Woman versus Womanliness in India:
An Essay in Cultural and Political Psychology

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I

At one plane, human civilizations can be seen as a continuous effort at expanding awareness of the subtler and more institutionalized forms of inequity and the suffering born of it. Person-to-person aggression and personal sadism have been punished since almost the dawn of civilization; for survival, every society had to do that. But, as Bertrand Russell was fond of pointing out, social ethics always lag behind private ethics. So slavery, racism, colonial exploitation, and genocide were not only permitted, but often encouraged. Some controls, it is true, were maintained; the sacred texts everywhere defined social rights and social wrongs and prescribed limits to group violence. But the observance of such limits was not based on an understanding of the less obvious forms of oppression or of the social institutions and psychological defenses which legitimized such oppression. For instance, civilization had existed in the West for many centuries before men such as Owen, Marx, and Kropotkin formulated ambitious explanations of intraspecies aggression in terms of social groupings which till then had been seen as 'naturally' different.[1] Today the idea of a continuum between the exploiters and the exploited, between the aggressors and their victims, is commonplace. It was not so only a century ago.

There were still other, and subtler, forms of inequity. Sigmund Freud, for instance, was one of the first to point out the inequities associated with biological strata like age and sex. Though Friedrich Engels had noted earlier the vulnerability of women in general and Western women in particular, in some ways he merely extended the formal model of class analysis to the condition of women.[2] Freud had less faith in human nature and even less willingness to grant that economic institutions were the only means of oppression human intelligence and nature could devise. He traced the root of inequity to a more fundamental stratificatory system 'designed' to

derive its strength from man's evolutionary experience, namely, psychobiological growth. As a pioneer, he understandably directed attention to the biological stratum which was most vulnerable at the time, namely, children. For the first time in human history he systematically analysed how over the centuries man has exploited children, using them to express sadistic and narcissistic impulses. He also showed how man has built enormous defences to deny to himself his cruelty and exploitation. There were times when infanticide and the torture of children were widespread in the world, yet some of the most sensitive and humane thinkers of the age never protested against them. In fact, children were tortured by men such as Milton and Beethoven. Child labour was acceptable till about fifty years ago in reputedly the most civilized parts of the world. The sexual abuse of children was common: some of the greatest Greek philosophers enthusiastically supported the homosexual use of children.[3] It would be rash to conclude that they were vicious hypocrites—they were no more hypocrites than the defenders of the democracy of Greek city states which rested on slavery. They just did not have a large enough span of moral awareness. Human morality had not yet acquired (or perhaps it had lost) adequate depth at that point of time.

Gregory Zilboorg's deservedly famous paper suggests something very similar for the man–woman relationship.[4] Here, too, oppression results from attempts to deny one's deepest anxieties, which are projected to an exploitative relationship institutionalized over centuries. The most socially valued attributes of the male, Zilboorg argues, are a result of the natural selection imposed upon him by the female's original power to instinctively sense which mate was biologically fitter. This primal dominance arouses in man insecurity, jealousy, and hostility towards woman. He has a phylogenetic awareness that his primordial role is 'highly specialized as no more than a temporary and ephemeral appendage to life', as a 'parasitic' fertilizer.[5] Till now he has had no civilizational awareness that he has been trying to work through this basic hostility by limiting the full possibilities of woman through sheer oppression.

It is an indicator of how far man has succeeded in these efforts that in many societies the evolutionary and biological primacy of woman has given way to an institutionally entrenched jealousy of man on her part. It is this complex psychosocial phenomenon

which Freud appropriately called penis envy.[6] I do not think, as many defenders of woman do, that Freud was wrong in his analysis; there is enough data from some of the major Western societies to support him. He merely missed the historical tragedy that was involved in this reversal of roles.

All this is by way of a long digression. The point is this: the present awareness of the constricted role of woman in Indian society and in public affairs is part of an ongoing process of civilizational change and must be so analysed. This demands that we identify the structure of defences, individual as well as cultural, which has given meaning to the role of woman in Indian society, defences which have been challenged in recent times by new waves of social consciousness. Only then can we hope to isolate and control the long-term processes of social and psychological changes in this sphere.

For example, everybody knows that the survival rate of boys in India is much higher than that of girls. But only scattered individuals and groups feel passionately about it, in spite of the fact that the number of vulnerable young girls in India is larger than that of landless labourers. Even fewer persons are sensitive to the fact that this indirect female infanticide — or, to use Johan Galtung's term, structural violence toward woman — is mainly a function of maternal neglect, a weird expression of woman's hostility toward womanhood and also, symbolically, toward her own self. This classic instance of the psychological defense of turning against self by identifying with the aggressive male draws attention to the way in which some social institutions have made woman herself a participant in her self-repudiation and intra-aggression. The oppressive reality for woman, one might suggest, is now only partially outside her. A part of that reality has been introjected through a long historical process of social learning, and the learning has been thorough. It has been said that man's cruelty toward man is exceeded only by man's cruelty toward woman. But even man's cruelty toward woman is no match for the cruelty of woman toward woman.[7]

To ignore this aspect of womanhood in India is merely to strike a moral posture congruent with the strident tones of the female liberators of women in the West; it abridges Indian awareness of some of the latent justifications of oppression in this society. Such a statement itself challenges vested interests and arouses

anxiety, so I shall begin with a consideration of the linkage between the Indian's traditional world image and his means of livelihood.

II

An agricultural society has its own distinctive symbiotic relationship with nature. Since the time of neolithic agriculture, this distinctiveness has lain in the central role of woman in society and culture. It was she who was primarily involved in 'gentling and nurturing and breeding'; it was her 'capacity for tenderness and love' which gave the earliest agricultural settlements of man their touch of 'security, receptivity, enclosure, nurture'; and it was she who made fully possible the growth of civilization.[8]

A number of studies have found that such a society tends to emphasise the feminine principle in nature, to see nature as a mother who is irascible and unpredictable, propitiable only through a wide variety of rites and rituals.[9] Particularly in societies where nature continues to be the dominant partner in the man–nature dyad, important themes in folklore and religious texts are often the fecundity and bounty of nature as well as her frequent denial of sustenance to men who have poor means of controlling the fickle mother and are totally dependent upon her for survival. This is certainly true of India. Though the Brahmanic tradition attempted to limit the dominance of woman in society, the pre-Aryan dominance of woman was retained in many areas of life, particularly in the symbolic system.[10] This undeniably is a matrifocal culture in which femininity is inextricably linked with *prakriti*, or nature, and *prakriti* with *leela*, or activity. Similarly, the concept of *adya shakti*, primal or original power, is entirely feminine in India. It is the male principle in the godhead, *purusha*, that is reliable but relatively passive, weak, distant, and secondary. That is why the deities that preside over those critical sectors of life which one cannot control — such as the success of crops and the occurrence of famines (food), protection against cholera and smallpox (personal survival), and childbirth and child health (perpetuation of race) — are all motherly figures. All the more cruel rituals which are mentioned as indicators of Indian medievalism, have centered on the goddesses: sati, or the enforced ritual suicide of women after the death of their husbands; child sacrifice at Sagra Sangam; infanticide to ensure the longevity of dams,

bunds, and buildings; and human sacrifice of various forms. The thugs, or men who robbed after the quasi-ritual murder of unwary travellers, considered themselves devotees of Kali. For that matter, most of the marginal groups, such as thieves and dacoits, have sought meaning as social beings by being devotees of one 'black' goddess or another, that is, at another level, by identifying — and identifying with — an aggressive, treacherous, annihilating mother. In other words, the ultimate authority in the Indian mind has always been feminine. It is this authority that the traditional Indian male propitiates or makes peace with through symbolic or real aggression against his own self and by identifying with what he sees as the passive, weak, masculine principle in the cosmos.

III

There is a congruence between this structure of authority and the traditional family and socialization systems. Studies of child rearing done in the more orthodox sectors of Indian society have repeatedly shown that in the critical years of life the mother is the only true and close authority to which the child is exposed. In his relationships with others, the Indian child has a wide spectrum of predefined roles and role-specific behaviour. There is distance and fragmentation of self in these interpersonal relationships. It is only with respect to his mother that he is his whole self and recognizable as an individual.[11]

Associated with this in the son is a deep feeling of ambivalence toward a controlling yet discontinuous mother. He often sees her as a treacherous betrayer, mainly because of her intermittent presence and nurture which are in turn due to the exigencies of her familial role, social obligations, mores, and taboos.[12] The Indian's fantasy life is to a great extent organized around this image of an angry, incorporative, fickle mother, against whom his anger is directed and from whom through a process of projection, counter-aggression is feared.[13] His model of male identification, too, is the father who is more a mother's son than a woman's husband, and therefore is swayed by the same fantasies and fears.

For the Indian mother, on the other hand, the son is the major medium of self-expression. It is her motherhood that the traditional family values and respects; her role as wife and to a lesser extent as daughter are devalued and debased. The woman's self-respect

in the traditional system is protected not through her father or husband, but through her son. It is also through the son — and for that matter on the son — that she traditionally exercises her authority.[14]

Here, thus, is a case of psycho-ecological balance. What nature and economic systems emphasise, the family and cultural systems underscore. No wonder all major social reforms and attempts at social change after the beginning of British rule have centered on woman and femininity. It is by protesting against or defying the traditional concepts of woman and womanhood that all Indian modernizers have made their point. On the other hand, all forms of conservatism and protests against modern Western encroachements on Indian society have taken shelter in and exploited the symbol of motherhood.

IV

Thus the mother–son relationship is the basic nexus and the ultimate paradigm of human social relationships in India. To an extent this is true of all cultures, but only in a few cultures have the loneliness and self-abnegation of woman as a social being found such elaborate justification in her symbolic status as a mother. Since motherhood is a compensatory mechanism, society can manipulate and control a woman by forcing her to take on her maternal identity, and a man by forcing him to take on the son's role, whenever there is a crisis. The culture tends to shape critical public relations to fit or exploit that symbolic paradigm.

Yet simultaneously Indian society inculcates in women self-doubt, and in men a certain ambivalence toward womanhood. This ambivalence is very different from the ambivalence which the Western man feels toward woman or the universal fear which Zilboorg, Bettelheim, and Salzman diagnose. In Indian society, except for small sectors in which the martial values predominate, the man's fear is not that he will lapse into womanliness and thus lose his masculinity or potency. In fact, potency in India is not generally something 'men strive for, protect or protest in the external world. The masculine fear here is that a man may fall foul of the cosmic feminine principle, that woman will betray, aggress, pollute, or at least fail to protect.

There are two major corollaries of such uncertainty about the

cosmic feminine principle. The first of these can be stated in the form of a dialectic but is perhaps a matter of the various levels at which the Indian man lives his psychological life. On one plane, he is continually afraid that he may become too independent of the maternal principle of authority, as a son too defiant of the power of cosmic motherhood, and too close to open anger toward his mother. On the other, he is constantly anxious that he will be incorporated by an all-encompassing, powerful mother, lose his autonomy and individuality altogether, and be reduced to the 'safe' but ineffective role of the father.

Secondly, 'bisexuality' in India has always been considered an indicator of saintliness and yogic accomplishments. Perhaps it is considered an indicator of having successfully coped with or transcended one's deepest conflicts about femininity and masculinity. Perhaps it has something to do with the traditional concept of *ardhanarishwara*, or bisexual god, associated with the deity that combines a god's grandeur with yogic asceticism, namely Shiva. However it be, one who is close to godliness is expected to show a little less concern with the worldly division between the sexes and a little more ability to transcend the barriers imposed by one's own sexual self-hood. He is expected to subscribe to values which are unfettered by society's prevalent sexual identities.[15] In India, unlike in many Western societies, what can be called the softer forms of creativity and the more intuitive and introspective styles of intellectual and social functioning are not strongly identified with femininity. Nor is masculinity very closely linked with forceful, potency-driven, 'hard', and hardheaded modes of intrusive behavior. Sex-role specific qualities are differently distributed; in fact, the concept of potency in Indian high culture has always had a private, introversive quality about it. The Brahman's concept of ritual and intellectual potency has nothing in common with the manifest extroversive concept of potency in the modern West. Brahmanic potency is 'derivable', as it was in medieval Europe's monastic orders, from displaced sexual potency through abstinence and denial of one's sexual self.

This has another aspect. In the twilight zones of consciousness in which creative minds dwell, there is always a certain emphasis on the ability to turn inward and live in one's own inner world; a tendency to accept intuition, tenderness and *caritas* as values;

a sensitivity to one's natural environment and to the 'latent' communication among men; and the capacity to use media of self-expression which mobilize feelings, imagery, and fantasies. In the West this has invariably meant becoming more feminine. That is why psychological studies of creative men in the West frequently show that one of the best predictors of creativity in men is the extent of their psychological femininity. In the Western context Berdyaev has argued that the figure of Christ is androgynous and that 'all creators must be so if they are to conceive and bear greatly and whole'.[16] Understandably too, there are elements of pathos and loneliness associated with such a search for bisexuality in societies where, even at the level of symbols, males dominate.[17]

My own studies of creative men in India roughly corroborate this finding, but with one important *caveat*. The Indian, apparently, is not more creative only when he is more feminine, i.e., when he can better accept his feminine self. His creativity also consists in his being able to identify the cosmic feminine principle with his own internal concept of authority and then in defying this authority and simultaneously making large-scale symbolic reparations for this defiance. This is a major ingredient of the relationship between womanliness and creativity in India. The isomorphism between one's inner controls and the society's concept of authority sharpens one's sensitivity to the basic symbolic system of the culture and makes one more rooted in the culture's style of self-expression. On the other hand, this defiance of one's final and most intimate authority gives an edge to one's defiance of the shared concept of authority outside. Clearly, this defiance is one of the cornerstones of creative effort.

There is another aspect to this linkage between creativity and womanliness in India. Public defiance rationalizes one's more guilt-provoking private defiance. If this public defiance of authority is linked to the cause of woman, either as an exercise in reform geared to her good or as a purely intellectual exercise in understanding her problems, the structure of rationalization becomes stronger and more usable. It binds the moral anxiety triggered by defiance of one's internal authority and, at another level, atones for that defiance. This atonement — through working for the cause of woman or, in its intellectualized version, through understanding woman and femininity — has been perhaps the single most important theme in the history of social creativity in India.

Many years ago someone pointed out to me how formidable and powerful the women are in the *Mahabharata* — the epic which perhaps summarizes the Indian ethos better than any work of social science — and how the story revolves round them. It struck me then as an original viewpoint, and over the years I have been convinced that it is correct in more senses than one. When looking at the styles of creative self-expression during the last two hundred years, a period characterized by a fast tempo of social change and the breakdown of many aspects of the older life style, one cannot but marvel at the crucial role that woman as a symbol and womanliness as an aspect of Indian identity have played. This linkage is clearer in some parts of the country than in others, because some communities, such as in Bengal, have a greater tendency than others to dramatize the psychological problems of society at large.[18] Perhaps Bengal's tribal base, unsure Brahmanization, deep symbiotic links between means of livelihood and cultural products, and strong feudal traditions have something to do with this.[19] At least from Rammohun Roy to Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar in the area of social reform, from Bankim Chandra Chatterji through Sarat Chandra Chatterji to Satyajit Ray in literature and the arts, from Vivekananda to Aurobindo in religion, womanhood as a symbol and womanliness as a subject of study have been the centrepieces of creative consciousness in different sectors of Bengali life.

Whether in Bengal or the country as a whole, certain closely related modes of symbolic adaptation have dominated India's distinctive style of entry into the modern world. What came into flux in the British period was an entire authority system which involved the invalidation at many levels of the traditional equation between femininity and power, the old concept of propitiation through rituals and magic, and the primal mythical personification of nature as an inviolate cosmic mother. Some, like Rammohun Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, tried to redraw the traditional definition of womanly identity, trying to introduce into it new elements drawn from reinterpreted traditions and to endogenize certain Western themes. Their own deeper ambivalence toward woman found in these efforts a personal adaptive device. I have shown elsewhere in this volume how true this was of Roy, and some of the new biographies of Vidyasagar do not leave us in much doubt on this score either.[20] Some with mass appeal

like Sarat Chandra Chatterji and Govardhanram Tripathi among writers, and Vidyasagar and Gandhi among reformers, tried to legitimize woman's wifely role in particular and public role in general by stressing in them aspects of her motherliness.[21] Some others like Ramakrishna Paramhansa and Aurobindo found in motherhood the supreme concept of a new godhead, rooted in tradition on the one hand and capable of balancing the overemphasis on masculinity in the Semitic religions on the other. In fact, the appeal to many Westerners lay in this concept of a godhead that could be counterpoised against the patriarchal orientations dominating the Western view of man and nature. Still others like Bankim Chandra Chatterji and Vivekananda linked this traditional image of sacred motherhood to the modern concept of motherland, hoping thereby to give a new sanctity to the concept of nation in an essentially apolitical society. Even Gandhi tried to give a new dignity to women by making a new equation between womanliness and political potency, denying in the process the Western association between maleness and control over public affairs and statecraft; rejecting the martial tradition in India, which, like martial traditions in most other societies, debased womanhood; and abrogating the colonial identity which equated femininity with passivity, weakness, dependence, subjugation, and absence of masculinity.[22] His conservatism as well as his modernity, his success as well as his failure, rested on this equation.

V

In sum, the redefinition of womanhood in presentday India has required a redefinition of the concept of man and of public functioning. In this ongoing process, the emancipation of woman and her equality with man have been important but not the main issues. They may today lead to vicious debates in small groups of already privileged modern women, but the majority in the hinterland have not surprisingly never considered these themes relevant for social analysis and intervention. To make the issues of emancipation of woman and equality of sexes primary, one needs a culture in which conjugality is central to male–female relationships. One seeks emancipation from and equality with one's husband and peers, not with one's son. If the conjugal relationship itself remains relatively peripheral, the issues of emancipation and equality must remain so too.[23]

Thus in conclusion I must confront the profound yet common-place paradox of every social interpretation of the Indian woman: why do some women in India reach the pinnacles of public power and recognition while women in general have kept out of large areas of public life?[24] According to some, the ascendancy of certain women is proof that Indian culture does not intrinsically discriminate against women. According to others, these women are exceptions that prove nothing. To psychologists, there is always a continuity between the commonplace and the exceptional. I have already said that, in India, competition, aggression, power, activism, and intrusiveness are not so clearly associated with masculinity. In fact, in mythology and folklore, from which norms often come for traditionally undefined social situations, many of these qualities are as frequently associated with women. The fantasy of a castrating, phallic woman is also always round the corner in the Indian's inner world.

That is why in some areas of life, disjunctive with the traditional life style and not having clearly defined or well-developed norms, women do not start with as great a handicap as they do in many other societies. Obvious examples of such areas are politics and public affairs and some scientific and religious activities.[25] Here public success does not seem to detract from private womanliness. In other words, in such instances the Indian woman can more easily integrate within her feminine identity the participation in what by Western standards are manly activities but in India are either not defined in terms of sex roles or are tinged with trans-sexual or bisexual connotations. In these areas, Indian women do not have to fight the same battle that their Western sisters have to fight, though some of them do pretend to give battle to existing norms here too.[26]

That, of course, is shadow boxing. I am not concerned here with those for whom the search for freedom and dignity as women has become a search for a new neurotic stability which they hope will defend them as successfully against self-awareness as the now crumbling defences once did. For the more sensitive woman, the challenge is nothing less than redefinition of herself. The first task that faces her is to devise means of de-emphasising some aspects of her role in her family and society and emphasising others, so that she may widen her identity without breaking totally from its cultural definition or becoming disjunctive with its psychobio-

logical distinctiveness. In the West that may mean defying the limits of conjugality and giving a new dignity to the maternal role of woman; in India it may involve transcending the partial identity imposed by motherhood and winning a new respect for conjugality. Partial identities always extract a price from those who live with them, either as victims or as beneficiaries. Indian women have paid terribly for Indian insensitivity, but they have also extracted a heavy toll from a society which has not yet learned to live with all aspects of womanhood. In that respect theirs is not what Rollo May would call a case of 'authentic innocence' but that of 'pseudo-innocence'.[27] This innocence leads one to participate in a structurally violent system because of the unawareness of one's power to intervene in the real world and because of the indirect psychological benefits of being a victim.

But then, ultimately this is no different from ancient wisdom. The victims and beneficiaries of a system, even commonsense admits, are rarely ever exclusive groups. Modern psychology only strengthens one's belief that no marauder can hope to be a marauder without being a prey and no prey can be a prey without being a marauder.

NOTES

1. Erik H. Erikson has called attention to the manner in which men and societies legitimized these differences with reference to the latent construct of 'pseudo-species'. See his 'Race and the Wider Identity', in *Identity, Youth and Crisis*, (New York: Norton, 1968), pp. 295–30.
2. *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (New York: International, 1942).
3. One even gave elaborate instructions on how to perform well in this sphere, though he was kind enough to advise that one should not stimulate the genitals of a child when indulging in buggery because that might lead to premature sexual growth in the child and be bad for his morals.
   L. de Mause, 'The Evolution of Childhood', in de Mause ed., *The History of Childhood* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), provides excellent data on the treatment of children through the ages. See also my 'Reconstructing Childhood', Paper presented at the meeting on 'Alternative Visions as Desirable Societies', Mexico City, May 1979.
4. 'Masculine and Feminine, Some Biological and Cultural Aspects', *Psychiatry*, 1944, 7, 257–96. See also Bruno Bettelheim, *Symbolic Wounds: Puberty Rites and the Envious Male* (New York: Collier, 1962).

5. Ontogenetically, too, it is the female sex which is primal, not the male. See a summary statement in Leon Salzman, 'Feminine Psychology Revisited, Circa 1970', *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 1971, *31*, 123–33.

6. A sensitive interpretation of Freud's view of womanhood and its humanist implications can be found in Erik H. Erikson, 'Inner and Outer Space: Reflections on Womanhood', *Daedalus*, 1964, *93*, 582–606.

7. For an early psychological analysis of woman's identification with the aggressive male and her hostility toward womanhood see Karl Menninger, *Love Against Hate* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World 1942,), Chapter 4. It may seem too superficial to be important, but in a society like ours, a major obstacle to the equal treatment of woman by man in job situations is the pressure exerted by the insecure female relatives of both male and female job-holders.

8. Lewis Mumford, *The City in History* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1961), Chapter 1.

9. Barbara Smoker, making the point that the Judeo-Christian God was 'the original male chauvinistic pig', has tried to show how the position of woman in the original peasant culture of the West changed in response to a 'divine sex change'. Gradually the fertility goddesses gave way to a patriarchal God who was perceived as the creator of man after his own image. See 'Women and the Patriarchal God', *The Secularist*, (33), May–June 1975, 67–8.

10. See on this theme Heinrich Zimmer, *Philosophies of India* (New York: Meridian, (1956). The Aryan attempt to contain the importance of woman was more successful in the Brahmanic and Brahmanized sectors than in the rest of society where women retained much of their traditional freedom and prerogatives.

11. See for example M.S. Gore, *Urbanization and Family Change* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1968), Chapter 1; also Dhirendra Narayan, 'Growing up in India', *Family Process*, 1964, *3*, 148–52.

12. An important element in her familial and social roles is the fact that she is expected to be the main socializing agent for her children, responsible for meting out both rewards and punishments. This fosters the child's ambivalence towards her. In many societies, the responsibility for administering punishment is mainly the father's. Here he is on the whole an outsider to the reward-punishment system for the children.

There is also the possibility that the wife resents the husband's social superiority and dominance and, unable to express it, displaces her unconscious destructive impulses toward him to her son. P. E. Slater, *The Glory of Hera* (Boston: Beacon, 1968). Paraphrased in Sudhir Kakar, 'Aggression in Indian Society: An Analysis of Folk Tales', *Indian Journal of Psychology*, 1974, *49*, 119-26, particularly 125-6.

13. G. Morris Carstairs, *The Twice Born* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1957); Philip Spratt, *Hindu Culture and Personality* (Bombay: Manaktalas, 1966). See also Beatrice B. Whiting (ed.), *Mothers in Six Cultures* (New York: Wiley, 1966).

14. As is well-known, the Indian family underemphasises the wife's role and overemphasises the mother's to blur the outlines of the nuclear family and deemphasise it as the basic unit of family life. Though a huge majority of Indians stay in nuclear households, the values associated with the extended family system are a major influence on intra-family relationships.

15. See a more detailed discussion of this in Ashis Nandy, 'Ramanujan's Passage to England: A Psychohistorical Note on the Public and Private Culture of Science', *Psychoanalytic Review*, 1979, 66.

One wouid expect this idealization of bisexuality to lead to understanding and tolerance of the other sex (Judith S. Kestenberg, 'Vicissitudes of Female Sexuality', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 1956, *4*, 453–76). One wonders why this has not happened in India's high culture. Perhaps what the culture emphasises is not so much bisexuality as trans-sexuality. It is in India's low cultures that androgyay as a value has had its fullest impact.

16. N. Berdyaev, *The Meaning of the Creative Act*, translated by D. A. Laurie, (New York: Harper and Row, 1954), as reported in Frank Barron, *Creative Person and Creative Process* (New York: Holt, Rinehart anc Winston, 1969), p.105. See also Frank Barron, 'The Psychology of Creativity', in Frank Barron et al., *New Frontiers in Psychology*, Vol. II (New York: Rinehart and Winston, 1965), p.40; D. W. Mackinnon, 'The Personality Correlates of Creativity: A Study of American Architects, in P.E.Vernon (ed.), *Creativity*, Penguin, 1970, pp. 289–311, particularly 305–6.

17. On the tragedy which accompanies the search for bisexuality in the West, see the fascinating study of Lawrence Kubie, 'The Drive to Become Both Sexes', *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 1974, *43*, 349–426.

18. How far this helps the society to 'work through' these problems by providing tentative solutions — and non-solutions — is, however, a different issue.

19. See a brief discussion of this in Ashis Nandy 'Sati': a Nineteenth Century Tale of Women, Violence and Protest, Chapter 1.

Kakar, in 'Aggression in Indian Society', provides interesting comparative data on seven Indian subcultures which show Bengal to be exceptional in its concern with the destructive and threatening aspects of the mother, and unconcern with the Oedipal conflicts between the father and the son.

20. 'Sati', Chapter 1; Binay Ghosh, *Vidyasagar o Bangali Samaj* (Calcutta: Bengal Publishers, 1958, Vols. I–III); and Indra Mitra, *Karuna Sagar Vidyasagar*, (Calcutta: Ananda Publishers, 1969).

21. In fact, this redefinition through the new norms of sex-role specific behaviour was tried also by Rammohun Roy in the Brahmo ideology and by Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar in his style of reform and the rationalizations he offered for them. Nirupama Pota's ongoing study of the four most creative writers of twentieth century Hindi literature (Jay Shankar Prasad, Suryakant Tripathi Nirala, Sumitra Nandan Pant and Mahadevi Verma) suggest something roughly similar.

22. How central this theme was to Gandhi's political programme has been discussed by Erik H. Erikson, *Gandhi's Truth* (New York: Norton, 1969). Also see Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph, *The Modernity of Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1966), Part 2.

23. The theme of equality between the sexes has been less dead, because it also relates to equality between the son and the daughter. So from Rammohun Roy to Jawaharlal Nehru, a number of reformers have made it an important plank in their ideologies of social change.

24. Veena Das, 'Indian Women: Work, Power and Status', in *Indian Women: From Purdah to Modernity* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1976), pp. 129–45 seems to

argue that men in India are also kept out of large areas of life. If women do not have access to men's life, men also do not have access to women's life.

25. I must remind those who may be surprised by my inclusion of some aspects of religious activity in this list that traditional Hinduism is not an organized. religion. Some of the highly organized Hindu sects which have sprung up during the last 150 years are thus clearly discontinuous with the older life style. In such sects women often play important roles.

26. I must reluctantly draw attention to the fact that in India the truly creative women in these areas have rarely been feminists, ardent or otherwise. The battle has been fought by men who have presumed that the plight of women in other areas of life extends to these too.

27. On May's concepts of childlike innocence and unauthentic innocence, see his *Power and Innocence* (New York: Norton, 1972).