

## HINDU PERSONALITY FORMATION UNCONSCIOUS PROCESSES

A CHILD'S learning begins long before it can talk. Indeed it is likely that the learning which occurs during its first two years to a large extent lays down those patterns of expectation and response by which we recognise an individual's personality. During the earliest years the child's intelligence is gradually developing—prompted, so Piaget maintains, by social stimulation—but its feelings are from the very outset intense, though at first undifferentiated. Later on, the habit of rationalisation will intervene to an increasing extent between perception and feeling and between feeling and response: the innocent eye of childhood will be dimmed, and the spontaneity of young children will be succeeded by the deliberation and self-consciousness of their elders.

This intervention of rational categories serves a protective as well as a useful purpose. It is useful because verbal concepts make possible the learning of new techniques of mastery over persons and things; and it is protective because cerebral control damps down, if it does not altogether inhibit, feelings which can be painfully strong. Nevertheless, the life of feeling continues its subterranean existence, finding expression in emotional response to people, to nature, and to works of art, and in phantasies and dreams. In adult life feeling-responses tend to be subordinated to deliberate, rational behaviour; but on closer examination this behaviour is often found to be merely a disguised expression of emotional reactions.

These irrational, emotionally determined quirks of behaviour and response are not wholly arbitrary. They are found to recur in many different contexts; and when studied carefully they reveal a pattern and an interconnectedness in which the connections are not necessarily logical but in many cases symbolical, and only subjectively meaningful. In order to interpret them correctly intellectual understanding of the facts of an informant's situation is not enough; one has in addition to empathise, to "feel with" him before one can identify his elusive patterns of emotional response. Once

identified, these emotional syndromes can provide the key to the understanding of both individual and group personality.

This is the point at which students of culture and personality part company with those psychologists and anthropologists who refuse on principle to go beyond facts which can be objectively demonstrated and quantified: and yet the antithesis between these methods is not complete. The employment of aesthetic sensibility in order to recognise emotional sequences in a person's (or a people's) thinking and behaviour does not preclude the subsequent use of systematic observation and measurement in order to verify or modify predictions to which these empathically-identified concepts have given rise.

Since Ruth Benedict's pioneering work there have been several outstanding examples of the interpretation of national character. Among others might be mentioned the studies of the Balinese by Bateson and Mead, of the American Indians by Erik Erikson, of the Americans by Mead and Gorer, of the Japanese by Benedict, of the Germans by Dicks and by Schaffner, of the Russians by Dicks and Gorer, the work of Roheim and Kardiner, and the group of studies reported by Mead and Métraux.\*

Although diverse in content, these works are united by certain assumptions held in common by their authors: that the key to understanding national character lies in the study of processes in the personality development of individuals; that events which occur in the earliest stages of human psychological maturation have an enduring influence throughout later life; and that dynamic psychology provides the best available theory for the elucidation of personality development. These assumptions are also basic to the interpretations of Hindu personality development advanced in the present book.

In attempting to understand the outlook of an alien people, an ever more comprehensive knowledge of the facts about their language, history, geography, economics, social structure and religion can take us only part of the way. Sooner or later we come up against the realisation that these facts mean something different to them and to us. In order fully to understand a people's "otherness" we must try to grasp the essence of these distortions; and this involves a recognition of subjective emotional factors in their personalities—and in our own.

\* Benedict (1934); Bateson and Mead (1942); Erikson (1950); Mead (1942); Gorer (1948); Benedict (1946); Dicks (1950); Schaffner (1948); Dicks (1952); Gorer (1949); Roheim (1932, 1934); Kardiner (1939, 1945); Mead and Métraux (1953)

Each people has a characteristic "style" of thinking and of personal interaction, and this is not fortuitous: it is due to the continuance, in the unconscious mind of each member of the society, of certain emotionally significant phantasies which were formed in early infant life. Group character can be interpreted and understood only when the underlying phantasies upon which it is based are brought to consciousness. In a personal psycho-analysis the focus is upon the unique idiosyncratic elements in each patient's pattern of phantasies; in the study of national character, on the other hand, it is the communally-shared phantasies which demand attention.

Human phantasy life can be compared to an unfamiliar script which is still in the process of being interpreted. Its cryptograms have been present since the beginnings of history, in the form of myths and legends, dreams, superstitions and fairy tales. These ciphers have always been regarded as significant because they were strangely moving although no one knew why. It was Freud who first succeeded in deciphering them and spelling out what they mean. Using psycho-analytic theory as the key, it is now possible to chart the basic phantasies found in the emotional life of individuals, and of communities.

The process whereby infantile phantasies come to underlie adult personality is closely analogous to the way in which a child learns to talk. A baby's first utterances are formless cries prompted by feelings of hunger and discomfort, and the relief of his discomfort leads him to return to silence, and to sleep. Within a few weeks, however, wakefulness begins to play a larger part in the infant's life. He begins to chuckle, to burble and to crow as well as to cry. At this stage there is a very wide range of meaningless sounds (many of them rather attractive) which he can and does utter; but during his first year he becomes increasingly interested in using this gift of utterance in order to communicate with those nearest to him, particularly his mother. At first their communication is in "meaningful sounds" rather than in words, but already at this stage he finds that the great majority of the sounds which he can utter are useless as means of communication—because his mother-tongue, like every human language, has selected a quite restricted number of these many possible utterances and regards only these as being meaningful. These are described as phonemes, and constitute the basic elements of sound of which the language is composed.

Already in 1911 the linguist and anthropologist Franz Boas had enunciated these principles of phonetic analysis: (1) that

the total number of sounds that may be found as one proceeds from language to language is unlimited; but (2) that every single language has a definite and limited group of sounds, none of which is excessively large.\*

This restriction of the gamut of "available" utterances gives each language its individual cadence and imposes upon all those whose mother-tongue it is, a style of articulation which is recognisable even when they speak in another language. It is a matter of every-day experience that one can often identify a Norwegian, a Hungarian, a West African, an Indian or a Scot by the characteristic accent which each one brings to the speaking of English. By means of phonetic analysis one can identify with some precision the repertoire of sounds to which each speaker's utterances are habitually restricted, and can predict the characteristic transpositions which will occur when he talks a language other than his own.

Clearly one begins to acquire one's native phoneme-pattern even before one has learned to talk. At an equally early age, the ground-work is laid for defining the pattern of one's future style of emotional response. As with speech, so with emotional relationship: a child's earliest experiences occur in relation to his mother. In the earliest weeks, before she can be comprehended as a separate being, the infant's phantasies are dominated by what looms largest in his experience, namely his internal feelings of hunger or satiety and the physical presence of his mother's breast and supporting arms which are so closely associated with these alternating states of feeling.

More than any other psycho-analyst, Melanie Klein † has succeeded in demonstrating the importance of the child's adaptation to these, its earliest object-relationships, in determining the tenor of its later relationships and its future capacity for constructive activity and self-expression. She has shown that even in early infancy phantasy begins to operate, not in a formless manner but in rather concrete terms, endowing the first objects which the infant is able to perceive with magical powers to succour or to harm.

In principle there is no limit to the range of possible phantasies (just as there is no limit to the range of possible utterances) but in practice children reiterate a comparatively small number of phantasies over and over again. Mrs. Klein believes that certain symbols are innate in the child's unconscious mind, just as sucking and grasping reflexes are present from birth, but that the majority of sequences of phantasy are

\* Boas, F. (1911), pp. 15-16

† Klein, M. (1927, 1952, 1955)

alike because they take their cues from similar sequences of events in the give-and-take of the relationship between mothers and young children.

Applying Mrs. Klein's theory of early infantile phantasy to the study of group character, I would contend that in the first and second years of life children acquire certain *nuclear phantasies* which underlie and determine their future modes of reaction to events and to people encountered in later life. In any social group these nuclear phantasies tend to remain consistent and similar because they are transmitted unconsciously from mother to child in the context of feeling and behaviour characteristic of the nursing relationship: and this is a context which, at least in non-Western communities, is extremely resistant to change.

Just as the phoneme-pattern of its mother tongue imposes on each people, and even on each regional group, a particular accent which will always be distinguishable in its speech, so the sharing of similar nuclear phantasies in infancy will give rise to common characteristics in a people's adult "style of reaction". This is the justification for the belief that the key to an understanding of group character lies in elucidating a community's shared infantile phantasies.

The remainder of this chapter is accordingly devoted to a discussion of some of the basic phantasies which appeared to be shared by my informants in Deoli, and of their possible influence upon Hindu personality formation.

A high-caste Hindu presents a seeming triumph of deliberate self-control over spontaneous impulse. This is conspicuously the case with the religious ascetic, who learns to subordinate all sensual promptings to his deliberate aim of cultivating non-attachment; but it is also seen in the decorous, restrained behaviour to which all adults aspire. Behind this façade, however, irrational impulses are at work, betraying themselves indirectly in a number of ways—for example, in a man's attitude towards his wife, and women in general.

Ideally, woman is regarded as a wholly devoted, self-forgetful mother, or as a dutifully subservient wife, who is ready to worship her husband as her lord. In fact, however, women are regarded with an alternation of desire and revulsion. Sexual love is considered the keenest pleasure known to the senses: but it is felt to be destructive to a man's physical and spiritual well-being. Women are powerful, demanding,

seductive—and ultimately destructive. On the plane of creative phantasy, everyone worships the Mataji, the Goddess, who is a protective mother to those who prostrate themselves before her in abject supplication, but who is depicted also as a sort of demon, with gnashing teeth, who stands on top of her male adversary, cuts off his head and drinks his blood. This demon-goddess has the same appearance as a witch—and that brings her nearer home, because any woman whose demands one has refused is liable to be feared as a witch who may exact terrible reprisals.

In endeavouring to interpret these implicit emotional reactions to women in general, one looks to the child's first relationship with a woman, with his mother: because the feelings associated with that relationship will frame the expectations with which he approaches all subsequent heterosexual relationships. What I found in Deoli was that Hindu children, almost without exception, begin life with an abundantly rewarding experience. During their first year, they are never separated from their mothers for more than a short time, and they are given the breast generously, whenever they feel hungry or upset. An infant's mother is his willing slave, and he becomes something of a tyrant. This pattern of mothering is if anything too good. Child analysis in the West suggests that infants may be alarmed by their own seeming omnipotence, fearing that the bullied mother may one day turn and rend them (like the devouring witch) in retaliation for their own momentarily intense wishes to destroy her by biting and eating her up. In the West a child experiences greater amounts of deprivation, in the cause of "training", and is able to test out his fits of hostility towards his mother, taking reassurance from the fact that she not only survives them, but still loves him. In the Hindu family, because he experiences so little frustration, the child develops an assurance that support and succour will never be denied him—hence his constant (and even unrealistic) optimism in later life—but his aggressive phantasies remain rudimentary, imperious and unmodified by the experience of minor deprivations—until, at the age of 1½ or 2, new experiences occur with bewildering rapidity.

Already, before this, the child will have cause to notice that his mother, though devoted to his service, is unaccountably inconstant in the warmth of her contact with him. At times she caresses him affectionately while at other times owing to the presence of her parents-in-law she becomes aloof and seemingly indifferent to him. Sometimes also he will have

known what it is to have this monopoly of his mother usurped by his father, when the latter begins to claim his wife again.

Hitherto he has always slept beside his mother but now his father literally takes his place. At this time, too, the child is weaned. He has for many months been given increasing amounts of adult food and drink, so that the weaning is not a physiological hardship; but it represents a withdrawal and a reversal of his mother's previous unquestioning devotion to his needs. Coming at this point it adds to the feeling of rejection by his loved and dominated mother. When his mother resumes her menstrual functions and becomes periodically "unclean" this impurity is not believed to endanger small children; but as the child grows older he has to learn to avoid his mother at such times as one who is mysteriously dangerous, like the blood-stained demon-goddess Durga (whose name means "Unapproachable"). Other sorts of learning also crowd in upon the small boy, because now that he is beginning to be able to speak and to "understand" he ceases to be the inarticulate tyrant of the household and instead becomes the recipient of numerous instructions and mock threats.

I suggest that this relatively late reversal of a previously dominating (although emotionally inconsistent) relationship with his mother has a profound effect upon the child's later development. The underlying mistrust which seems to cloud so many of my informants' adult personal relationships may well be derived from the phantasy of a fickle mother who mysteriously withholds her caresses and attentions from time to time; but at weaning the child's emotional insecurity is suddenly intensified. Earlier experience has created in his phantasy a bias in favour of the feeling that things will come right in the end (the breast will not long be withheld) but now the two most certain-seeming facts of life—the mother's constant support and the child's own omnipotence—suddenly prove unreliable. It is as if he were accustomed again and again to climb a certain step and then suddenly found the step no longer there. His confidence is shattered and from now on he mistrusts everything that pretends to constancy—his own and others' personalities, and even objects in the material world. To such a feeling the concept of all-pervading Maya seems appropriate, if not inevitable.

In contrast with the Western child whose familiarity with intermittent experiences of frustration and delayed satisfaction has enabled him to indulge his aggressive phantasies in moderation, only to be reassured by his mother's renewed affectionate

attentions, this desertion on the part of his mother seems a final one. In his phantasy she becomes someone terrible, revengeful, bloodthirsty and *demanding* in the same limitless way as the formerly imperious child. As the Goddess, she is seen as a horrific figure, decapitating men and drinking their blood. In order to appease her fury she must be placated with offerings, but what is more important, she must be appealed to in an attitude of complete submission. She becomes kind and rewarding, a mother again and no longer a demon, only when one has surrendered one's manhood and become a helpless infant once again. Significantly, as will be shown below, the offering proper to the Mataji consists of the symbolic castration of a male animal, whose blood she drinks. This may be the source of the feeling that sexual intercourse represents a victory for the woman, who must be served when she demands it, and a castrating of the man—because with every issue of semen he loses virtue and manly strength at the same time.

The most widely known of all forms of the Goddess is that which depicts her as Kali the black she-demon, naked, four-armed, wearing a garland of the heads of giants, dancing on the breast of her prostrate consort, Mahakala, who is Lord Shiv. In this context, the child's father is seen as a fellow-victim of this mother-figure who is at once an object of adoration and of fear.

Hitherto his father has been a relatively unimportant figure in his life—in most families, as we have seen, fathers refrain from "making much of" their infants—but now he becomes intensely significant, sometimes as a fellow-victim, sometimes as the towering rival whose intervention has destroyed his former blissful state. From this time on his father's voice will be associated with commands which must be obeyed. The pain of defeat by the father in the oedipal situation is greatly intensified by the frequency with which the child is an involuntary witness of parental intercourse. It is not lightened, as in the West by the creation of a warm relationship between father and son. This has been prevented by the taboo upon the father's giving expression to affectionate feelings for his child. Instead, it appears to the boy that he has no choice other than that of unconditional surrender before this strong intruding stranger, his father. He must not only submit before this rival, but must deny any wish to compete with him. This is clearly reflected in the Hindu's later attitude towards his fellow men. To his father, and to figures of authority in general he owes unquestioning obedience. He is obliged in their presence to suppress all indications that he may lead an adult sexual life,

and by extension he has to stifle every manifestation of his spontaneity and emotional responsiveness. In effect all those who occupy the status of sons or younger brothers are required to enact a symbolic self-castration, denying themselves the right to lead an emotional or sexual life of their own so long as the father-figures still live and dominate them. This is implicit in the Hindus' willing subservience to autocratic Rajahs, to the rich, and to important officials. "Rais hain", they say: "They are the lordly ones", and they submit.

On the other hand he expects a similar unquestioning subservience from all who are below him in rank and authority. This self-castration is the fundamental Hindu attitude towards the father, though it is not, as I shall indicate below, the only one.

There is a corollary to this catastrophic reversal of the infant's early blissful situation. In order to recapture it in phantasy he must become a helpless child again as he does when prostrating himself before the Mother-Goddess; and this is also the essence of a Hindu's attitude towards his father and his Guru, and in his religious worship. In each of these situations he stresses on the one hand his utter helplessness, his unlimited appeal, and on the other his ruthless suppression of his own sexuality, and with it all his sensual gratifications. When confronted with this complete surrender, the deity, the father and the Guru are compelled to offer help; the tyranny of early childhood reasserts itself. This is seen also in the universal compulsion, in Hindu society, to give alms when they are begged. People give to beggars not because they enjoy giving (though for some it can be a pleasure as well as a duty) but because they feel intensely uncomfortable and guilty if they fail to do so; and this occurs not only in public, when they might be thought to be coerced by social pressure (as we feel obliged to conform with our neighbours on flag days) but also in their private thoughts.

Infants do not have a monopoly of infantile phantasy, which reveals itself in adults in similar irrational feelings. Fathers can be unwittingly jealous of their small sons, as well as sons of their fathers.

It may well be the father's guilt at his suppressed hostility to his infant rival which obliges him to overcompensate for this, in accepting his obligation to support his son, provided the latter has demonstrated his complete submission.\*

\* Cf. p. 179 below, Rajendra Singh's unguarded reference to wringing his child's neck

If the supplicant's self-punitive attitude can be maintained with great intensity, as in the accounts of holy men who have practised severe austerities, it is believed that a magical result is ultimately obtained. The ascetic is rewarded in three ways—with omnipotence in face of which even the Gods, the ultimate father-figures, are powerless; with a sense of bliss, which is like sexual satisfaction, but even more intense; and finally with release from separate self-hood, back into the nothingness of union with the creator-spirit of the universe. These rewards can be interpreted respectively as the regaining of infantile omnipotence, and so triumphing over the authority of one's father; as resuming possession of one's mother with the intense gratification of infantile sexuality; and as the return to the dark mindless "togetherness" of prenatal existence. In *Samadhi*, the saint has by the progressive annihilation of all external and internal distracting stimuli, achieved the feat of voluntary regression to the prenatal state before his first encounter with the outside world. He is lowered into a pit, the womb of earth, and once enclosed there he lives for ever unchanging in a timeless bliss of union with his creator: a triumph of phantasy over the reality-scene.

I have already suggested that it is in the seeming "betrayal" by a child's mother that we must seek the explanation of the lack of empathy, and the prevailing uncertainty of mind which so forcibly impressed me in Deoli; but it is in his accommodation to the stress of intense oedipal rivalry with his father, that the pattern of his adult paranoid trends can be discerned. According to Freudian theory, paranoid reactions can be traced to one type of outcome of the Oedipus situation,\* namely that in which the boy assumes a passive role and in phantasy has a homosexual love-relationship with his father. But while he longs to be possessed in this way, the child also fears and repudiates his desire; hence the transition from "I love him", through "I hate him", to "He hates me", on which delusions of persecution are based.

Already in my informants' phantasies the father has been seen as a fellow-victim of the witch-goddess-mother; but there is also a powerfully-repressed homosexual fixation on the father. This is shown not only in the ever-recurring paranoid reactions, but also, in indirect and sublimated form, in a man's feelings toward his Guru—the one context in which a warm affectionate relationship (although a passive and dependent one) is given free expression. Since this occurs at the stage of

\* Fenichel (1945), pp. 427 ff.

development when anal functions are the focus of keenest emotional interest, the conflict is usually expressed in anal terms. In analysis, the buttocks and other parts of the body are found to be implied when psychotic patients give free associations to their delusions about sinister machines. The theme of supernatural influence (expressed in the West as "scientific rays", in India as death-dealing magic, and in both cultures as mysterious powers of thought-control) is similarly found to derive from infantile phantasies about the faeces, as dark autonomous goblin-like agencies, issuing from the self.

This brings to mind the remarkable place occupied by faeces in the implicit phantasy life of these Hindus. Two forms of contamination were constantly being described: that due to faeces, and that due to association with persons of lower caste and particularly to eating with them. An indication has already been given (p. 80) of the way in which these concepts coalesce. Thus, the remains of a partly-eaten dish or any food which has once been brought into contact with the lips, becomes *jutha* and it is abhorrent, almost unthinkable, for anyone else to eat this, though such food may be given to the untouchable sweeper-caste. Emotionally, *jutha* are treated with the same abhorrence as is human excrement. It was noticeable that Brahmins might be employed as cooks (and often were called in to cook, when other Brahmins were to be the guests) but the collecting and disposal of used utensils was left to menials of low caste, or to the women of the house. Exceptions to this abhorrence of *jutha* occur within the family and in a sacred context. A father often summons his children to partake of food which he left over. This is a privilege; and it is also a privilege to be allowed to eat *prashad*, the offering of food which a God has "tasted". Symbolically, these leftovers represent the faeces of the father and the God: the act of grateful acceptance represents a submission to their authority, and is the model of the only "good" relationship with the father. In contrast, the phantasy of a good mother goes back to the early experience of generous suckling; at that infantile level, everything issuing from the mother is felt to be nourishing and beneficent. This attitude is reflected in beliefs about the sacred cow, paradigm of motherhood, whose dung and urine are felt to have healing properties, and whose "five products" are swallowed in the course of ceremonies of purification.

An interesting aspect of the deification of the cow (which represents the wholly gratifying mother of one's earliest

recollection) is the way in which the role of her consort, the bull, is minimised. He is a benevolent nonentity, as is the child's father during his first year of life; and yet as Nandi, the divine bull, this mild and passive figure is always associated with Lord Shiva, the essence of maleness. Beside every phallic lingam, representing the Great God, is portrayed a sitting bull. Philosophically, Shiva stands for both the generative power and the destruction of the universe, but in the context of village experience he represents on the one hand the ideal of *tapassya* (the self-castration of extreme asceticism with the aim of obliterating all sensuality) and on the other, as consort of the demon-goddess, he is sometimes her victim, at others himself a still fiercer and more terrible destroyer.

Nandi and Shiva thus illustrate three aspects of the father-figure. Another no less universally encountered, is the god Vishnu, who appears in diverse forms, but always as a benign, gentle figure, succouring and sustaining, who inspires love. In Vishnu-worship, sexuality is not abhorred, but rather idealised. As Krishna, he is the great lover; but he is portrayed as an effeminate, seductive and yet divinely powerful youth. His devotees seem at times to identify with him as he makes his amorous conquests, at other times to identify themselves with the *gopis* (the girl cowherds) who are overcome with pleasurable anticipation at his approach. This particular father-figure can be recognised as revealing a thinly-veiled longing for him as a homosexual lover. The persistence of repressed homosexual urges is suggested both by their frank display in the stereotyped deviant behaviour of *hinjras* and in the violent feelings of disgust which they arouse. When the same theme is presented in slightly disguised and sublimated form, it is openly enjoyed. It was noticeable that when the popular rustic opera *Ram-Lila* was performed in Deoli, the centre of interest was the elegant young man who played the part of the heroine Sita. Everyone spoke with admiration of his good looks, and he received many encores.

Although they showed marked paranoid tendencies, my informants were far from obsessional: and this at first was puzzling. Verbally, they seemed intensely scrupulous about cleanliness and about attention to details of ritual performance; and yet in practice they were tolerant of seemingly filthy surroundings, and in practice their rituals corresponded only very approximately to the precise formulation with which they were described. Again, their indifference to unpunctuality,

their easy acceptance of abrupt changes of plan and their seeming inability to carry through long-term undertakings to their conclusion—these were all unobsessional characteristics.\*

The confusion in interpretation arose from their verbal insistence upon faecal cleanliness. In the West, over-strict toilet training is believed by psycho-analysts to result in accentuation of those obsessional traits of punctuality, neatness and conscientiousness which comprise the "anal character", and which are favoured in our culture. In contrast to the Hindu pattern, Western obsessionals are seriously distressed if they are not able to carry out their routines with precision; and they cannot discuss anal topics without embarrassment. That Hindus are unobsessional and yet pre-occupied with this topic of faecal contamination is attributable to the fact that in infancy their training in cleanliness is gentle, leisurely and unemphasised: it is only after the age of two, when verbal instruction comes into play and when the oedipal conflict is at its height, that their attention is focused upon this function. From this time onwards faecal contamination becomes intimately tied up with submission to paternal authority, with religious worship, and with questions of relative caste status. It is implicit in the emphasis upon eating only with the right hand; upon eating only with caste fellows; and upon regarding other persons' leavings as if they were excrement. To be willing to sit and eat together constitutes a powerful bond; but to eat together out of one dish represents a bond of the closest intimacy, for it means at the same time "we are fed by one mother", and "we accept the jutha (which is equivalent to the faeces) of one father".

This act of eating together is emotionally so important that in social life it outweighs most other considerations. Thus, a sannyasi may be regarded as a holy, god-like man: and yet his former caste-fellows will not eat with him because he no longer observes their taboos against commensality. In describing the excesses of the *lajadharm*, Hari Lal expressed greater horror of the fact that members of all castes supped from one dish, than he did of their sexual excesses. On the other hand, careful observance of food taboos and avoidance of association with low-caste persons left a man not only in a pure state, but fortified against sensual temptation.

\* It might be pointed out that unpunctuality was only natural in a community where clocks and watches were unknown. What was striking, however, was the frequent reference to precise times (e.g. of birth, death, marriage) coupled with an indifference to punctuality in practice.

The pious Hindu's repugnance for alcohol is perfectly understandable, because of its notorious disinhibitory properties. Alcoholic intoxication militates against that subjection of the self which is seen to be the principal emphasis of the religious life, just as it is the accepted way of dealing with a surcharged oedipal situation. If one looks into the associations linked with wine, its use is seen to be permissible to Rajputs in order to nerve them for their aggressive role. It is also associated with the two terrible aspects of the phantasied parent-figures, the Mataji and Bhairav, who exemplify the explosive discharge of all the violent passions which a man normally keeps rigorously under control; but never with Shiva the ascetic, or Vishnu the mild sustaining ally of mankind. It is those castes, the Brahmins and the Banias, who are denied any approved aggressive outlet (such as Rajputs enjoy in hunting, concubinage and war) who condemn alcohol with especial emotional vehemence, because it presents a threat to their customary defences against their own severely repressed emotions: a threat, and perhaps also a temptation which they must at once repudiate.

The same holds true of eating meat, but with still greater force: and even Rajputs seem to feel uneasy about their indulgence in this privilege. Many who were not over-scrupulous in other respects (such as Hira Singh, Nathu Singh, Partab Singh) took pains to assure me that they were practically vegetarians.

Here again the associations to meat-eating are interesting. The one occasion of the year when meat is plentiful is at Navratri, when a series of blood sacrifices is made to the Mataji. The most usual form of sacrifice is a goat (and it must be a he-goat) which is led before the shrine and then decapitated with one blow of a sword. In Deoli, this was the only form of meat, and whether the goat were a formal offering, or simply killed by the Khatik, it would still have to be a male, and to be killed in this way.

The identification of the male goat with the male victims of the Goddess is made explicit by the *bhapa's* act of drinking the goat's warm blood, mixed with alcohol, while he is possessed by the spirit of the Mataji. The goat is sacrificed to appease her devouring rage, and then her worshippers unite in eating its meat. This act, which is felt by Brahmins and Banias to be one of grave impiety, which even Rajputs feel to be incompatible with the enlightened religious life, means symbolically that the child feasts with his demon-mother upon his father's blood. To take meat means to eat the father's penis and so acquire his

virility. This makes one strong, because meat is a builder of semen, but it puts one in peril of a similar castrating attack, either from the Goddess or from her still more fearsome consort, the Bheruji; and it estranges one from the path of submission and denial of one's sexuality, which is felt to be the only way to ultimate reconciliation with one's mother and father figures. The orthodox Hindu ban on eating meat, and the stress on ahimsa (not taking life) can thus be interpreted as the conscious reaction-formations against repressed oedipal feelings of hostility against the father, feelings which are never allowed direct expression.

There are, of course, some foods which are associated not with threatening, but with gratifying phantasies. The pre-occupation with loss of semen, which is a very common source of neurotic anxiety among Hindu men, can be palliated by eating certain exceptionally good, health-giving foods, namely wheat flour, rice, milk and butter, honey and white sugar. These substances have two valuable attributes: they are "cool" foods, that is to say they give nourishment without inflaming the passions, and they have the property of building pure, unspoiled semen. In fact *white sugar* (as distinct from the dark, unpurified molasses of everyday use) is used as a synonym for semen; but the constant association of all these foods with this same theme indicates that they are all, in varying degrees, equated in phantasy with rich, desirable semen.

In two social contexts this phantasy is given clear expression. At the great temple of Shiva, only a few miles from Deoli, the bi-annual festivals of that god are the occasion for libations of milk, curds, melted butter, honey and white sugar (in this order). These offerings are poured on to the upright phallic *lingam* which represents the god's creative powers, thus bringing semen and semen-foods into conjunction.

At every Hindu wedding, there is expected to be a prodigal dispensation of these exalted foods. During the feasting which attends these ceremonies, particular emphasis is placed upon the amount of *ghi* (clarified butter) which is offered to the male guests. Young men vie with each other in the amount they can consume. It is regarded as a mark of virility to be able to swallow two pounds or more at one sitting; and the boasting and teasing which attends these feasts make it clear that here *ghi* is being equated with semen.

All these cherished semen-equivalents have in common the properties of being fluid (even sugar can be poured) opaque and *white*. Here is the opposite pole of that strong, unreasoning

prejudice against darkness which is evident in many contexts of Hindu life (from the desire to marry a light-complexioned spouse, to the use of black flags and garments as a symbol of deprecation). Earlier, it was suggested that the emotional bias against dark things is due to the strong investment of feelings concerning the threat of faecal contamination. In contrast, pure uncontaminated semen is highly esteemed, and the favourable emotional attitudes to which it gives rise are carried over to the qualities of fairness, sweetness and freedom from adulteration—qualities which are admired in one's fellow-men as well as in one's diet.

It is claimed by psychoanalysis that one indication of a person's having attained emotional maturity is his ability to have a mutually rewarding experience of intercourse with a love partner of the opposite sex. Freud himself once defined a normal man as one who was able "to work and to love"; and D. H. Lawrence considered the full life to be one in which a man alternated between "daytime purposive activity" and a deep emotional union with a sex partner. These are norms which not only the emotionally sick but many ordinary Westerners fail to achieve: and they illustrate very clearly the occidental cultural bias in favour of individual achievement and self-realisation.

In the Hindu world, sexuality is considered an impediment to the progress towards emotional maturity, which comes only with the final triumph of asceticism. Sexuality remains always something detrimental, dangerous, seductive. A young man's sex life is restrained by many factors, by his wife's being not of his own choice, by his living in his parents' house, and his having to deny his sexual life while in their presence, by his phantasies concerning women, of whom the demon-Goddess is the paradigm, and not least by his phantasy of his father as a gigantic rival threatening instant destruction if he dares to re-assert his infantile claims upon his mother. These are the circumstances in which one would expect to encounter either homosexuality or impotence. The evidence for the existence of strong repressed homosexual urges has already been discussed. The actual practice of homosexuality certainly occurred: my informants were prone to accuse each other of it, though it was not a thing which they would describe in their own experience, except as a childhood phase. Impotence was a very common occurrence, and pre-occupation with fears of impotence or of loss of virility (a form of castration-fear) seemed to be present in the majority of men.

Another pattern of sexual response was found repeatedly: This was a sharp distinction between their potency in relations with prostitutes or in promiscuous affairs with girls of an inferior caste, and with their wives. In the former instances, it was the men who took the initiative, and they described their (necessarily secret, but not strongly disapproved) adventures with pleasure; but in their own homes it was different. There, it was the wives whose appetites must be satisfied: and there the anxieties over failing strength and potency were most intense. This was clearly because married life, conducted under one's father's roof, within the extended family, excited all the terrors of childish oedipal phantasy, whereas the despised casual sex partner could be more easily dissociated from this scene except where she was found to be older than the man—in which case anxiety returned. Significantly, almost every one of my informants told me that it was advisable to have sex relations only with women younger than oneself: to sleep with a woman several years older would destroy a man's strength in a short space of time. The older woman is feared because she conjures up the repressed oedipal craving for possession of the mother, and so intensifies the castration anxieties which dog all sexual functions.

Earlier in this chapter it was suggested that it was the abrupt change from an un-frustrated infancy to the subsequent "desertion" by his mother which not only created the Hindu child's phantasy-picture of her, and her later substitutes, as witch-like figures, but also shattered his early scheme of object-relationships, so that he found it difficult in later life to trust or even to empathise with other persons. In one sense, everyone goes through life trying to find again the good relation he once had with his idealised parents as a small child. The Hindu solution to this quest is not through personal relationships, but in an acceptance of formal mutual obligations to bridge the gap. It would be an act of blindness indeed to suggest that because relations between a Hindu son and his parents, between a man and his wife, lack that warmth and spontaneity which is expected in Western society, they are necessarily inferior. Each patterning of human behaviour has its positive as well as its limiting aspects. Psychoanalysis is better equipped to demonstrate the latter than the former; but as an ordinary responsive observer one must pay a tribute to the serenity and calm which prevail in a well-adjusted Hindu family. It is perhaps a precarious calm, based on the suppressing rather than on the resolving of underlying

tensions, but still it reflects a gracious and civilised way of life.

The characteristically Hindu attitudes which have been discussed in this chapter, attitudes concerning women, sensuality, authority, power, asceticism and non-violence, the Hindu view of the material world, and of their fellow-men and the ultimate values of the Hindu religious outlook—all these things become more readily intelligible when one elucidates the nuclear phantasies which give rise to them. In the present writer's opinion genuine inter-group and inter-racial understanding will only become possible to the degree that each group's covert pattern of irrational complexes is made the object of study, as well as their history and all the overt aspects of their social life.