyā) in the person of Lalita. Situations corresponding to this have been analysed by Karl A. Menninger M.D. in his article, "Impotence and Frigidity"<sup>14</sup> and demonstrated by Paul Heyse in his short story. The Fury, referred to earlier.

In the characterisation of Bikash (Rekhā) Chandra Prasad Saikiya seems to demonstrate that an only child has the most intense Oedipus complex, and is, therefore, in the greatest danger of not adjusting adequately.<sup>15</sup>

Two memorable Oedipal phenomena are Manohar (Stabdha Brindāvan) and Pranab (Jananīr Sandhānat Ejan Dekā Mānuh). Manohar evinces the elements of positive gratification of the fixation on the parent of the opposite sex. Pranab's search of the mother corresponds to that of Dan Joan.<sup>16</sup> Pranab lost his mother while he was four; searched her while he was a boy in any grandmothers and stepmothers as he says. As a young man he searched her in marriageable girls. But he feels he has failed in the pursuit now as he did before. Disappointment is characteristic of this search, because the object is to be

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13. J.C. Flugel, The Psychoanalytic Study of the Family (The Hogarth Press Ltd.), p. 209.

14. Men, p. 109.

15. Otto Fenichel, The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis, p.514.

16. Walter Hollitscher, Sigmund Freud, An Introduction, p. 243.

Dan Joan's Oedipal complex is of a particular kind. It is dominated by the pregenital incorporation, pervaded

found nowhere but in the distorted and idealised memories.

The identification, however, has taken place at a time when his ego has been split up or has been subject to instinctual vicissitudes. Still, the search underlies Pranab's inability to find lasting satisfaction in any individual of the opposite sex. This is one kind of Dan Joanism.<sup>17</sup>

Assamese psycho-analytic fictions seem to remain content in demonstrating the impact of the simple Oedipus complex on man and woman, and particularly on the former, which is marked according to Freud by "an ambivalent attitude to the father and an object-relation of a purely affectionate kind to the mother."<sup>18</sup> This is applicable even to the monotonous series of Oedipal phenomena in the fictions of Homen Bargohain. The Oedipus problem is, however, various and very intricate. Freud speaks of "the triangular character" of the Oedipus situation, which in addition takes the constitutional bisexuality of each individual as its content.<sup>19</sup> The intricacy of the problem reveals itself in the more complete Oedipus complex, "which is two-fold, positive and negative, and is due to the bisexuality originally present in children."<sup>20</sup> The neurotics generally,

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by narcissistic needs and tinged with sadistic impulses.

17. J.C. Flugel, *The Psycho-analytic Study of the Family*, pp. 48-58.

18. M.W. *The Ego and the Id*, p. 705.

19. *Ibid.*

20. *Ibid.*

though not always, display "the complete type with one or other of its constituents preponderating",<sup>21</sup> although fictions in its classic or systematic demonstration is rare in our literature.

A psycho-analytic fiction does not limit its study or investigation to one complex only. Though Freud holds the Oedipus complex as the root of most neuroses, his psycho-analytic literature is replete with analysis and observations of a many more complexes, which condition neuroses in man, and exert their action in his unconsciousness.

The most attractive man in our fiction experiencing the psychological impact of bastardism is Manik (Aparādh). Jogesh Das creates him as one who is born, as he says, neither as a Hindu nor as a Muslim; and more pathetically enough he is not environed to become a man (p. 13). The story has prettily detailed the significance of the unconscious in his behaviour. It indicates that Manik's involvement into the criminal career proceeds from a compulsive need for punishment. But one thing worth noting in his behaviour is that he has no sexual impotence and that he has seduced none during his criminal career.

Three very interesting women experiencing the problem are Sonia (Seujī Pātar Kapāni), Chaya (Āghorī Ātmār Kāhini) and Surabhi Dutta (Kālahirā). In her pathogenic disposition Chaya sings aloud, reads for hours together in a closed room and gets rid of tension only by committing suicide. Love of

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21. M.W. The Ego and the Id, p. 706.



loneliness, a never-to-marry-decision, hatred to live in other man's pity are the behavioural displacements of Surabhi, consequent upon her psychic preoccupation in a mysterious birth. Hatred towards her mother, an exaggerated love or pity for Banawali Dutta, who adopted her are essential part of the environment under which she was made to grow up at home. The determinant of her present psychic restlessness is a painful feeling of belonging to none. Birth complex captures the whole life and future of Sonia. Behind her general behavioural inhibition, her avoidance of love, there lies an intense awareness that she has no parents, - an obsession which will last all life wherever she lives, - here in the garden with Naresh, her lover or elsewhere in his absence.

Bastardism leads Uttara (Trisūl) to schizophrenic hallucination. Dhruwajyoti Dwara (Emuthi Tarār Jilimili) meets the same fate. Utpal (Meghamallār) resorts to sexual violence in revenge; Krisna Gosain addicts to wine and aloofness to avoid being in pity.

The problem of bastardism has also been touched by Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya in his Pratipad and Śataghni. He deals more intensively with it in Ballawī, where we get three bastards.

Persons suffering from defense-neuro-psychoses are numerous in our fictions: This group consists mostly of the phenomena of obsessional neurosis, and hysteria, the two forms of neurotic diseases upon the study of which psycho-analysis

was first built up and in the treatment of which also "our therapy celebrates its triumph". Freud distinguishes the obsessional neurosis from hysteria thus : "it is (the former) not so noisily ostentatious, behaves more, as if, it were a private affair of the patients, dispenses almost entirely with bodily manifestations and creates all its symptoms in the mental spheres."<sup>22</sup> A feeling of guilt is characteristic of the patient. Feelings of guilt are, of course, part of every neurotic behaviour. Karavi's guilt-feeling in Nilima Sarma's *Nārī Muktir Ka Kha* (The ABC of Women's Emancipation) proceeds from the defeat of her egoistic choice of a husband, contrary to the advice of her mother. She is now obsessed by a metaphysical terror of being haunted by her mother's spirit. The eldest of the seven sisters may find (as we have already pointed out) reason for her guilt for not becoming a son.

The feeling of guilt has for some patients a basis in reality as in the case of Kamana in Devidas Neog's *Phalgu* (The Subterranean stream at Gayā shrine) but for some it has no basis in reality as in the case of Kuntala's mother. Both are phenomena of hysteria. Kamana is a phenomenon of dissociative reaction and repression. She looks normal. In some dissociative reaction, says Coleman, the patient appears quite normal, and is able to engage in complex activities, but in some of them, the stress becomes intolerable.<sup>23</sup> In severe

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22. M.W. General Introduction, p. 551.

23. James C. Coleman, *Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life*, p. 213.

reaction against a trauma (i.e., the forceful coitus performed by her tutor, {Bipul} on her while she was a virgin) Kamana develops amnesia. While the step-child severs the strings of her violin, she reacts by protecting it from beating by herself and also by her husband, thus internalising or introjecting its guilt on herself.<sup>24</sup> Reading the letter left by the unknown Bipul (for, she cannot remember him) she reacts by a fit of fainting, perhaps in remembrance of the virginal trauma and in fright of its possible recurrence.

The story demonstrates the truth of Freud's discovery that the specific determination of hysteria is sexual passivity in pre-sexual period.<sup>25</sup>

An unconscious feeling of guilt is characteristic of the prostitute's behaviour in Imran Shwa's *Sikhār Minati* (The Flame in Prayer). "But I want no money from you, you are so aggressive!" she says.

Aggression is the only condition under which she is psychically able to enjoy being sexed. Her position is just the same as the woman described by Karl A. Menninger in his article "Impotence and Frigidity".<sup>26</sup> The wish for being aggressed is a punishment she unconsciously wishes for her sin.

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24. M.W. *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*. See p. 747 for explanation of the conflict of ambivalence in hysteria.

25. M.W. *Selected Papers on Hysteria*, p. 97.

26. *Men*, p. 106.

Basavi's frank acceptance of Mr. Chopra as her sexual partner in reaction of her husband's sexual indifference in Nām Rākhilo Bāsavi (She was named Basavi) carries the trace of an unconscious feeling of guilt. Her behaviour is just the realisation of the psycho-analytic truth that "any thwarted instinctual gratification results in a heightening of the sense of guilt or may do so."<sup>27</sup>

In Kumar Kishore's Kinkinīr Kalanka (Stain in the Kinkinī, a musical instrument) Mauohumi Kakati scratches her eyes in dream with the iron sticks attached to her hair. On analytic treatment it is revealed that before her marriage she had striken young Santanu at his eyes when he rejected her marriage proposal on grounds of property. A severe feeling of guilt and a wish for punishment being repressed sought release in her dream by actually hurting herself. The punishment comes from the super-ego for her aggressiveness, which has been internalised.<sup>28</sup>

Bipul Kakati's delusional state, consequent upon his beloved's insult in Herowā Digantar Māyā (Illusion of the Lost Horizon) displays just the same behaviour as that of Henry in Theodore Dreiser's Sister Carrie. First he felt "the subtleties of illusion" in anxiety expectation of her return and then turned into actual hallucination."<sup>29</sup>

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27. M.W. Civilisation and its Discontents, pp. 797-798.

28. M.W. New Introductory Lecture (32), p. 852.

29. The Great Short Stories of the World Spring Books (1964), p. 1049.

Kamal Bargohain's *Mai Eti Sāp* (I'm a Serpent) has a clinical phenomenon of melancholic obsession as featured by Freud in New Introductory Lectures.<sup>30</sup>

Three traumatic or hysterical phenomena drawn most successfully in realisation of Freud's discovery that the hysterical symptom is the memory symbol of certain affective (traumatic) impression and experiences" are Malabika in Chandra Prasad Saikiya's *E Bhava Gahana Bana*, Hemanta Choudhury in his *Yātrā* (Journey), Sangram in Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya's *Ward No Dui*. Hemanta Choudhury is indeed detailed in the story to correspond to "an instinct ridden character", i.e., an inconsistent or pathological father who makes generous presents one moment and takes them back in the next and makes promises that were not kept.<sup>31</sup>

Some memorable phenomena of ~~of~~ obsessional neurosis and hysteria are Chirala in Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya's *Chirālā āru Chinduin*, Birat Barua in Kirtinath Hazarika's *Aceton*, Munu in Upendra Goswami's *Māhī Āi*, the father and mother in Bhagawan Sarma's *Eikhan Kār Hāt* (Whose Hand is this?), Sujati and Bisalakshi in Nilima Sarma's *Sei Eti Din*, Bhagyawati in Bhaben Saikiya's *Praharī* (The Watch), Jyotirmai and Sonali in his *Daridra Kuber*, Malati and Lalitabala in Mrs. Bargohain's *Kektāsar Phul*, Janhawi and Animesh in Kumar Kishore's *Kawar āru Kankāl*, Swapan and Kunjan in his *Banyā Dhout Ba-Dwip*, Prahlad

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30. M.W. Lecture 31, p. 831.

31. Otto Fenichel, *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis*, p. 375.

in Homen Bargohain's *Timir Tīrtha*, Rajeswar in his *Hāladhīyā Carāye Bāo Dhān Khāya*, Subala in his *Subālā* etc. Apurba in B.K. Bhattacharya's *Dāinī* and Chamcher in his *Idar Zone* are typical demonstration of hysterio identification as featured by Freud in his Group Psychology and Analysis of the Ego.<sup>32</sup>

We have a number of fiction where the sterility of the husbands has been treated as the source of their women's neurosis. These fictions are explicit about the afflictions of sex. Impotence and frigidity are common features of men and women in these fictions. Impotence and frigidity are, however, psychological disorders, and sterility is an organic inadequacy or a biological lack, which affects reproduction and infects love-life psychologically.

Ramakanta, Jivan Das, Niranjan and Pabitra Chaliha in Malik's *Tribenīr Swapna*, *Bhāratī*, *Aghori Ātmār Kāhinī* and *Sonālī Sutare Bandhā* respectively are sterile husbands. Their wives are neurotic, yearning instinctively for motherhood, which they are forced to suppress or repress for social and superego-disapproval. The inferiority feeling of these women can be explained in the light of Freud's discovery that the realisation of impotence of one's own inability to love in consequence of mental or physical disorder, has an exceedingly lowering effect upon the self-regard."<sup>33</sup>

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32. M.W., pp. 679, 680.

33. M.W. On Narcissism, p. 409.

These women are all victims more or less of transference neuroses and characterised by an impoverishment of the ego, from which their inferiority feelings proceed.

The case of Aparna in Aghori Ātmār Kāhinī merits a little discussion. She is sick of life for her husband's instinctual indifference. Her neurosis is conspicuous in her failure to divorce him. She feels as she says, that Niranjana is not sufficiently adequate or equipped to live without her (p. 107). Her case is indeed, made complicated by the loss of one of her eyes in an accident. Her present political orientation may be interpreted as "a spur upon an active mental life" by way of over-compensation.<sup>34</sup> But organic inferiority plays, in the opinion of Freud an insignificant part in the etiology of neurosis.<sup>35</sup> In stressing on Aparna's organic loss Malik seems more Adlerian than Freudian.

We have a number of fictional persons distinguished by a preponderance of self-love in them. Some of them are persons who have been portrayed to the extent that they can easily be recognised psycho-analytically as perverse. They derive "sexual pleasure in gazing at, caressing and fondling his (their) body."<sup>36</sup> The novels and short stories of Gobinda Prasad Sarma abound in persons characterised by narcissistic perversion. Bijita's love-attitude to her lover's handkerchief

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34. M.W. On Narcissism, p. 409.

35. Ibid.

36. M.W. On Narcissism : An Introduction, p. 399.

seems to exceed normal fetichism. Her masochistic phantasy - (as in) "Darling do you know what I did to-day? I washed clothes from 10.30 to 12 wetting myself in rain, snuffing in cold, gasping in exhaustion. But it was a trifle. My mind got enwrapped in memories. Hoped I were afflicted by fever ... ." - bears mark of perversion. Bijita's brother has been portrayed as a *vekyur*. Bakul in *Dusita Subās* is a passive homosexual. Sarbari, his sister, who is made to serve first as object of a pedophilic becomes ultimately a prostitute. Inversion and prostitution in these fictions are compulsive developments as evident from Sarbari's statement : "I do not enjoy doing all this. These gentlemen seduced us on pretext of love and affection and friendship with my elder brother. He did not check them. How can I? Even if I refuse to accept money and renounce their company, I am not able to discontinue in wrong-doing" (p. 89).

Excessive *mustarbation* has been explained as the cause of Nirmal's impotence in Homen Bargohain's *Jiyāi Thakar Yukti*. Haranath in *Narakar Swādhinatā* and Bob in *Octopus* and Ranjit in *Subālā* represent the gravest form of sadistic perversion. Sibanath's sexual behaviour in *Pitā-Putra* is full of perverted components. While a boy he used to look from hideouts at the women and girls washing freely in the river. He indicates through his recollection of past life how he used to participate Gopal, their servant in the inhibited enjoyments. It is Gopal who taught him first to discover his own body as a source of pleasure. All this is suggestive of a *mustarbatory* preoccupation. He also indicates the impact of his father in



his infantile seduction.

Sundarjan in Kusīlaw is an invert. The night scene in the novel is devoted to the confession of his attempt at inverting Ratna.

These are some of our fictional persons portrayed to demonstrate the perverted form of narcissism. But narcissism is characteristic of all men. "Love is primarily narcissistic", says Freud.<sup>37</sup> Narcissistic persons are those who "are plainly seeking themselves as a love-object" and those whose "object-choice may be termed narcissistic."<sup>38</sup> Narcissism is not in this sense a perversion, but the libidinal complement to the egoism of the instinct of self-preservation, a measure of which may justifiably be attributed to every living creature.<sup>39</sup> Mrs. Barua in Malik's Prācīr āru Prāntar is a typical instance of narcissism. She is a woman who for fear of spoiling her beauty and elegance refuses her husband any sexual approach. Her narcissistic frigidity reduces her husband into a sadist, who in revenge forces one mistress after another into nakedness before her eyes. Dr. Satyendranath Sarma term Mr. Barua's disease megalomania, i.e., a form of disease in which "the libido withdrawn from the outer world has been directed on to the ego, giving rise to a state which we may call narcissism."<sup>40</sup>

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37. Women, "The Sexual Impulse and the Art of Love" by Havelock Ellis, p. 26.

38. M.W. On Narcissism, p. 405.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

Tara's love in Malik's *Suruḷ Mukhḷr Swapna* is narcissistic. Her longing for Gulach is characterised by lowering of self-regard in feeling of deprivation, and by exaltation in moments when she feels love returned. To be loved is the aim and satisfaction in a narcissistic object-love.<sup>41</sup>

Another memorable phenomenon of narcissism is Ranjan in Jogesh Das's *Satadal Barua*. Complete object-love of the analytic type is, according to Freud, characteristic of man. Ranjan is portrayed as an exception. He is one who cannot make the object of love so sublime as to enable it to gain command of the entire self-love of the ego. He is erotic but unable to marry anyone for ill-luck as he says; "I cannot concentrate where I ought. Business thrives when labours are employed. But life is quite a different thing." His erotic overestimation of Jetuki and Miss Barua is only a deviation from primary narcissism, which is not adequate for object-love.

Four persons can be distinguished as typical war neurotics out of the whole range of the post-war Assamese fictions. The stories containing them are Malik's *Jisḷ Khristar Cabi*, *Maram*, *Mohi Māstar* and Jogesh Das's *Buddhadev*. Mohi is portrayed as a classic phenomenon of anxiety neurosis. "Sometimes we feel very heavy in our mind without apparently knowing the reason why", - Malik interprets his state of the mind on the eve of the unlucky encounter with his beloved, Basana.

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41. M.W. On Narcissism, p. 409.

Irritability, anxious expectation, dizziness, 'an accumulation of excitement', as pointed out by Freud in Selected Papers on Hysteria are characteristic of Mahi's behaviour.<sup>42</sup> The captain in Maram, who had killed nearly three hundred men in course of his military raid is seen weeping bitterly at the death of a pet pup in time of peace at home. Freud writes in Thoughts on War and Death : "Reaction-formations against certain instincts take the deceptive form of a change in content, as though egoism had changed into altruism, or cruelty into pity."<sup>43</sup>

Khutlingla, Pamela in B.K. Bhattacharya's *Iyāruingam* and Cināki Suti respectively, Mira in Sadhana Mazumdar Barua's *Antarāl*, Radha in Nilima Sarma's *Pratibimba* may be mentioned to form a separate group characterised by the preponderance of envy and jealousy, featured most probably in realisation of Freud's discovery on the importance of penis-envy. Envy and jealousy play, according to Freud, a greater part in the mental life of women than they do in that of men as an example of male unfairness.<sup>44</sup>

The jealous male characters in our fictions are Nalini Duwara (*Ballawī*), Ismail (*Pratipad*) and Jivan Das (*Bhāratī*).

B.K. Bhattacharya's *Larbi* (*Eneye*), Jogesh Das's *Smt. Hazarika* (*Nāyikā Āhil Nāmi*), Malik's *Apara* (*Aghori Ātmār*)

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42. M.W., p. 88

43. M.W., p. 758.

44. M.W. *New Introductory Lectures*, Lecture 33, p. 859.

Kāhinī) are women of Adler's manish type, who are fighting for the prizes of life. These women tend to evade the responsibility of love and marriage. They seek to compensate for the evil of the masculine attitude with a masculine response. The defense attitude towards womanhood is the foundation of their whole life. A feeling of inferiority lies behind Larbi's Quixotic phantasy of freeing women of their social and cultural oppression.

Of the two sisters in Chandra Prasad Saikiya's Ekyatān, Puravi belongs to Adler's 'assailant type', and is aggressive, cruel, unable to sympathise or co-operate being hostile to the whole world. Karavi belongs to the dependent type - the assailed. She is one who compensates for her feeling of anxiety not along the line of aggression but by means of anxiety, precaution and cowardice. She is maladjusted for her physical ugliness, for her feeling that she is hated by her sister, her sister-in-law and even by her mother, who pities but does not actually love her. Individuals of this type usually capitulate to difficulties and suffer defeat after defeat.<sup>45</sup> Karavi may be featured in the light of Otto Fenichel's "I am no good" formula". Depression is the common characteristic of every neurosis (at least in the form of neurotic inferiority feeling).<sup>46</sup>

Homen Barghain has created a number of persons who are characterised by their acute awareness about the human

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45. Adler, Understanding Human Nature, p. 178.

46. Otto Fenichel, The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis, pp. 386, 394.

situation - "the break down of traditional values, depersonalisation of human beings in a mass society and the loss of meaning in human existence."<sup>47</sup> The existential neurosis originates in these persons out of the personal identity, and involves a definition of self. The young men in Bargohain's *Yauvan* are all victims of existential neurosis.

Babachunu in Imran Shwa's *Banajyotsnā* (Moonlight in the Woods), Mohini in Sneha Devi's *Nirbhejāl*, Haliram in Bhaben Saikiya's *Durnām* and Munu, the step child in Debidas Neog's *Phalgu* are physically and mentally inadequate. Babachunu is deaf and dumb from his birth, and is libidinally dependent on Hamida Khatun. The story stresses the exploration of his unconscious in relation to and reaction against Rahul and Malina. The step-child, deaf and dumb from his birth is irritant and accustomed to break things. Haliram is an idiot hereditarily, and abnormal environmentally.

Psycho-analytic fictions in our literature, have a very few persons who are really 'character', i.e., integrated in their personality - persons who have been able by virtue of labour in transforming their wish-fancies into reality. The fictional persons are men and women, alienated more or less from reality on account of their failure to resist or subordinate the wish-fancies. They are persons of the pleasure-principle, who take refuge in their satisfying world of fancies.

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47. James C. Coleman, *Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life*, p. 256.

A good many of the women are widows, - neurotic under a burdensome tradition, restless either for sex or for mother-yearning. Some few of them have been portrayed as the typical representative of the contraceptive age, - "women without a bra on their breast." Indrani in Homen Bargochain's Kusilaw, the young wife in Amulya Phukan's Brtta (The Circle) may be mentioned as representative of the type. God, religion, chastity have no meaning for them. Smiling for them is life; and sex is health.

The instinct of sexual gratification is as great as that of motherhood. Our writer who has consciously stressed on the realisation of this truth is Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya. His Aparna and Charengla are typical representatives. A pathological victim of the mother-yearning is the young wife in Rini Barua's Adbhut Trpti, who in her dissociative reaction has used to carry a Japanese doll and endear it as a live child of her own.

Saurabh Kumar Chaliha's Saurātar Natun Dhusan (A New Endowment for the Emperor) and Runu Barua's Aprakās (The Hidden) have children who are neurotic for a severe curbing of individuality under over-protective parenting. We have also a few stories and novels with children, gone astray under "masked deprivation" in the home, that is, for inadequate or distorted maternal care. Bhattacharya's Eneye and Lavanya Prabha Devi's Aprative (Confounded) may be mentioned as instances. Stories with pathogenic family patterns are not rare in our fictions.

## Chapter VIII

### Contents:

#### **Therapeutic measures applied in Assamese Fictions.**

- 1. Literary art is therapeutic by the nature of its creation.**
- 2. The basic aim of psycho-analytic therapy.**
- 3. The therapeutic techniques and their application in art.**
- 4. Two divisions of fictions from the therapeutic view-point.**
- 5. Different methods exemplified.**
- 6. Conclusion.**

## Chapter VIII

### Explaining Freud's view of art and the artist

scattered throughout The Major Works, Morrison writes that art is a therapy, which rescues the artist and his audience from potential suffering.<sup>1</sup> Literary art deals with the problems of life, the solution of which is its aim. Psycho-analytic literature is therapeutic in a more specific way inasmuch as it employs the therapeutic method systematically in adherence to the science of mental health to achieve some practical end.

The basic aim of psycho-analytic therapy is to make the neurotic ( i.e., the persons suffering from functional derangement on account of disorders in the mind and the nervous system) aware of their potentiality and to enable them to adjust to their situations. The analyst helps the patient to achieve emotional catharsis, increased understanding and improved interpersonal competencies.<sup>2</sup> The analyst does this in sympathy for the unfortunate patient. He does not behave him as an authority or a judge with the right to summon him to account. The proper analyst is related to his patient as is a father to his son, not as is a master to his servant.

The basic techniques of psycho-therapy which operate in the process of treating a typical neurotic individual are

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1. Claudia C. Morrison, *Freud and the Critic*, p. 47.

2. James C. Coleman, *Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life* (5th edition), p. 702.



as we have enumerated and explained in some detail in the first chapter, free association, dream-interpretation, interpretation of resistance and transference. A fiction-writer who undertakes to shoulder the analyst's responsibility creates art generally, though not always, in adherence to these techniques. He would take, for instance, a neurotic person, observes his behaviour, bring the repressed materials to his consciousness. In course of the investigation the person is made to go through a process in which resistance and occasionally, transference would inevitably follow. All this would be interpreted by the analyst in accordance with the law of his art. His task is more difficult than that of the professional analyst for he has got to do everything within the limit of his art. But he has accepted the scientific discoveries about the mind as materials of his fictions. He has sought to demonstrate the importance of sex in human life through action, - to demonstrate the truth that man is inherently incestuous and can become himself only by ridding himself of the incestuous fixation. The idea of mental health is dependable on the perfect eradication of this fixation.

This is exactly what Birinchi Kumar Barua has done in his *Jīvanar Bātat* in connection with the libidinal problem of the widowed mother. The marriage of the only son is normally a pleasure and health for the mother, weary of work and age. But it has been quite otherwise with Dharani's mother. The intrusion of Dharani's wife makes her maladaptive to the pathological extent. The poor widow is, however, too old for

a course of clinical analysis. She is not 'educable'. The solution of her problem by the arrival of her grand daughter is suggestive of a great insight on the novelist's part into the problem of health. The old widow now learns to live with a better understanding of life.

The first of our fiction-writers who has subjected his person to a through analysis, decided upon the diagnosis and kind of treatment is Dinanath Sarma. Arup (Santi) is neurotic under the stresses of environment and heredity as a consequence of which he cannot marry Santi and enjoy life. He is sent abroad for a course of psycho-analytic treatment. Arup returns integrated and marries Santi. Again observations reveal that Santi is sexually frigid, even when she feels she is strongly in love with Arup. The novelist employs a widow for sexual enlightenment of the inexperienced Santi, who makes her emanable to sexual excitement and arousal. The birth of the child enables Gunawati to achieve adjustment at home with her mother-in-law. The death of the hero in Sangrām in the struggle of self-identification is an artistic inevitability but his realisation just before death that living here satisfactorily is to renounce one's best self is therapeutic in significance though negatively.

In all this, Dinanath Sarma's insight into the problem of health is psycho-analytic.

From the psycho-analytic point of view our psycho-analytic fictions - short fiction in particular, can be divided into two groups. One group ends as a process of neurotic cure

or adjustment, and the other starts as one of neurotic aggravation. But in both techniques they are therapeutic positively as in the first and negatively as in the second. Dinanath Sarma's *Napungsa*, B. K. Bhattacharya's *Ward No Dui*, Mrs. Bargohain's *Mauna Ākās* are some of the memorable instances of the first group; and Chandra Prasad Saikiya's *Yātrā*, Hhaben Saikiya's *Ākās*, Sneha Devi's *Bar-Mā*, Kamal Bargohain's *Mai Eti Sāp*, of the second. Art and analysis in these stories are so aptly blended that investigation of the diseases and the removal of them by this investigation appear self-evident. The stories concern themselves with the genesis of the persons' morbid symptoms, and the psychic connection of the pathogenic idea, the removal of which is its aim.

In most of Malik's fictions therapy proceeds in the form of digression rather than evoked artistically through investigation of persons' problem. Malik has indeed a very few fictions where the formal psycho-analytic therapy is explicit. *Dumukhīyā Sāp* is one of these, where a widow professionally a teacher, is made to experience a typical neurotic conflict, i.e., a conflict between an instinctual striving for discharge and the ego that strives to repress that discharge. The conflict manifests itself by her undoing of a love-letter offered to her by one of her students (*Aparajita*). The resistance being overcome, the widow realises that the real woman in her is the woman who loves such love-letters (from *Ajit*, her lover). It is revealed through autoanalysis that the ideal teacher in her who tears the letter into pieces

and punishes the likes of Aparajita for handing tabooed letter (tabooed because she is a widow and a teacher) is a mere fraud - an imposition from outside. The widow, free of neurosis (of any inhibition), now comes to realise that life is greater than virtue or vice. Love is even greater than life. It is only love that makes life worth-living. The suppression of sex is all that has been responsible for her behavioural distortion.

Mental health and happiness cannot be achieved unless we scrutinise our thinking and feeling to detect whether we are rationalising and whether our beliefs are rooted in our feeling. The basic aim of psycho-analysis is to help man discern the truth from falsehood in himself. "The truth shall make you free."<sup>3</sup>

The cathartic or the analytic method has been employed by Malik in another story, namely, Tribenīr Swapna. Many things said about love art and the inadequacy of the man guided by the pleasure principle in Civilisation and its Discontents can be quoted to justify the death of the artist in the story.<sup>4</sup> But Malik's stress is not on the justification of the artist's death but on the emotional problem of Puravi, loving wife of the impotent Rama Kanta, for whose love the artist had to pass away. Here is the conflict where the super-ego participates

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3. Erich Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, pp. 77, 79 (chap. The Psychoanalyst-physician of the Soul).

4. M.W., see pp. 773-775, 785.

on the ego's side in an attempt to repress her sexual impulse, which caused indirectly the death of the artist. Malik's penetration into the woman's problem, and the prolific changes that this penetration brings in her through the psychic play of forces serve as the therapeutic aid to help her understand the problem.

In Aghori Ātmār Kāhinī, one of the most successful psycho-analytic novels in our literature, Malik entrusts Niranjan with the analyst's responsibility. The psychological digression in the novel comes from him. He can analyse himself and can help the other persons in the novel understand their mental states. About all the persons including himself he says, "You (Sasanka) are afraid of living alone, so you have done business. I serve the office of a political party, and Aparā (his wife) devotes herself to something like politics (pp. 63, 64). Again, he continues, "physical deformity begets inferiority complex in man. Man suffering from one, such as this, has to do things in excess just to show that he does not have that" (p. 65). Asked if he is a victim of any complex Niranjan reflects, "I have one, I think that I understand all things, but as a matter of fact, I do not comprehend many things in life." The reason for man's discontent to-day, he explains, is the extent of his knowledge about himself. In no ages past man has been so critical about himself as at the present. The consequence of eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge is the deprivation from heaven (p. 65).

Niranjan is like many of Malik's persons "philosophically gifted and therefore, accustomed to introspection". But he is also neurotic himself; for he lacks a sufficient degree of capacity for enjoyment and active achievement in life. He is an impotent man having no understanding of the "primary processes - the psychology of emotions and wishes." He is one of those 'who accept only logical connections.'<sup>5</sup>

Freud stresses on the 'morality' of the analyst, i.e., on his ability to overcome in his own personality the mixture of leudness and prudishness with which so many others are wont to meet the sexual problems.<sup>6</sup> Niranjan is neither leud nor prudish, but still he is not a normal person. He is a repressed mate of the Beduins (homeless), i.e. the ego-impooverished. And again he is organically sterile and psychologically impotent. Still, what Malik has achieved through him in the way of mental health is proof of his psychoanalytic insight.

In Ādhārsilā, Malik employs Dr. Maohim, his religious nurse, and his affectionate daughter in the treatment of Chamir, who help him abrogate the stress of environment, i.e., the social indignation and indifference which bastardism has thrown him into. Here Malik seems to attempt to realise the truth of

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5. According to Otto Fenichel, men accepting only logical connections are easily frightened by their new experiences when analysis succeeds in changing their attitudes. See *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis*, p. 478.

6. M.W. *Selected Papers on Hysteria*, p. III.

Freud's discovery that the psycho-neuroses are accessible to psychic influences than to any other remedies. These diseases are not cured by drugs but by the doctor - to wit by the personality of the physician in so far as he exerts a psychic influence.<sup>7</sup> Through Chamir's departure with his beloved is suggested that a change of situation is urgent for psychic health and happiness. Malik leaves Dr. Arunabh in discontent even in the contact with four women offering love earnestly in realisation of the truth that sex is not sufficient to content man in modern intellectual predicament. In *Trisūl*, *Kabitār* *Nam Lāvā*, he portrays persons with the gravest form of abnormal behaviour, such as psychoses, melancholia, jealousy, etc. He penetrates to the genesis of their disease but leaves the persons in their affliction perhaps in consideration of Freud's warning that psychoses, confusional states and marked depressions are unsuitable for analysis at least as it is practised to-day.<sup>8</sup> The psycho-analytic method was created, in the opinion of Freud, for patients who are permanently incapacitated and its triumph is to make a gratifying number of such permanently incapacitated.<sup>9</sup>

In most of his fictions Malik demonstrates suppression of sex as the cause of neurosis. But gratification of sex is not suggested as a cure either, in the present social setup.

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7. M.W. Selected Papers on Hysteria, p. 107.

8. Ibid., p. 109.

9. Ibid.

Sexual gratification satisfies Rita's motherhood but makes her victim of a more aggravated affliction in another way.

A deeper scrutiny of his novels and short stories will reveal that in all of them Malik's emphasis falls on the tragedy of sex, more specifically in the case of man.

There are many ways and means of psycho-therapy and all methods are, as Freud states, good, which produce the aim of therapy. Our usual consolation, "you will soon be well again" is also one of the psychotherapeutic methods.<sup>10</sup>

Some of the methods used in our fictions are contrast, shock situation, confession, auto-analysis or introspection, patho-cure etc.

♣

Bhattacharya's *Iyāringam*, one of our successful psycho-analytic novels is the record of a growing consciousness of Khutingla, called upon through contrast with Charengla. Charengla's infinite simplicity, frank behaviour, motherly affection move her to the extent that she gets rid of her mistaken belief that it is unnatural or impossible for two women to love one man. She also wins by degrees the individual strength to ignore the artificial environment and religious hindrance in the way of her wedding with Bishwang.

Contemporary Assamese fictions have been very explicit in portraying women in their primitive, quenchless craving for

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10. M.W. Selected Papers on Hysteria, p. 107.



sexual gratification. *Iyāruingam* is one of our novels which demonstrates that the impulse of motherhood is as strong in a woman as the impulse of sexual gratification. The discovery of the truth that Charengla, and Aparna (*Cināki Suti*) are neurotic not for sex, but for a yearning of motherhood is indeed a profound insight into women's mental health.

The same method of therapy is used in *Ballawī*. But the analyst, Nalini Duwara is an abnormal person. The patient, therefore, (Ali, daughter of a conservative, religious mother, frigid for an unconscious fear of punishment) even when she is cured dies committing suicide. We are again to remember Freud's stress on the 'morality' of the analyst and on "the rationally executed analytic treatment" to get rid of patient's risk in the course of treatment.<sup>11</sup>

The persons in *Cināki Suti* are so placed one in contrast to the other that it is not far to diagnose what one suffers from and to prescribe what will heal one's mind. All the characters are neurotic - incapable of love or marriage. Anath is primitive or carnivorous of love, but not adequate for the same on account of his infantile fixation. Pamela is instinctive; but sexual gratification is inconceivable for her but through marriage. Jivan is up for free-love, which entails no responsibility of marriage and children for him. Aparna is all for spiritual love, i.e., love without longing; but cannot at the same time renounce a biological instinct for motherhood,

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11. M.W. Selected Papers on Hysteria, p. 110.

for which she considers marriage to be the most convenient way. The ultimate realisation or the therapeutic achievement in the novel is what is concluded in Somerset Maugham's *The Razor's Edge* : "Believe me my dear friend, people can say what they like but marriage still remains the most satisfactory profession a woman can adopt ... my long experience has convinced me that the only basis of a happy marriage is complete fidelity on both sides (pp. 309, 310).

Therapeutic understanding of psychological problems in *Pratipad* proceeds again by way of contrast from *Nashiruddin*. *Jebinisha* is analytic, he explains, and *Ismail*, narcissistic; for the one, love is health, and for the other, a disease. Love for the narcissistic creates jealousy which persists till death. *Panu's* love for *Chatterjee* serves as the mirror where he sees his own face for correction. He discovers that there is nothing manly in his being an extremist; nothing philosophical in his wilderness, his addiction to wine and devotion to religion and studies. All these are symptomatic of an attempt to repress his love for *Panu*, i.e., have a sexual aetiology. His displeasure in the company of women is but the negative expression of his love for *Panu*. *Chatterjee* arrives at this through auto-analysis.

*Chandra Prasad Saikiya's Eikyatān*, *Mrs. Bargohain's Jananīr Sandhānat Ejan Dekā Manuh*, *Bhaben Saikiya's Ganga Sān* demonstrate the importance of confession for cure or adjustment. The same is shown in *Debidas Neog's Rajjyotisi*. The story is an emotional catharsis of a young astrologer, victim of

occupational inhibition. He wanted to become a great astrologer making the horoscope of a prince where he will relate all that he has learnt about the science. But he has become in practice an ordinary astrologer, practising petty aspects of the science to earn his livelihood.

The story is replete with therapeutic digression on the psychic relation of the astrologer with men. The astrologer is simply dissatisfied at man's natural inclination to flattery, and aversion to truth because it is painful.

For Karabi's marital adjustment in *Nārī Muktir Ka, Kha*, Nilima Sarma lays stress on parental advice and instruction. In Dr. Diganta Bardaloi's *Etā Prasnar Uttar Bioāri* (In search of the Answer to a Question), the doctor diagnoses Szal's illness to have originated from the behavioural stresses of an ideal authoritative father, and an impulsive wife. His impotence and occupational maladjustment are analysed as the result of a neurotic aggravation. In *Mānuh*, Bardaloi demonstrates through the maladjustment of three doctors (physicians) that a man can be happy only when he aims at becoming a man. As for the physicians he says that they are fortunate persons, for they can resolve their problems and gain in adequacy and maturity without professional aid.

The psycho-analyst in fiction is either an ordinary man, generally, though not always, the hero with the author's analytic personality or a professional physician who uses not drugs but his personality for the patient's cure.

In Homen Bargohain's *Kuśīlaw*, the role of the analyst is entrusted to Ratna, who is, of all the characters in the novel, the most integrated person and can afford with an analyst's sympathy to give a detached opinion about life. In Sundarjan's attempt at inversion on him at night he says; "It is hard to know how a man has to dance in the platform of life. But man should be sympathetic to man (p. 140). Evil, he says, is inherent in life. Some men participates in this law of life as contrivers and some as recipients. As regards the strike, he says, all men hate disturbance but they also wish instinctively for it, perhaps for reason obscurely known to them. Ratna himself wishes it, for it is an exciting news for a reporter; Bimal wishes it, for a bloody photo of violence is a pleasure and renown for a photographer and a sensation for the readers.

All the major characters in Bargohain's novels and short stories are distinguished by their capacity of auto-analysing themselves. They are prettily equipped with the psycho-analytic knowledge of their creator. Sibanath in *Pitā-Putra*, Ratna in *Kuśīlaw*, Prahlaḍ in *Timir Tīrtha* are analysts of themselves and also of the other persons in the novels.

Introspection brings to light Sibanath's neurotic predisposition and also the influences intensifying it. "In short, I was at no time a man of action ... . The whole of my life was spent in dreaming and talking with myself (p. 42). He painfully refers to the influence of Gopal, his servant, in his sexual life. He speaks of his father's amorous look at a

girl while crossing a river, that has remained stamped in his mind. His present hatred for his wife is attributable to the recollection of experiences such as these, he auto-analyses (pp. 66-79).

Prahlad knows he is sick of life, which no drug can cure. A man who is afflicted by a disease, such as this, he explains to his wife, wants to live day and night in the affection of his wife (p. 35). He introspects on his romantic and instinctive inclination to Marxism, his father's reproach at his girlish nature (p. 43) and on the resulting inferiority complex of such behaviour. Analysing the cause of his present pain he finds a strong feeling of guilt in him, for, he has all his life been prostituting his personality in the service of others (pp. 62, 63). In analysing the pornography of Dr. Arabinda Barua, he reflects on man's outward and inward personality. The private world, i.e., the world of our mind is all hell where man is dreadfully alone, free of guilt, of inhibition or restriction. It is the world where man walks like an indignant animal of the forest.

Introspection or examining one's own thought and feelings has been the common method for psychological investigation of fictional persons. Its therapeutic significance cannot be exaggerated. Another therapeutic method occasionally used is patho-cure in which the experience of one's pathological disorder serves as a therapy for that of another person. Or one disorder is cured by another of a more intensive order. The bite of a snake, for instance, may cure

a man of his amnesia. Rini Barua's *Adbhut Trpti* and some of Kumar Kishore's novels are seen to employ this method. Nagen Saikiya's *Rog-Mukti* is a psycho-drama, which demonstrates the recovery of a father's neurosis at the death of his child by a sudden attack of fever.

The change of environment has been stressed by many fiction-writers as a therapy of readjustment. Naren in *Kawini Phukan's Samasya* was a normal man as a customer of prostitute, but turns into a criminal career after the abolition of the system. He heartily feels that he is not adequate for a career, such as this. Murder upsets him. He wishes to become a good man. But in the present situation, it is impossible. "If without evidence I am arrested and put to prison, every now and then, I am sure to become bad again", he utters helplessly (p. 933).

The change of environment and of the present legal system is suggested in *Sadamara's Dokmokālir Yātrīas* well as in *Jogesh Das's Aparādh*. The husband in one stress after another of the familial environment is forced to murder his wife, and is going to be hanged half an hour after. He becomes painfully aware of the inadequacy of law as the punishing authority - of its pathetic failure to investigate what leads a man to commit such crimes as murder.

The inadequacy of the legal system is brought to relief even more impressively in the second story.

A psycho-analytic fiction is not as some are accustomed to assume it to be, a Pandora's box of sex and aberrations. A good novelist or a short-story writer taking the psycho-analytic responsibility, while he recognises sex as the very being of life and abounds his fiction with the seeming exuberance of sex and diseases never leaves it without prescribing means for their cure. The aim of a psycho-analytic fiction is to release through action, the truth of psycho-analysis and the realisation itself is the evidence of the remedy. The evils of prostitution is evident in Subala's yearning for marriage and motherhood in Bargohain's Subālā. It is not far to comprehend that the reaction of the first forcible rape on Lalita in his Sambodhan is an emotional violence of a criminal type, but that of the second is an objective reflection, characteristic of health. Man can lessen or avoid suffering if he can accept life easily. The social and cultural imposition from outside disables Lalita to accept it easily. She has been made to believe marriage as the only proper means of instinctive gratification, and chastity as the only virtue of a woman. Her own feeling at the performance of the second rape on her is that she is neither good nor bad after it. She has not been a different woman by the dispossession of the imaginary thing called chastity. She experiences not loss of her beauty, her feeling and emotion. She is disillusioned now, free of neurosis. She can now accept life easily. She shall not, we have reason to think, be deprived of a happy marriage and will be able to restore herself from the recurrence of the last night's rape, even if she goes begging.

## Chapter IX

### Contents:

**Some limitations in the literary application of Freudian findings.**

- 1. Artistic imperfections resulting out of the indiscriminate use of psychological findings.**
- 2. Tragic inclination of the irrational unconscious in its literary use.**
- 3. Anti-philosophical bias of Freudian psychology.**
- 4. Freudianism : a bar to the realisation of spiritual truth.**



## Chapter IX

Modern fiction has everywhere been subject to very many faults or imperfections for its increasing emphasis on the scientific accuracy in description of events. A searching study of the influence of psychology in literature would certainly press one to conclude that literature has lost art in analysis, its tragic capability in exaggeration of morbidity and loneliness, and its philosophy and spiritualism in its exclusive stress on realism or renunciation of idealism. The unlimited possibilities of theme, the new depth, new subtlety and the new complexity have been possible for literature to achieve at the peril of its own intrinsic endowments. W.H. Hudson's remark is worth quoting in this connection : "Art cannot without self-destruction adopt the aims and borrow the methods of science."<sup>1</sup> The literary advocates of the new realism, however, pay little heed to the truth of the remark, and in their enthusiasm, go direct to actual life and reproduce what they find there with photographic fidelity.<sup>2</sup> The consequence of this rather indiscreet preoccupation has been fatal in common practice. Bent on reproducing life's actualism, they often give in their fiction "detailed pictures of the sordid, base and ugly", which seem anything but true to life at large. And sometimes what is written to dignify their

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1. William Henry Hudson, An Introduction to the Study of Literature, p. 167.

2. Ibid.

fictions is but the much-ado-about nothing of a certain class, of writers whose chief concern seems to be the elaboration of the trivial and the common-place, and who offer as little but cross-sections of life as seen through a powerful microscope.<sup>3</sup> Hudson pleads for the rejection of the theory of realism on grounds that it involves in another form the old confusion between scientific and poetic truth.<sup>4</sup>

The literary imitators of the psychological realism have everywhere been bitterly criticised for their idolatry and for the bane they have caused to literature. Malcolm Cowley (America) satirically portrays a bohemian paradise to mock at the works of Freud and D.H. Lawrence. Mathew Josephson attacks the Freudian novels of Waldo Frank for portraying characters' subconscious to the exclusion of their consciousness. "We shall hearken only to the subconscious strata of the brain, observing only instinctual behaviour, and speak only in the shadowy dictum of dreams." Frank's fictional persons have been mocked at as slack balloons appended to bulrush genitals rather than human beings.<sup>5</sup> Sherwood Anderson, May Sinclair even, not to speak of the lesser writers, now forgotten, have become subject to severe criticism for writing in accordance with the psycho-analytic formula. Raoul Reed is stated to have said in *The Freeman* that the good writer

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3. William Henry Hudson, *An Introduction to the Study of Literature*, p. 167.

4. *Ibid.*

5. Claudia C. Morrison, *Freud and the Critic*, p. 40.

studies closely and sees clearly not psycho-analysis but life, and that the business of the novelist is to describe life as he sees it and not to explain it.<sup>6</sup> Beresford argues in the same magazine that a self-conscious use of any scientific knowledge inevitably results in meretricious writing. He has expressed his annoyance at the monotonous series of heroes suffering from Oedipus complex. Beresford, however, maintains that the use of Freudian material by writers is inevitable, and believes that it would ultimately result in a better literature once the material is "so assimilated and transmuted as to become a personal experience and conviction."<sup>7</sup> In the preface to The Greatest American Short Stories, A Grove Day writes that "the use of types taken over from clinical histories has seldom resulted in first-rate fiction."<sup>8</sup> He considers the writings of Conrad Aiken an exception to this. In the opinion of the extramentalist, Robbe Grillet (1922- ) conventional (by which he means psycho-analytic) plots presuppose a coherent decipherable, universe, something many of to-day's artists can no longer believe in. Another French writer, Nathalie Sarrante has argued that the psychological analysis in fiction is obsolete for our time and is in general false because it distorts and oversimplifies psychological reality.<sup>9</sup> Dostoevsky

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6. Claudia C. Morrison, *Freud and the Critic*, p. 41.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

8. A Grove Day, *The Greatest American Short Stories*, p. 16.

9. Douglas A. Hughes, *Studies in Short Fiction. Five short novels and twentyfive stories*, p. 576.

to name a distinguished literary precursor of psycho-analysis is stated to have expressed through one of his characters (Father Paisey) that scientific materialism, now a great power has analysed everything divine, handed to us in the holy books, spared nothing of all that was sacred of old. But as a matter of fact he continues, it has analysed the parts only and overlooked the whole in its marvellous blindness.<sup>10</sup> To this J.W. Beach adds that psychology may be consistent, but it is not true; it is mythical. What we have to do away with is not intellectual or religious wrong-headedness but simply mania, simply this and that form of psychological perversion.<sup>11</sup>

Manik Bandopadhyaya, most disposed to scientific investigation of life at the beginning of his literary career as a novelist renounced the application of Freudian psychology towards the latter part of his career on grounds of its mystic inclinations. In explaining the mysterious problems of life he says, Freud relies on mysticism, which is a part of religion. Freudianism can give partial and not the whole truth about life. He denies the preponderance of the unconscious in the mind and holds that mental diseases are consequences of both environmental and sociological impact and can be ameliorated through psychological and sociological insight.<sup>12</sup>

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10. J.W. Beach, *The Twentieth Century Novel* (1969), p. 96.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 100.

12. Ranendra Nath Dev, *Bangla Upanyase Adhunik Paryyaya*, pp. 274-278.

Almost the same view has been expressed by Malik and Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya through some of their fictions.

Explaining the drawbacks of the psychological method in fiction, Paul West writes in the preface to his The Modern Novel that art is a "deliberate construction" and 'essentially parasital'. A fiction without artistic control of the experiences or ideas it represents is anything but a fiction. The aim of art, he continues is to enlighten and not to increase the chances of chaos. Life may be chaotic but art is disciplined. About the stream of consciousness method in fiction he writes that the method gives scope for too much chaos and self-indulgence which endanger the artist with the loss of self. The followers of the method, he continues, in an urgency of revealing the irrational aspects of the mind try to ignore the essential order that lies behind the chaotic. Paul West concludes that the interior flux and the fictional account of how one experiences, it will inevitably conflict with the nature of art.

In the light of the wisdom of these remarks on the general drawbacks of psycho-analytic method, it is now not hard to illustrate the drawbacks of fictions of a particular language, of our language in particular where fictions are not numerous. Our fictions are faulty with the exception of a very few not only because they are far apart from our tradition but also because they deviate from the standard of a good fiction.

Our quest for the limitations of psycho-analytic fictions certainly presupposes our notion of an ideal condition

in which a fiction has been or can be perfect both in matter and technique. Of such a condition as this, we have practically no tradition of our own, prior to the intrusion or application of psycho-analytic discoveries into it. What our Lakshminath Bezbarua and Padma Nath Gohain did with their half historical and half social novels, namely, *Lāhari*, *Padm Kuwarī* and *Bhānumatī* in the field of long fictions was not worth more than a beginning both in respect of form and matter. Neither in plot nor in characterisation these novels show any remarkable distinction. They could, however, tell stories, which their readers most passionately sought for delight and edification.

The historical novels of Rajanikanta Bardaloi written under the influence of the English Scott are unique in our literature from the historical point of view. Dr. Birinchi Kumar Barua commends their lofty idealism, their philosophic depth, descriptive power, their creative imagination and charm of style.<sup>13</sup> About his fidelity to life, Birinchi Kumar Barua writes that his novels do not aim so much in recreating history as at imaginatively depicting the life of man and woman.<sup>14</sup> Still what has been remarked by Hudson upon those of Scott can be unequivocally applied to the novels of Bardaloi : "his novels are for most part defective in construction. He is at his best in description and action. As an interpreter of character his method is wholly unlike that of the modern psychological

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13. Dr. Birinchi Kumar Barua, *History of Assamese Literature*, p. 168.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 170.

novelist; he does not indulge in elaborate analysis. When he attempts to deal with complex mental and moral conditions he naturally fails and he has little power over the stronger passions except those (and the exception is significant) of patriotism and loyalty".<sup>15</sup>

The novels of Dandinath Kalita, Daivachandra Talukdar and Muhammad Pear are "never concerned with the nuances of character and situation that spring from awareness of the growth of the human mind in response to critical stimuli." They have indeed, nothing comparable to Jivanar Bātat. But Birinchi Kumar Barua's Jivanar Bātat is a psycho-analytic novel, and is, indeed, the most powerful one in our literature, in its "fidelity to the great essential motives and impulses, passions and principles, which shape the lives of men and women."<sup>16</sup> Our critics are of opinion that this novel has attained to the standard of a great novel as construed by Hudson in his An Introduction to the Study of Literature. It is a realistic novel on the rural life of Assam. But realism here is both artistic and idealistic. There is no extravagance of romance in it, no attempt at stuffing it with direct didacticism. The novelist appears here neither a propagandist nor a preacher.<sup>17</sup>

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15. W.H. Hudson, *An Outline History of English Literature*, p. 219.

16. W.H. Hudson, *An Introduction to the Study of Literature*, p. 166.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 169.

All novels written before the war and after it are inferior to the two novels of Birinchi Kumar Barua, remarks Homen Bargohein.<sup>18</sup> *Jīvanar Bātat* is a tragedy of modern life so intensively arranged as to aggravate in the manner of Hardy that "happiness is an occasional episode in the tragic drama of our life."<sup>19</sup> The morality here is conveyed in the texture of characterisation, i.e., in the beautiful portrayal of Tagar, in the love and faith to her lover, her obedience to her parents, fidelity and devotion to her husband, her faith in God, her passive suffering in the hand of her mother-in-law and in the cruel hand of destiny. The novel is minutely psychological, but free of any impression of monotony or analytic heaviness, for what is psychological here is also very natural or real.

Still, while acknowledging it as the greatest of our novels, the literary critics are not silent about its aesthetic or artistic imperfections. Dr. Satyendra Nath Sarma points out in his criticism of the novel the irrelevance of Tagar's delivery pain and Sukomal's behaviour, consequent upon his suffering from dysentery and pain at anus. Life cannot deny the reality of such experience but inclusion of it in art is suggestive of obscenity, he continues.<sup>20</sup>

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18. Asamiya Galpa Sankalan, ed. H. Bargohein (1975), p. 132.

19. Dr. S.N. Sarma, Asamiya Upanyasar Bhumiika, p. 184.

20. Ibid., p. 187.



Birinchi Kumar Barua's second novel, *Seujī Pātar Kapani* has a little structural unity in comparison with that of the first. It is less artistic than the first, but greater than that. A really great novel, it has been stated by Hudson, is likely as a rule to approximate rather to the loose than to the organic type.<sup>21</sup> The looseness in the plot of the novel is undoubtedly for purpose, greater than artistic. But in so doing the novel has failed to give that amount of aesthetic pleasure, which is derived from an organic type, i.e., from the compactness and symmetry illustrated in the first.

The conflict between art and analysis is more conspicuously felt in the fictions of Dinanath Sarma. Sarma's 'sad failure' as an artist has been ascribed to the abundance of his knowledge about the mind. In the three novels, namely, *Uṣā*, *Sangrām* and *Nadāi*, he gives up the conventional principle of plot, i.e., that of developing conflicts through two or more opposing forces from without. The conflict in all of them takes place in the mind of the hero or the heroine. The novelist concentrates on the analysis of the person's mind, i.e., 'his emotions, feelings, and experiences' - the action and reaction against the environment, which entraps him or her. Dr. S.N. Sarma remarks upon *Nadai* as the creation of an adult hand.<sup>23</sup> Here is a point of significance. The three novels,

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21. Hudson, *An Introduction to the Study of Literature*, p. 141.

22. Dr. S.N. Sarma, *Asamīyā Upanyāsar Bhūmikā*, pp. 188, 189.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 177.

though they are unconventional in plot are more or less organic in a sense. But the materials in the first two (Usā and Sangrām) are psychologically patterned to achieve a pessimistic end. The two heroes are educated and neurotic. Bipin is bisexual by nature. Budhinath is an unemployed, ideal youth unable to adjust to the cruel, social environment. Both are unheroic heroes, as all psychological heroes are. Dinanath Sarma, enthusiastic though he is as a novelist over the study of his person's mind is not, as a rule, able to make an artistic display of the mental sufferings. The success in Nadāi is ascribable to his familiarity with the material. Nadai is an elemental youth, competent to fight all oppositions from the physical world.

The condition of all good work in literature is as has been pointed out by Hudson "fidelity" of the artist to his experience. The grasp and thoroughness in writing a fiction can come from the familiarity of the creator with his material. The success of Birinchi Kumar Barua as a novelist and that of Rama Das and Haliram Deka as story-writers is unquestionably due to their 'fidelity' to the material. And the reverse is true of Dinanath Sarma. The most defective, artistically, of the novels is perhaps his Sānti. The novel is new like the other three in its renunciation of the traditional plot, but it is even unlike them both in material and technique. The plot is complex, but loose. There are subplots and episodes or accidents having little or no logical connection among themselves and with the main plot. The history of Bhogram's

frustrated love, and that of his beloved Pamile's treachery in love are not indispensable to the main plot. In the same way, the sexual behaviour of the irresponsible Anil, of the unusually devoted Thomas to his wife have possibly been urgent for analytic purpose. From the artistic or aesthetic standpoint they do not seem to be relevant.

Most of the artistic imperfections of a psycho-analytic fiction, thus proceed from the creator's lack of fidelity to the materials. The psychological discoveries of Freud about the human mind and behaviour are not easy things for popular comprehension. Most of the creative writers who are so romantically tempted to allow themselves indulgently to stray in, are of the common make-up, in whose writing the use of psycho-analytic discoveries proves a nuisance to their art and also to their readers. The minor writers generally fail in their treatment for want of powerful observation. The major writers can through their real creative genius absorb that knowledge into personal experience and can utilise it successfully to achieve the desired end. Instances of writers attaining substantial fidelity through a sheer power of realistic imagination even when they are handling scenes and incidents which have never come within the range of their own experiences and observations are not rare in the history of literature.<sup>24</sup> Shakespeare, Dostoevsky, Lawrence, Sophocles and Eripides treated the Oedipus problem most accurately without

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24. Hudson, An Introduction to the Study of Literature, pp. 135, 136.

reading Freudian psychology.

In a cultural atmosphere like ours the creative life is full of inhibitions as we have explained earlier. For impositions, inherent and external, our fiction writers have to face the music of utilising the scientific discoveries. Dr. Birinohi Kumar Barua writes about Malik's *Chabi Ghar*, one of his popular novels : "In *Chabi Ghar* (Picture House), Malik covers psycho-analysis and social consciousness. Unfortunately the story is lost in the experiment."<sup>25</sup> But Malik has done so honestly and intentionally, I believe. The application of psycho-analysis entails such irreparable loss or expense on life as the creative writers are unable to compensate. Freud has indicated the nature of the loss in his statement : "There are two tenets of psychoanalysis, which offend the whole world and excites its resentment; the one conflicts with intellectual and the other with moral and aesthetic prejudices."<sup>26</sup> The mental processes are, in the opinion of Freud essentially unconscious; and impulses, sexual in nature play a peculiarly large part in the causation of nervous and mental disorders.<sup>27</sup>

Syed Abdul Malik is inherently disposed to our traditional preoccupations towards optimism. Those fictions of Malik, which incline towards optimism look 'shallow' but are, if I am not incorrect, comparatively free of technical

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25. B.K. Barua, *History of Assamese Literature*, p. 181.

26. M.W. *General Introductions to Psycho-analysis*, p. 452.

27. *Ibid.*

imperfections. The depth and artistic imperfections in Malik's *Maram*, *Marahā Pāpārī*, *Prān Powār Pīcat*, *Prān Herowār Pācat*, *Jowār āru Upakūl*, *Śeṣ Upakūlar Śeluwā Pār*, *Kabitār Janma* and *Irānī Kuwarī* proceed from his psycho-analytic indulgence. In these he seeks indulgently to explore in the manner of James Joyce the despicable aspect of life. It is for his pride in romantic indulgence that he has achieved so little through art even when he has known so much about life in comparison with our young writers. In Ābiye Main's arrest on charge of stealing a necklace in *Kanthahār* and his imprisonment without defensive reaction, for example, he could have achieved much more than what he has, had he left himself open to the influence of depth psychology in Main's characterisation. In the depiction of Rajeswar in *Hāladhīyā Carāye Bāo Dhān Khāya*, Homen Bargochain has achieved under the influence of depth psychology a depth corresponding to that of Joseph K. in Kafka's *The Trial*. Again what Malik has done in *Ekā Bekā Bṛtta* out of Ajad's search of self-identification is no better than a distortion of existential psychology.

The most daring of our psycho-analytic writers is Homen Bargochain, most of whose fictions suffer loss of artistic brilliance. We may not be justified in assigning him to the likes of the American Waldo Frank but he is one of our fiction writers who has been most exoriated by a class of critics for his Freudian obsession. His fiction has hardly a person who does not correspond to a specific pattern of depth psychology. The artistic consequence of such conscious use of scientific

knowledge has been fatal. He has worked on a series of fictions, long and short from Mahāswetār Biyā onwards, where characters are victims of Oedipus complex, either in the positive or in the negative aspect of it :

- (1) In the unconscious of your father lies a distorted desire for you"

Mahāswetār Biyā.

- (2) In every woman who came into contact with me I used to seek the image of my mother. Dipali, Bibha, Jahanara, Rebeka, Madhuri - indeed in every woman of the world I wanted to get my mother back. But the mad yearning remained for ever unfulfilled.

Epitaph

- (3) Occasionally Jayanta thinks that he and his mother are looking secretly at each other from a distance beyond a certain bound; they are two independent personalities, inimical to each other.

Sanatorium

It is doubtful if anybody can tolerate reading them, when put together in a single collection. In some of his fictions, persons with phenomenal behaviour fall suddenly or inartistically to satisfy the creator's craze. The introduction of Ranjit, the sadist, has not enhanced the readability of Subālā; nor does the elimination of him from the novel can, I think, make it less enjoyable. The introduction of Ranjit's sadistic behaviour to Subala by the old prostitute appears less

interesting than Freud's featuring of sadism throughout the Major Works. The night scene in Kusīlaw, devoted to Sundarjan's attempt at inversion on Ratna, and Ratna's reaction to it does not seem to be an essential part of the novel. Sibanath's sensitivity to smell in Pitā-Putra would have been more pleasing, had it been left as a trait of his normal personality. But it has been detailed to a neurotic pattern instead. Sibanath and Prahlad are the creator's own projections made under the unworthy influence of the American Hemingway, who as W.M. Frohock points out in his The Novel of Violence has been more concerned with the relations between himself and some projections of himself and a harsh and hostile social environment than with relations between human beings.<sup>28</sup> To remain open to influence is not perhaps a vice for a creative artist.

"Knowledge of life may be obtained in various ways besides direct personal experience, it may in particular, be obtained through books and through conversation with other people, who have touched the world at points, where we have not touched ourselves."<sup>29</sup> But an extravagance of it without proper assimilation makes exhausting demand on the writer's inventive energy. In some of his fictions Bargohain has failed to attain substantial fidelity in handling psychological findings. Gautam, the artist in Octopus is a creation of wrong observation. He is a sadist, I think, on a par with Bob, the Negro soldier in the story. The man who delights himself in killing one woman

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28. Frohock, The Novel of Violence, p. 186.

29. Hudson, An Introduction to the Study of Literature, p. 135.

after another, and the man who enjoys the sight of killing are both sadists of the same magnitude. Bargohain's interpretation of Gautam as an artist - a lover of order or beauty is a startling distortion of psychological truth. Art is not quite out of reason. Gautam's extolation of Judy, dead in the hand of Bob, to the level of Cardelia, dead in the hand of King Lear is artistically at fault. It is a sheer nonsense to attempt to create pathetic beauty out of such death.<sup>30</sup>

The interpretation of Haranath in Marakar Swādhīnatā is faulty from the psycho-analytic view point, and disappointing from the artistic. It is not in conformity with the tenets of depth psychology to say that Haranath was normal as a young man in view of the other details in the story about his abnormality in adulthood.

It is not possible to make an excursion searching artistic imperfections in each of the whole range of psycho-analytic fictions. But a general heaviness is characteristic of fictions committed to this responsibility, not satisfying from the artistic point of view. This is undoubtedly due to the preponderance of chaos in them; and chaos in a psycho-analytic fiction is always artificial, meretricious, i.e., attractive in the surface but common-place in implication, for it is decipherable and coherent. And here is perhaps the justification of a critic being impressed that a psycho-analytic novel is dry, dismal, dogmatic and artificially diffuse. Nothing goes in it

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30. T.N. Goswami, Ādhunik Galpa Sahitya, p. 230.



without explanation, - of infantile predisposition aggravating neurosis in adulthood. It is hard to find in the whole range of our psycho-analytic fictions one without persons who are not obsessed by a feeling of guilt, sin, and most commonly of loneliness in some form or other. Loneliness is, I think, the most common source of suffering for a psycho-analytic hero. Occasionally they are either proton or electron as in the fictions of Saurabh Kumar Chaliha - dreary ghosts without adequate behaviouristic references. These ghosts can be made like demons, lurid and luscious, with the variety of life's primitive experiences. No persons in Bargohain's fictions appear dry - as dull skeletons. His Sibanaths, Rajeswars and Prahlads are both men and minds. He is as much concerned with their subjectivity, i.e., their action and behaviour as with their soul, i.e., with what goes in their consciousness. In the hand of a lesser writer, of whom we have many, a psycho-analytic hero figures as no better than "a seamy serpent of sex and aberrations." The lesser writers imitate psycho-analysis slavishly and revolt against traditions arrogantly. With them art becomes in practice, a lush appreciation of amoral sex.

Psycho-analysis has been highly commended as a method of curing mental diseases on the one hand, and mercilessly stigmatized as a systematic guide towards pessimism on the other. The trend of literary application of psycho-analysis is undeniably towards pessimism. The note of pessimism in psycho-analytic fiction proceeds as we have suggested earlier in the chapter from the undue stress it lays on the exploration of the

mind, which comprises, as Freud puts it "processes of the nature of feeling, thinking and wishing" and "such things as unconscious thinking and unconscious wishing."<sup>31</sup>

Indian literature, prior to the application of psycho-analysis into it was optimistic, ideal and philosophical. We have discussed the tradition of pure, spiritual sexuality in old Indian literature. The tradition has been continued by our modern masters, namely, Lakshminath Besbarua, Rajanikanta Bardoloi and Sarat Chandra Goswami almost in a spirit of idolatry, and occasionally occurs in the fictions of the most modern of our writers, namely, Malik, Bhattacharya and Homen Bargehain in an atmosphere of neurotic ambivalence. Assamese fiction owes the spirit of analysis and the use of scientific discoveries about the mind to the continental fictions, particularly English. Even English novels which brought our fiction into being was optimistic, moral and philosophical in the eighteenth century. The psychological method occasionally occurred as in the novels of Fielding and Richardson, but was not systematically practised. The well-made novels of the Victorian novelists were even comic notwithstanding their frequent penetration into the person's unconscious.<sup>32</sup> The Victorian novelists were, as a whole bracing in their moral tone. They did not discourage their readers as did their counterparts in France with their fatalism, nor did they make

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31. M.W. General Introduction to Psychoanalysis.

32. J.W. Beach, The Twentieth Century Novel, pp. 28, 44.

them feel that good and bad are indifferent in a world over which man has no control.<sup>33</sup> The same might well well be said about the fictions of the Russian Tolstoy and Dostoevsky even in their psychological preponderance.

The decadence in English fiction starts with the young psycho-analytic writers of the eighteen nineties, who used to "treat realistic theme realistically" without responding to passions or sentiments. They have no allegiance to the "ideas of morality and standards of conduct." There is nothing optimistic about George Moore's treatment of life. We may just as well apply the same to the novels of Hardy, Lawrence, Conrad, Sherwood Anderson, Thomas Woolfs, Faulkner, Dos Passos, Stephen Crane, Frank Norris, Harold Fredrie, Theodore Dreisser, J.M. Machado, De Assis (Brasil). They preserve the silence of the grave on the fuss of life. They lead their readers decisively towards pessimism, towards flouting all values, moral and spiritual. The man under their analysis is a man determined by heredity and environment. His is a world of darkness where human values are counted meaningless. The enthusiastic writers seem to forget the fact that psycho-analysis is a science of understanding and curing mental diseases caused by constitutional and environmental factors, and advocate in practice the wholesale overthrow of restraint and discipline in education, sexual relations and other spheres. They seem to lustily conclude that "all repression is bad and all conventions are to be flouted."

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33. J.W. Beach, *The Twentieth Century Novel*, p. 54.

Though Sigmund Freud stressed one reason for the settlement of all human problems, it is doubtful even if he restored anything for man here to sustain life. It is a question of consequence if he himself had really believed that a change or improvement of environment and blood would solve for man the problem of adjustment and bring him peace.

In New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis, Freud has modestly renounced his claim to a 'Weltanschauung' on the ground that science is still in its infancy.<sup>34</sup> Art, philosophy and religion, which man considers to be the sources of truth and value, and on which he relies for peace and salvation are in his consideration the enemies of science. About art he says: "Art is almost harmless and beneficent, it does not seek to be anything but an illusion."<sup>35</sup> Freud rejects outrightly or rather unsympathetically the claim of the latter two to give a unified solution of all the problems of our existence.<sup>36</sup> He distinguishes his psychology of the unconscious from philosophy, which relies exclusively on man's conscious experiences, and borrows its strength from revelation, intuition or inspiration.<sup>37</sup> The religious belief that "there is a power in the universe, which watches over the well-being of every individual with parental care and brings all his concerns to a happy ending" is

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34. M.W. Lecture 35, p. 874.

35. Ibid., p. 875.

36. Ibid., p. 874.

37. Ibid.

in Freud's opinion a mere illusion.<sup>38</sup> The destinies of man, on the contrary, are incompatible with a universal principle of benevolence or with a universal principle of justice.<sup>39</sup> And even if we leave, he adds, inanimate nature out of account and consider the destinies of individual man in so far as they depend on their relations with others of their own kind, it is by no means the rule that virtue is rewarded and wickedness punished.<sup>40</sup> Dark, unfeeling and unloving powers determine human destiny; the system of rewards and punishments, which, according to religion, governs the world seems to have no existence.<sup>41</sup> Erich Fromm states Freud to have criticised religion in his *The Future of an Illusion* that it seeks to keep man in bondage and dependence and prevents him from attaining the paramount task of human existence, i.e., freedom and independence. Man must leave father and mother and grow up to face reality. This is Freud's main argument against religion.<sup>42</sup> All great religions have proceeded from the negative formulation of incest taboo. Buddhism aims at ridding man of all familiar ties in order to find himself and his real strength, and Christianity insists on man's disobedience as the beginning of man's freedom and reason.<sup>43</sup>

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38. M.W. Lecture 35, p. 878.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. Erich Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, pp. 96, 97.

43. Ibid., pp. 83, 84.

Psycho-analysis overlooks all the spiritual demand of man and all the needs of the human mind.<sup>44</sup> About occultism (which "assumes that there are in fact more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy") Freud says that the general human inclination is towards credulity and belief in the marvellous.<sup>45</sup> Mysticism, spiritualism which once threatened his scientific outlook are nothing but transference of thought "I should like to point out that my inserting the unconscious between the physical and what has hitherto been regarded as the mental, psycho-analysis has prepared the way for the acceptance of such processes as telepathy."<sup>46</sup> By telepathy he means that ideas, states of excitement, volitions, which occur in the mind of one person, can be transferred through space to another, without the usual means of communication (words or signs) being employed.<sup>47</sup>

Freud's attitude towards love is neither philosophical nor optimistic; it is sharply realistic and scientific. Man is utterly defenseless in the highest state of love. Just as the mystic can never be sure God is there, so love carries us to that intensity of consciousness in which we no longer have any guarantee of security.<sup>48</sup> Freud discovers in the treatment of

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44. M.W. Lecture 35 "A Philosophy of Life", p. 874.

45. M.W. New Introductory Lectures, p. 819.

46. Ibid., Lecture 30, p. 822.

47. Ibid., p. 829.

48. Rollew May, Love and Will, p. 101.

the war-neurotics the ideas of masochism and the repetition compulsion and the polarities of love and hate, life and death.<sup>49</sup> And it is here that his attitude towards Eros differs from that of Plato. Plato considers Eros to be bound up with the possibilities ahead, which 'pull' one; it is the yearning for union - and moves one toward the more-than-nature. Freud's Eros, on the other hand, is a force coming out of chaotic, undifferentiated, instinctive energy-sources, along predictable and prescribable paths toward mature life, and only partially, painfully civilised love. Love cannot thrive in co-operation with will.<sup>50</sup>

Freud considers will an illusion, and argues for complete determinism, which, in practice, makes 'will' meaningless, along with cure or adjustment, psycho-analytic treatment aims at. For Aristotle man's irrationality is "a temporary aberration to be overcome by right education or re-education of his maladjusted emotions." But Freud's man has primitive cannibalism, and aggressive instincts which have the element of power in them, and which determine his behaviour. Man's will gets powerless in the service of three masters, namely, the id, the super-ego and the external world.<sup>51</sup>

Freud wanted to place man in his own position, ridding him of the Victorian illusion as we have explained in the first

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49. Rollo May, *Love and Will*, pp. 84, 85.

50. *Ibid.*, pp. 87, 88.

51. *Ibid.*, pp. 194-195, 207-222.

chapter of the thesis.

The removal of illusion is a good riddance for man. But in ridding man of his illusion he has alienated him of his ego, - the last blow on man as he says after the first two given by Copernicus and Darwin respectively.<sup>52</sup>

The fictional version of this tragic truth in our language is Malik's Aghorī Ātmār Kāhinī. All psycho-analytic fictions are, as a matter of fact stories of disintegrated men and women, with sex at their origin.

The modern notion of tragedy is not so much the killing or destruction of life as it is the lack of greatness and dignity in man, presentation of meaninglessness. Complete confusion, banality, ambiguity and vacuum of ethical standard as demonstrated by O'Neil in his *The Iceman Cometh*, *Waiting for Godot*, and *Death of a Salesman*, and by Virginia Woolf in her *Who's Afraid* are some of the essential features of modern tragedy.<sup>53</sup>

The note has been very impressively struck in Malik's *Dr. Arunābhar Asampurna Jīvanī* and in Radhika Mohan Goswami's *Niyatī*, and is more or less the common theme of our post-war fiction. The framework of morality and philosophy in which Pallaw has systematically or with classic rigidity disciplined himself is reduced to dust by the preponderance of incest in the world of Sankar and his daughter in Malik's *Gahwar*. Jury,

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52. M.W. General Introduction, p. 562.

53. Rollo May, *Love and Will*, p. 111.



transformed to the life of an ideal dancer gets reduced to an ordinary prostitute in *Prān Powār Picat*. Malik's attitude towards love and sex in *Śee Rātir Jonāk* is destitute of all religious and philosophical associations; it is sharply realistic.

There is nothing ideal, philosophical and optimistic in the treatment of sex by our modern writers. Birinohi Kumar Barua's *Jīvanar Bātat* has been remarked upon by Dr. S. N. Sarma as a modern tragic version of Kalidasa's *Śakuntalā*. In B.K. Bhattacharya's *Rangā Megha*, the young disrupt the traditional values along with the superstitions represented through the old Brahmin widow. In *Cināki Suti* the problem of love is discussed from different angles to the effect that no solution, free of ambiguity is reached. In *Pratipad* all attempts at ideal or philosophical speculation over love is discarded in preference of a scientific regulation of all human relationships. The artistic realisation of religion or God here is just the same as that in Freud's New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis.<sup>54</sup> The two worlds, physical and spiritual, pictured in *Ballawi* are not fit abodes for the likes of innocent Ali.

The diabolic urges of Freudian psychology, such as perversions, neuroses, psychoses and madness are most aptly demonstrated in Bargohain's fictions. It is hard, of course, to determine whether it is tragic or pessimistic or simply chaotic in implication. His characters are active and capable

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54. M.W. Lecture 35, p. 875.

of doing evil even when they are entrapped both from within and without. His young men are generally violent and some of them at worst to the extent of robbing their fathers of their consorts. He has even old fathers who can rationalise away the possibility of their daughter's marriage, preoccupied in their unconscious incestuous fixation. Positive biological, sexual violence between father and daughter as demonstrated in Malik's *Gahwar* does not occur in any of his fiction, but psychological diabolic violence of sex in the father-daughter and mother-son relationships nowhere so preponderously occur as in his fictions, and the implication of such violence is essentially tragic. Economic hardships force Subala's mother to force her daughter to professional prostitution. Bargohain's Bob, Haranath, Ranjit are typical instances of the diabolic extreme as explained by Rollo May in his Love and Will.<sup>55</sup> These characters seem close approximations to those in the fictions of Thomas Woolfe and Faulkner in their tragic violence.

The novels and short stories of Padma Barkataki are as a whole tragic in their firm insistence on the idea of determinism (i.e., the lack of free-will) and in their concentration on the plight of individuals trapped by heredity and environment. They frankly deal with human instincts and exaggerate sordid and pessimistic detail.

The proton and electron section of persons in Saurabh Kumar Chaliha's fiction is too dense in their loneliness and

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55. Rollo May, *Love and Will*, p. 124.

those of Kumar Kishore's are too tender to stand life. An excessive tenderness puts Animesh Bhatta in *Kawar āru Kankāl* in frequent fits of weeping. The tragedy of Gautam Barua, Palash, Miss Barua and Ranjan, Bikash, Lalita proceed if I have not misconstrued them, from "a paralysing fear of their own tenderness", i.e., from their individual neuroses, of which a kind of narcissistic tenderness is most characteristic.

Fate, destiny and many other concepts of Freud, such as libido, Thanatos and Eros are forces which reside in man, can seize him and render him "nature's tool". When a man fails to come to terms with them he falls victim to pathological suffering.

Bhupendra Kumar Bhattacharya's *Kaurav*, Rini Barua's *Adbhut Trpti*, Kirtinath Hazarika's *Acetan*, Runu Barua's *Aprakāś*, Bhagawan Sarma's *Eikhan Kār Hat*, Dipali Dutta's *Kunti Bilāp*, Nirban, Debidas Neog's *Phalgu* are some of our fictions which get to the core of pessimism. A searching study of our fiction would make it easy for us to justify what the critics have often complained that psycho-analysis is "a systematic training in indecision", - "a disease of which its therapy purports to be the cure."<sup>56</sup>

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56. Rollo May, *Love and Will*, p. 194.

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