Chapter VIII

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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. 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. 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

1. Claudia C. Morrison, Freud and the Critic, p. 47.
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 Bātāt 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 thorough 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 Mauma Ākāś are some of the memorable instances of the first group; and Chandra Prasad Saikiya's Yātrā, Haben Saikiya's Ākāś, 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. Dumukhiyā 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 antoanalysis 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."3

The cathartic or the analytic method has been employed by Malik in another story, namely, TribenIr 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.4 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. Hers is the conflict where the super-ego participates

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 Aghorf Ḩāimir 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 Apara (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.'

Freud stresses on the 'morality' of the analyst, i.e., on his ability to overcome in his own personality the mixture of loudness and prudishness with which so many others are wont to meet the sexual problems. Niranjan is neither loud nor prudish, but still he is not a normal person. He is a repressed mate of the Beduins (homeless), i.e. the ego-impoveryished. 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. Machim, 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

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.7 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 Trisul, Kabitār Naś 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.8 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.9

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.

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.¹⁰

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

Bhattacharya's Iyāruingam, 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

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 (Cĩnāki 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 Ballawi. But the analyst, Malini 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. 11

The persons in Cĩnāki 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.

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 Rajor'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 Nashiru’din. Jebinsha 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 anto-analysis.

Chandra Prasad Saikiya's Eikyatān, Mrs. Bargohain's Jananīr Sandhānat Ejan Dekā Mazuh, Bhaben Saikiya's Ganga Suan demonstrate the importance of confession for cure or adjustment. The same is shown in Debidas Neog's RajjyotiśI. 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 Nāri Muktir Ka, Kha, Nilima Sarma lays stress on parental advice and instruction. In Dr. Diganta Bardaloi's Etā Frasnar Uttar Bībāri (In search of the Answer to a Question), the doctor diagnoses Sasal'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 Homai Bargohain's Knśīlaw, 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 anto-analysing themselves. They are prettily equipped with the psycho-analytic knowledge of their creator. Sibanath in Pità-Putra, Ratna in Knśīlaw, Prablad 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 parnography 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 Adhut Trpti and some of Kumar Kishore's novels are seen to employ this method. Nagen Saikiya's Rog-Nukti 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. Maren in Kamini 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 Sadamaral's Dokmokālīr Yātrī as 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 Subala. 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 dispossessing 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.