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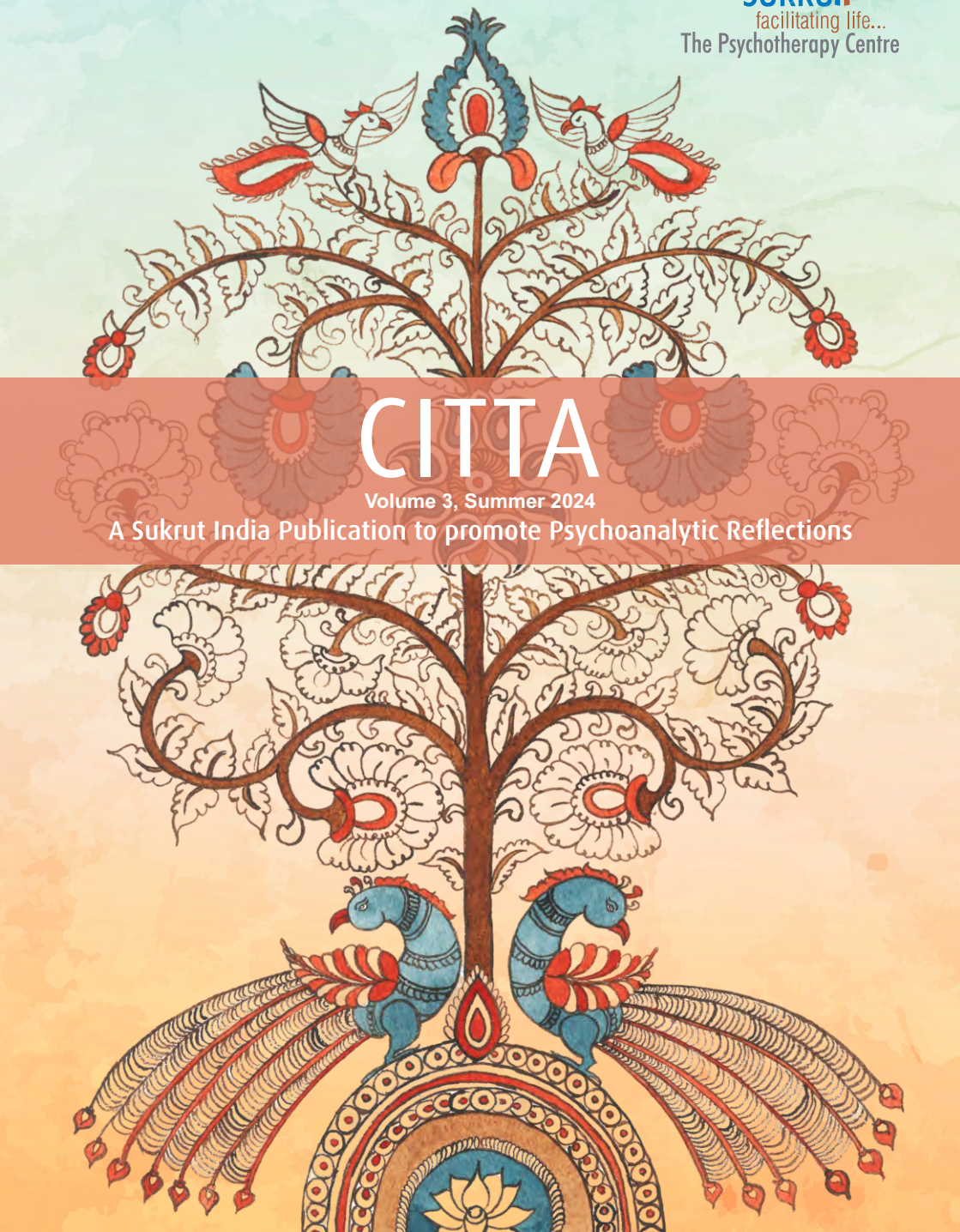
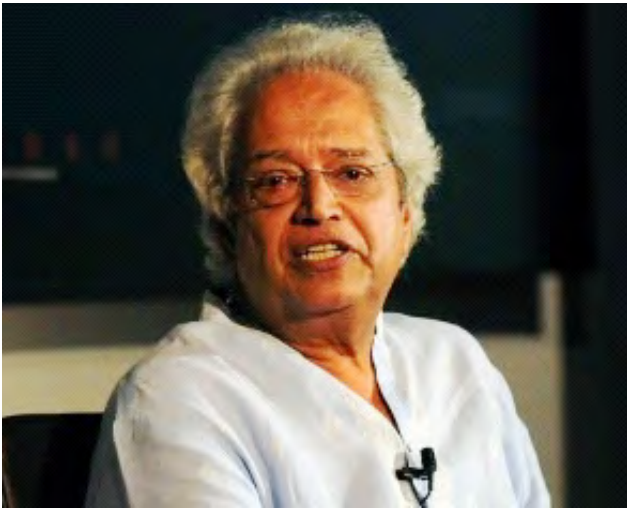


CITTA

Volume 3, Summer 2024

A Sukrut India Publication to promote Psychoanalytic Reflections



Sudhir Kakar (1938-2024) was a psychoanalyst, novelist, and cultural critic. He dissected the Indian identity in profound and provocative ways. Author of more than 20 non-fiction and fiction works, he was interested in sexuality, mysticism and religion as a counterpart to modern-day globalisation. He studied Freud and applied him to everything from film criticism to psychotherapy to mythology, considering Hindi cinema a producer of *new myths* and *collective fantasies* that came to India's rescue during great socio-political and economic upheaval. Kakar called the phenomenon a *humble representative of the Hindu cultural ideal.*

Sukrut was privileged to access Sudhir's sharp intellect and psychoanalytical insights in person, and learn the applications of psychoanalysis in the Indian context.

CONTENTS

Dear Reader,

I am thrilled to bring to you this edition.

The ***Tree of Life*** on the front cover is a representation of growth, interconnectedness and the cycle of life, both in Indian and Buddhist cultures. They symbolise the continuous journey of life processes and renewal our self. Likewise, this edition of CITTA presents the various facets to understand the interconnectedness and the blend between Psychoanalysis in India and the West, mystical with the ordinary, native wisdom with modern life, and enchantment with the harsh, uncertain dichotomies of our societies. We dedicate this volume to **Sudhir Kakar**, a pioneer to apply Psychotherapy in the Indian context.

The purpose of this reflective journal is to move away from knowledge for knowledge's sake and make significant difference in India. Sukrut has been holding intersubjective study and seminars, and presents here the psychoanalytic reflections of participants, facilitated by Sudhir Kakar, on his paper, ***A Psychoanalytic Study of Childhood and Society in India.*** Also included reflections from a film and a few art works.

Sukrut's *Inward Change Conference* has been a signature event. We are pleased to bring to you a detailed reflective report from the ICC 24 Summer programme. We have reflective reports on experiences from short ***Group Relations*** programmes in India and the UK. We have an **experiential report** from a Lab and a poem. We have an abstract from a paper (WIP) *Psychotherapeutic Practices from An Ancient Civilization and Modern Psychoanalysis - A Journey from Buddha's Heart Sutra (500 BCE) to Western Philosophy (from 600 BCE) to Nietzche (1844 to 1900) to Heidegger (1889-1976) to Freud (1856 to 1939) and Jung (1875 to1961),* as well as a piece from Indian literature that makes us reflect on feminism and liberation of the self in different contexts.

To other countries I go as a tourist, but to India, I come as a pilgrim, said Martin Luther King Jr. when he visited India after surviving an assassination attempt. India is celebrated for its ancient philosophical heritage, diverse spiritual practices, syncretism and tolerance. How have these shaped India's culture? We present to you a paper by Sudhir Kakar, ***Culture and Psychoanalysis,*** which is an exploratory piece about the interplay between Indian culture and psychoanalysis.

I have also brought to you a few Events and News which could be of interest.

I invite you to submit material that you think is of value. CITTA is committed to review submissions from practitioner-scholars in psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic psychotherapy which draws on reflections from personal history.

Also, do write to me about your reflections and thoughts about this edition; I promise to publish them.

Good wishes for a safe and beautiful life.

Shreeranjini G N

You can request PDF copies of past issues of Citta:

Citta, Vol. 1; Summer 2023 on a variety of contents

Citta, Vol. 2; Winter 2023-24 on the theme of Adolescence

Remembering Sudhir

I was planning to go over to Goa and was in correspondence with Sudhir till 07 April 24:

- Dear Sudhir, trust this finds you well.I am happy to send you the PDF of this volume, and will soon courier hard-copies to you. Good wishes. Manab.

- Dear Manab,

  Thank you for your mail. I look forward to going through the new volume of Citta. I have a lot of news I'd like to share with you

  First, a group of psychoanalysts are setting up a Kakar Centre for Psychoanalysis and Culture (attached document). It will be registered a independent centre but will be located at Munjal University in Gurgaon for two years. The University will defray its expenses for conferences and events for the first 2 years, till the Centre has gathered enough of a corpus to be completely on its own.

  Second, both my “Selected Writings” and “The Indian Jungle: Psychoanalysis in Non-Western Civilizations” are finally coming out (attached), the former endof April, the latter end May. I am attaching the invites for the launches of Selected Writings, April 20 in Goa, 22nd in New York and 27th in Delhi (invites attached). Third, there is Festschrift for me coming out in the journal “Psychoanalysis, Culture and Society” and an invited piece on *Psychoanalysis and its Discontents: A view from India* in the “International Journal of Psychoanalysis”. Perhaps it would interest you.

  As you can see, a full plate of dishes nearing the end of life which I can still savour.

  Warm regards, Sudhir

- Thanks, Sudhir, for letting me know about the intellectual developments involving you. I will try and attend one of the sessions. The plans for a center at Munjal University is timely progress to showcase India's civilizational strengths and its translation to psychoanalysis; Citta and my team at Sukrut are already committed to this, as you are aware. May I post the announcements at ISPSO and OPUS? Good wishes, Manab.

  PS: When would be a good time to visit you in Goa and catch up face-to-face?

I had read carefully Sudhir's Young Tagore: The Making of a Genius and wanted to discuss his analysis of the nobel laureate as essentially a mystic. I also wanted to debate with him the meaning he gave to mysticism in the Indian psyche. His passing on 22 April 24 has left me with unfinished business. Sudhir was always an endearing support; he attended Sukrut's International Conferences, the last time online in 2023, and gave his time to reflect on the study of his many papers by Sukrut psychotherapists at online Seminars.

I will miss him.

Manab Bose. He is a psychoanalytical psychotherapist in private practice.

Sudhir facilitated a series of online seminars for Sukrut's psychoanalysts

Dr. Kakar's papers that we read and reflected helped me to orient myself to the cultural aspects in my psyche, and to explore my own roots. Accepting my own roots helped me to share and connect with different aspects of the culture of the other. Connecting with other cultures helped me to be open to different things. I have accepted my Tamil roots, truthfully. It sensitised me to be open to understand and unpeel the cultural identity of myself and my clients. This engagement has helped me in my psychotherapeutic work.

Dr. Kakar's wide explorations into the impact of our indigenous culture on Indian psychoanalytic thought brought out many unconscious, hidden aspects about India. His books connect us with our ancient civilization, and challenges our blind dependence on the theories and practices from Western psychoanalysis. It's a great responsibility for me to continue to be aware of who we are in our "Indianness", and contribute continuously in my own way to the field.

Gracy Jebastina. She is a psychoanalytical psychotherapist and Founder-Promoter of Unleash Schools, providing psychological services to K12 schools in Bangalore.

I am very fortunate to join the Intersubjective Study & Seminars - Beyond Part 3, with Sudhir Kakar. My first introduction to his The Inner World had helped me relate to many of the topics such as The Hindu World Image, The role and relatedness of the Indian mother and infant, and The Indian-ness. But, what amazed me about Sudhir Kakar was his in-depth psychoanalysis of the cultural psychology of India. His articles gave me a strong understanding of the psychoanalytical perspectives of the culture that I belong to. While reading his articles there were times when I felt moments of

understanding related to the psychoanalytical part of our culture. The hedgehog example helped me understand why I prefer to be in the company of relatives or close friends, though the relationships do get pokey at times. Many a times I would think of a male not being able to take independent decisions as a sign of weakness, but Sudhir Kakar's article gave me the psychoanalytical perspective of why this kind of behavior is normal and embedded in Indian society. His articles have given me a new dimension of thinking towards our culture with better clarity.

Sudhir sir's demise is a significant loss. I wish I could have met him in person, but amvery grateful to have got the opportunity to listen to his analysis. What remains withme is his humility, his remaining grounded and committed despite all the laurels.

Divya Sriram is a teacher with Parikrma Humanity Foundation in Bangalore and a trained psychoanalytical psychotherapist.

Meeting Sudhir Kakar at the online sessions was an unforgettable experience that deepened my understanding of psycho-analysis, especially in the context of Indian culture which is so unique compared to the Western generalizations that I get to read. His work has always fascinated me, especially his pioneering efforts of psychoanalysis within the Indian context. His ability to weave together the threads of psychology, culture, and mythology has provided a unique lens through which to view the human psyche.

During our interaction, I was struck by his profound insights and the way he effortlessly connected complex psychological concepts with everyday experiences. His explanations were enriched with anecdotes and cultural references that made them relatable and deeply meaningful. He had an invaluable knack for identifying the subtle gaps between Western psychological theories and its applications in the Indian cultural context.

One of the most memorable aspects of our conversation was his humility and openness. Despite his towering achievements and global recognition, he was genuinely interested in my thoughts and perspectives made during the presentations. This humility made the interaction not just a learning experience but also a warm and enriching dialogue.

Reflecting on his work, what stands out to me is his exploration of the Indian psyche through a cultural lens. His writings, such as "The Inner World", "The maternal enthrallment" and "Psycho-analysis and Cultural imagination" are analytical

narratives that bring to life the intricacies of Indian cultural and psychological life like no one else has done before. They had a deep impact on my nuanced understanding of the subject, which was highly relatable through my own life experiences.

I will always remember Sudhir Kakar for his intellectual generosity and his pioneering contributions to psychoanalysis and cultural psychology. His work has left an indelible mark on the field, and our interaction has left a lasting impression on me. His ability to throw light on the collective unconscious based on stories from Indian mythology are sheer revelations of my unconscious which became apparent from my own psycho-history. These insights will surely continue to inspire and guide my own explorations in psychology.

Sudhir Kakar will be remembered not only for his scholarly contributions but also for his ability to connect with individuals on a personal level, making complex ideas accessible and relatable. His work and our brief interaction have enriched my understanding and appreciation of the profound interplay between mythology, culture and the human psyche.

Anupam Das works full-time with PSU giant Hindustan Petroleum in Mumbai and is a trained psychoanalyst.

I have been following Sudhir Kakar since I first read The Inner World — A Psychoanalytic Study of Childhood and Society in India. As an HR professional I got so intrigued with Kakar's insightful analysis on how we as Indians develop the sense of family and societal ego in us as opposed to an individual ego, as explained in Western concepts of the self.

During my last two decades of work experience I have always been interested in exploring the issue of contextualization of HR interventions. Having worked for many American multinational corporations as an HR leader, I was bestowed with the responsibilities of implementing HR policies and programmes in India, I have realized that contextualization is extremely important for successfully implementing HR interventions. In my view, organizations where global leadership that were sensitive to the Indian culture and were ready to amend its global practices and programmes to suit the local needs were far more successful in implementing them, faced least resistance and experienced greater degree of sustained acceptance from its employees than those organizations which believed in universal implementation without being sensitive to local need. It is in this context I was searching for answers so as to find out the core of "Indianness" that was the basic tenet of work place behaviour

of people in India. This is when I read his second book written along with his anthropologist wife Katherine Indians: Portrait of A People. This was an eye opener for me as it was a compelling work by Kakars on the cultural character of Indians. This book provided me ample insights to understand what sets Indians apart from citizens of the rest of the world; and what sets Indians apart from other Indians. The Kakars analysed through their sharp cultural analysis convincingly connected Indian business culture to the Indian child's experience of family. From an early age, they postulated that an Indian child is made aware of the importance of the integrity of the family, and of the hierarchy within it. Indian children grow with an encrypted identity of self where in lieu of receiving nurturing from elders in the family, they are expected to follow their elders' wishes. It is with this deep believe they grow as an adult having a mindset that what their elders dictate is what is best for them. This has ramifications far into the child's future, particularly when he/she joins the workforce. Corporate cultures, the Kakars postulated, especially the Indian organisation, is characterised by four elements: a) a high degree of idealisation by subordinates of their superiors; b) a significant separation between members of the organisation by power, authority and prestige; c) a widespread culture of caring, altruism and kindness; and d) a fierce loyalty by workers towards the organisation. The biggest take away for me as an HR professional that I got from insightful analysis of the Kakars was to arrive at understanding of work behaviours of Indians that were deeply rooted to their cultural identity. As aptly quoted by Kakars in this book is a sound understanding of "Indianness": "… Indianness, the cultural part of the mind that informs the activities and concerns of the daily life of a vast number of Indians as it guides them throughout the journey of life. The attitude towards superiors and subordinates, the choice of food conducive to health and vitality, the web of duties and obligations in family life are all as much influenced by the cultural part of the mind as are ideas on the proper relationship between the sexes, or on the ideal relationship with god."

His third book Culture and the Psyche — Selected Essays gave me further insight that high value in Hindu society is on connectedness not only with the family, but society and the universe. The stronger fusion and extended dependence on the mother (and other family members) ensured that Indians grew up with more tolerance of ambiguity and acceptance of dualities.

Finally, where did I start using the insights from Kakar in my work? It is in the context of Executive Coaching where I started using them to enhance my effectiveness. Executive coaching is an area where I found usage of the psychoanalytic approach especially meaningful. I understood it when I work with organizational leaders in order

to help them enhance their interpersonal skills. I remember a recent instance where a senior organizational leader who was very successful in his role especially setting business directions. However, at times he was really struggling to build a meaningful interpersonal relationship with his direct reports. I tried to hold a mirror to show him how his direct reports see him as self-focused and often find him as a person who lacks warmth. In coaching over a few sessions he started opening up about his lonely childhood. A breakthrough came when he connected his early childhood memories where he hardly experienced joy and happiness through building relationships with friends and family members. What helped me to understand his perspective is the learnings from Kakar's work where he analysed how an Indian child builds his identity from early childhood experience. I worked with him to set a learning journey comprising practise and feedback that helped to improve both his deeper perceptions on interpersonal sensitivity and the techniques to build relationships at work place.

Since last five years I have started using Kakar's insights into my coaching and leadership development interventions. Especially his insights in the field of cultural psychology where he explored the explicit link between modernity and tradition in India, deeply probing culture, social customs and family ties in Indian context. With a keen eye on the cultural dimensions of psychoanalysis, Kakar challenged the universality of Western models by pioneering a nuanced understanding of the human mind across cultures. For an Executive Coach like me, these are lifetime learning that can be applied to explore the human mind in Indian work places.

Coming from a diverse background with an engineering degree followed by Masters and PhD in Economics, Kakar found his calling after a meeting with Erik Erikson in Ahmedabad. Kakar trained in Freudian psychoanalysis at the Psychoanalytic Institute in Frankfurt, with Erikson's recommendation. Kakar has been best described by Harold Coward, a Canadian Academic, who said "Kakar, in tune with Indian philosophy, psychology, and religion, holds that the ability to realize mystical experience is enhanced through the guru-shishya or teacher-student relationship as exemplified in most Hindu and Buddhist schools."

I haven't read Kakar's entire work yet, but as time passes, I am going to explore more of his work since that opens up a path of self-exploration and rejuvenation of mind which are must for any professional who is engaged in human Resource Development.

Pallab Bandopadhyay holds a Doctoral degree from XLRI and is a trained psychoanalyst in private practice out of Bangalore.

Sudhir Kakar's work has significantly influenced my understanding of Indian psychoanalysis and has helped me to embrace the "Indianness" in me. His explorations into the intersection of culture, psyche, and spirituality have provided a nuanced perspective on the Indian mind. Kakar's psychoanalytic approach to Indian epics, myths, and folklore has deepened my appreciation for the cultural context in psychoanalytical processes. His emphasis on the role of family, community, and tradition in shaping individual identity resonates deeply with me. Through his writings, I have gained insights into the unique aspects of Indian psycho-social development and mental health. Kakar's integration of Western psychoanalytic theory with Indian cultural practices has broadened my conceptual framework. Overall, his work has been instrumental in helping me navigate the complexities of Indian psychological thought. I shall remember him through his interpretation of our society.

Shreeranjini GN is the Head of a Parikrma Humanity Foundation school in Bangalore. She is a psychoanalytically informed, art based psychotherapist.

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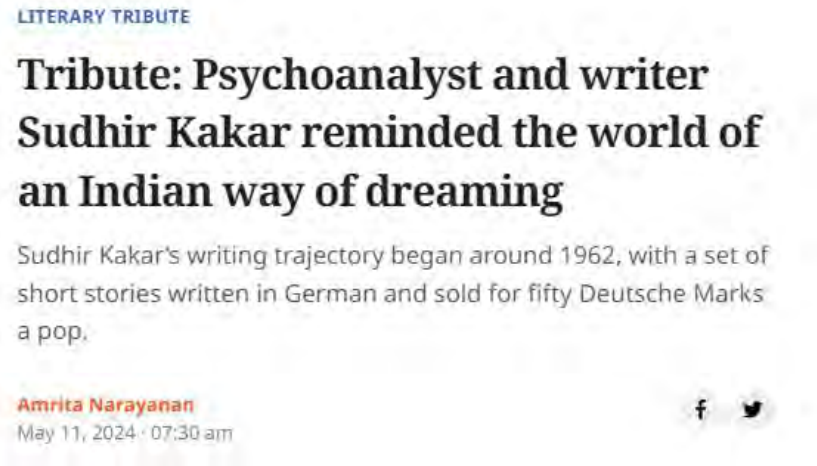


LITERARY TRIBUTE

Tribute: Psychoanalyst and writer Sudhir Kakar reminded the world of an Indian way of dreaming

Sudhir Kakar's writing trajectory began around 1962, with a set of short stories written in German and sold for fifty Deutsche Marks a pop.

Amrita Narayanan
May 11, 2024 · 07:30 am

Beginning in 2015, for four hours a week for four years, I participated in that once crucial ritual of modernity: psychoanalysis. My training analyst was Sudhir Kakar (1938-2024), whose passing this April, marks the end of an almost sixty-year career of reflection upon the notion of an Indianness of the imagination – what Kakar would come to call a cultural unconscious – imprinted upon by cultural myths, values and products. It was a renegade project, in defiance of the traditional field of psychoanalysis, whose borders are still primarily defined by its European and North American practitioners.

Kakar's version of Indian psychoanalysis does not sharply deviate from Freud's vision, it extends it. On the occasion of his 70th birthday, Freud famously declined the title "discoverer of the unconscious", saying instead, "The poets and philosophers before me discovered the unconscious. What I discovered was the scientific method by which the unconscious can be studied." Ever the clever post-colonial, who read with, rather than against Freud, Kakar took it as his right to include in the terroir of the psychoanalytic unconscious the "discoveries" of poets and philosophers far removed from the origins of psychoanalysis in Europe. A shortlist of these includes readings of philosophers such as Gandhi, Tagore, and Vatsayana; poets such as Bhart hari and Bilhana; Urdu folk tales such as those of Laila Majnun and Sohni-Mahinwal; and psychoanalytic readings of popular versions of Hindu myths such as those of Ganesh and Yayati. Mining the literature and philosophy of the subcontinent, Kakar gradually defined a regional unconscious of psychoanalysis, one that International Psychoanalysis would eventually recognise.:

Re-drawing boundaries for psychoanalysis has a history in India that pre-dates Kakar. Kolkata-born Girindrasekhar Bose (1887-1953), the first President of the Indian Psychoanalytical Society, famously shared a seventeen-year correspondence with Freud, during which he argued against the Western universalisation of penis envy, insisting that womb envy was more representative of the anxieties of the Indian male.

For such a prolific reader and writer, Kakar was surprisingly cautious about language. In yet another radical difference from his Western counterparts – perhaps in tribute to the "Indian emotionalism" he tried to understand in his writings – Kakar's clinical method did not hinge as strongly upon words as is usual for psychoanalysis. When I brought up Adam Phillips – another writer-psychoanalyst – who said that psychoanalysis was "a kind of conversation between two people and all the books each had ever read", Kakar agreed, but amended "conversation" to "communion".

At his home and in public settings, Kakar often sat alone. One of his rituals was to face the setting sun with a bemused beatitude, silent and as if absorbed in some theatre taking place within, in tandem with the drama of the rosy, darkening, skies. It will be hard for me to talk about him in the past tense, because for so long in my life in this field, it has seemed that Sudhir Kakar has always been there: a calm, brilliant, sui generis force in psychoanalysis.

Amrita Narayanan is a clinical psychologist and psychoanalyst from Goa.

Reproduced below are Dr Sudhir Kakar's reflections during Sukrut's 7th. International Conference on the theme Conversations in a Cultural Perspective, in February 2023, and published in the inaugural volume of Citta in Summer 23. He alerted us at the outset of the conference about the significance of building clinical analysis based on our own cultural perspective:

So, in the last decade we have become much more aware of how much of our psychological knowledge is far from universal. Indeed, most of our knowledge on how human beings feel, think and act is derived from a small subset of the human population. Since 2010, following Harvard's psychologist Joseph's highly influential essay, most people are not weird W-E-I-R-D. We have called this subset 'the weird', now famously Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich and Democratic: W-E-I-R-D. This small group of statistical outliers, with a high proportion of mostly American and some European college students, are both the producers and subjects of much of the contemporary psychological knowledge that we have, then proceeded to generalise the rest of the human kind. For instance, to see the huge difference between the

WEIRD and other, let us look at the notions of morality. The chasm that divides WEIRD morality from others is observed in a 2012 experiment by social psychologist Jonathan Haidt who studied morality in 12 groups of different social classes in different countries around the world: Africa, South America, Europe, USA. During his interviews, Haidt would tell the interviewee stories and then ask, 'Is there something wrong in how someone acts in this story and if so, why?'. One of the stories goes, 'A man goes to the supermarket once a week and buys a chicken. But before cooking the chicken, he has sexual intercourse with it. Then he cooks it and eats it'. Only one group out of the 12 tolerated the chicken story, finding it acceptable. These were students from the University of Pennsylvania, a liberal Ivy League college in the United States and certainly the most 'WEIRD' amongst the 12 selected groups. Their rationale for the tolerance was, 'It is his chicken, it is dead, nobody is getting hurt, and it is being done in private'.

So, my hope is that this conference will help us begin the process of separating what is universal in a psychological knowledge (of adolescents) from what is actually truer of WEIRD societies and needs to be seriously questioned. It is a difficult task since most of the psychological texts you study in colleges and universities, are WEIRD in their origins and assumptions. I hope we can start to become aware of a range of (adolescent) experiences, especially in the Indian setting that goes beyond the texts produced by WEIRD countries.

As I will talk to you later, popular myths, legends and so many others, are part of a cultural imagination, the cultural parts of our mind to which we pay very little attention by assuming the universality and the truth of what are WEIRD assumptions.

I don't know if you remember, perhaps you don't, because you are all younger people but there was one very important movie called Zanjeer in 1980's which made Amitabh Bachan into the big star he is today. Shashi Kapoor was one brother and Amitabh was the other. Amitabh goes out into the world and becomes and does all kinds of things, while Shashi Kapoor remains with the mother. In one of the climactic scenes, Amitabh Bachan asks Shashi Kapoor, 'What do you have?' and this sentence by Shashi Kapoor, 'Mere Paas Maa Hai' became one of the very, very famous sentences of film history.

While the Indian cultural imagination does not doubt the reality of separation, it refuses to admit that separation-individuation is the highest level of reality. Instead, the Indian vision of reality emphasizes union and oneness. Separation-individuation including

the second separation-individuation is a universal process. Yes, but between a minimum of separation-individuation needed to function as an adult in a particular society, and a maximum which encases a person in narcissistic armour by cutting all ties with family and community, there's a range of positions all of which need to be recognised by psychology as part of being human, rather than closely identifying with any particular position on the continuum as the only one that is healthy and mature. This is important because we often take just one position and often, as I said, implicitly because of the socialization, because of the studies we do. It is often one position which is more on one side of the continuum, rather than the other side which is emphasized by the Indian culture imagination. It doesn't mean that both are not right, it is only that there are different human experiences, both of them are right including and especially in the cultural setting in which one is operating.

I think, you've often heard a father, 82, in the United States saying to the son who is 30 years old or 25 years old, 'Uh, you're 25 years old and still living with your parents?' Whereas in India, somebody says, 'You're only 25 years old and you've left your parents?'. Breastfeeding in India, a UNICEF report for 2018, tells us, continues for over a year for children of both genders at a rate of 79% compared to the United States where extended breastfeeding rates are around 6%. From breastfeeding, the Indian child proceeds not to spoon feeding but to hand feeding, less frequently to strollers than to being carried on the mother's side or back in skin contact, and extended co-sleeping with parents or elder relatives. In this atmosphere of early life conveyed by visible skin contact over a long period, it would be reasonable to expect that the view of separating from the family would viralise the minimum necessary for autonomous functioning as an adult rather than the almost expected rebellious Western separation.

Dr Kakar's message endorses Sukrut's purpose to build a psychoanalytic framework of reflections rooted in the Indian ethos. Regrettably, there is very little originating from India. Papers continue to endorse WEIRD theories and citations from Western psychoanalysts. *25 and you're still living with your parents! You're only 25 and not living with your parents!* It is not that one or the other answer is wrong or right, but which one is most adapted to living in a particular society. Writings that blend self-disclosure with Western Psychoanalysis will go a long way to establish Indian psychoanalysis.

Intersubjective Reflections

From a Film

Dhak Dhak, a Hindi film featuring four women, who set out for a road trip to the highest motorable pass in the world on their bikes on a journey of self-discovery. Below are reflections from the participants:

1. The movie was very relatable to me. It showcases the power of female friendship and collusion, and how empowering they can be for one another. The movie also focuses on the image carried by Indian women based on her values and cultures. The movie also showcases how women speak, in comfort in intimate small groups, about topics that are taboo in public eg. homosexual sex.

2. I have female friends, all of us educated and very modern in our thinking but have social constraints because of the society we are from. The passage of time and the exposure that I received through ICC has helped me in the journey of self-discovery, allowing me to think differently, break free from social norms, and tweak the taboo subjects to my comfort, but at the same time stick to the values of my family. I am able to use my rationale without feeling guilty or by bringing in my spiritual guilt.

3. I have never spoken about sex, publicly. It was a very “hush hush” topic, only amongst very close friends, but now I am able to talk more openly when needed without the feeling of guilt or shame which I associated with my stereotyped upbringing about the way a girl is supposed to behave in society.

   The movie is full of emotions, adventure, girls' freedom and finding their identity. The men helping women characters in the movie while they lose their way or when a tire gets punctured etc., touched me personally because I have traveled alone many a times and found a few men really kind and helped me when needed ie. getting water for me, guiding me with the route, making sure I get a safe place to sit in the bus etc. In the world where women are looked at as an object of pleasure, there are men who respect women. We really need such men around so that women can live with dignity and can enjoy their freedom.

   This reflection will help me as a teacher and counselor to guide my students to have a healthy and a positive relationship between a boy and a girl. In this century where relationships have no meaning, no commitment, no loyalty, the adolescents could be taught about these values. They could learn to live in harmony with others.

From Study & Seminars 2024.3

A Psychoanalytic Study of Childhood and Society in India by Sudhir Kakar, who was trained at the Sigmund Freud Institute in Frankfurt, imputes to the ego the role of *the earliest and the 'more primary' carrier of a culture's traditions.* When situated within the larger intellectual tradition, the book exemplifies the social constructionist position that Kakar develops in the course of his academic career and fully elaborates in his later writings. Kakar argues that the cultural and historical relativity of psychoanalytic knowledge has been neglected owing to the absence of non-Western contributions that could potentially challenge the dominance of Western beliefs and values in psychoanalysis.

Kakar's book offers a meticulous analysis of the many ways in which personality and culture mutually reinforce one another. He assesses how various aspects of the cultural gene pool of Indians contribute to the evolution of the inner world and individual psychological development. This meta-reality is absorbed by the individual through his relationship with first his mother… and then the family. While the importance of the mother-infant dyad is not culturally specific to India, its intensity and pervasiveness are. Kakar scrutinizes the themes of the "good mother" and the "bad mother" under a cultural beam to show how the consequences of this interaction shape the Indian identity. Next in childhood, it is the relationships within the family, especially with the father, and the community (jati) that shape personality outcomes, like the respect for authority based on hierarchy, faith in beliefs, values, and ways of life of the jati.

Below is a reflective note from a participant on the subject of mother-infant dyad.

I have been impacted by the transference from my mother about her feelings of indignity over the years, she felt at the hands of her in laws. She constantly shared this feeling she had with me; from about the time I was 3years old. She was very clear and shared the need to be financially independent to be able to handle one's own situation. She also had regret of losing out on her career aspirations while she took care of me.

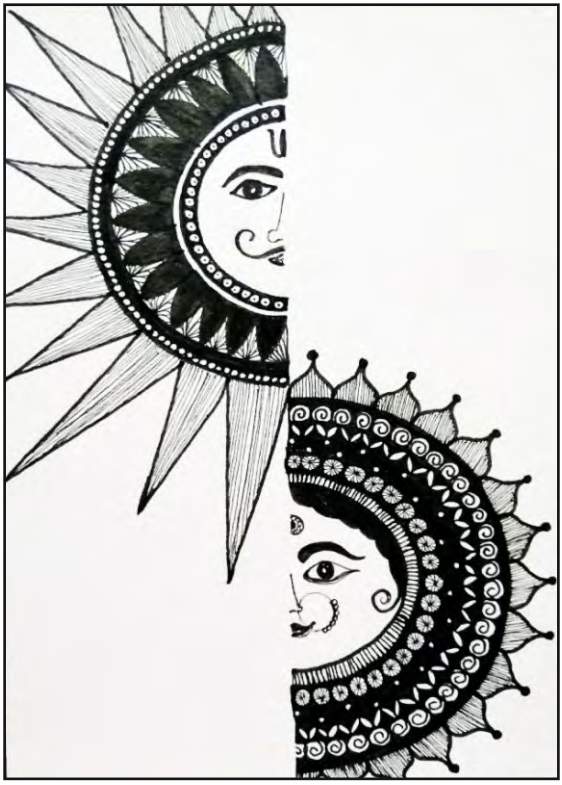
This has led to deep-rooted feelings of insecurity and anxiety, about my need to constantly search and struggle for an identity. Despite my ability to strike a work-life balance, I keep on searching to do more and want an identity separate from my spouse, kids and parents.

The communist background of my parents, father in particular and also my grandparents, had a big influence on the formation of my super ego. I was brought up in a house surrounded by people with very high morals, service towards community and high integrity. Till date I feel the struggle to balance personal life around work achievements and wealth creation vs high morals, and am I doing enough for people around me? I also battle feelings, if I deserve what I have. My father's need to help people around him, family members and strangers even at the cost of my safety has led me to believe most men are insensitive and it is best to manage things by myself.

My Psychological needs do come in conflict with that of society, especially when any thoughts do not fit a societal norm. There are tensions with such conflict and anxiety arises. However, to be able to manage the counter-transference, makes a big difference in my ability to deal with tensions and stress that arises in such conflicts.

I am a single child and have always been very obedient and comply with most instructions from parents, and the wishes of people around me. But there are many times when I do not feel like complying, and end up explaining and giving a lot of justifications for my behavior. I have recognized this recently, and am managing the counter-transference, without being indifferent to people close to me.

From Reflective Art Work



A Balance of Grace and Might

In gentle eyes, a fire ignites,
A dance of strength in soft delights,
With tender touch and fierce embrace,
Both warrior's heart and healer's grace.

A voice that whispers, yet commands,
Both tender heart and steady hands,
They walk the line, both bold and kind,
A fusion of the soul and mind.

Neither bound by roles or names,
A force of love that never tames,
With feminine light and masculine fight,
They shine as one, both day and night.

Shreeranjini GN

From Literature

Excerpt from Nagamandala, Pg. 38-39. Originally written by Girish Karnad, in Kannada. Translated to English by the author, Oxford University Press.

(The Cobra slides up her shoulder and spreads its hood like on umbrella over her head. The crowd gasps. The Cobra sways its hood gently for a while, then becomes docile and moves over her shoulder like a garland. Music fills the skies. The light changes into a soft, luminous glow. Rani stares uncomprehending as the Cobra slips back into the ant-hill. There are hosannas and cheers from the crowd.)

ELDER I: A miracle! A miracle!

ELDER II: She is not a woman. She is a Divine Being!

ELDER III: Indeed, a Goddess-!

(They fall at her feet. The crowd surges forward to prostrate itself before her. Appanna stands, uncomprehending. The Elders shout, Palanquin! Music! They lift her into the palanquin. Then, as an afterthought, Appanna is seated next to her. The couple is taken in procession to their house.)

ELDER I: Appanna, your wife is not an ordinary woman. She is a goddess incarnate. Don't grieve that you judged her wrongly and treated her badly. That is how goddesses reveal themselves to the world. You were the chosen instrument for the revelation of her divinity.

ELDER II: Spend the rest of your life in her service. You need merit in ten past lives to be chosen for such holy duty.

ELDER III: Bless us, Mother. Bless our children.

(All disperse, except Rani and Appanna. Appanna opens the lock on the away. He goes in and sits, mortified, baffled. She comes and stands next to him. Long pause. Suddenly he falls at her feet.)

APPANNA: Forgive me. I am a sinner. I was blind.
RANI: Hush, now!

(She gently takes him in her arms)

STORY: So Rani got everything she wished for, a devoted husband, a happy life. For Appanna's concubine was present at the trial. When she saw Rani's glory, she felt

STORY: So Rani got everything she wished for, a devoted husband, a happy life. For Appanna's concubine was present at the trial. When she saw Rani's glory, she felt ashamed of her sinful life and volunteered to do menial work in Rani's house. Thus Rani even got a life-long servant to draw water for her house. In due course, Rani gave birth to a beautiful child. A son. Rani lived happily ever after with her husband, child and servant. ono d (Her last sentence is drowned in the hubub created by the Flames as they prepare to leave. That was a nice story!', 'Has it dawned yet?', I don't want to be late, Poor girl!)ddidi sin MAN (exasperated): These Flames are worse than my audience. Can't they wait till the story is over?

FLAMES: But isn't it? ... It will be dawn soon.

MAN: It can't be. No one will accept this ending.

STORY: But why not?

MAN: Too many loose ends. Take Kappanna's disappearance, for instance.

STORY: Oh, that is Kurudavva's story. If you are interested in that one, you may find her yet, meet her unexpectedly as you met me here, in some remote place. Even in the market place perhaps. Or someone in the audience may know. Or you can invent the missing details. That would be quite in order. I am only Rani's story.

MAN: Even then, the present ending just doesn't work.

STORY: And why not?

MAN: It's all right to say Rani lived happily ever after. But what about Appanna, her husband? As I see him, he will spend the rest of his days in misery.

Nagamandala, a play by celebrated Indian playwright Girish Karnad, blends the mystical with the ordinary, folklore with modern life, and enchantment with harsh realities of Indian society. This thought-provoking play, a significant work in Indian literature and theatre, explores the vibrant landscape of rural Karnataka, delving into the complexities of human relationships, societal norms, and the enduring influence of folklore. This play encapsulates the complex understanding of feminism not just from the perspective of a man but poignantly for a woman. Rani at the end of the play gets transformed from a submissive wife to a sexually and spiritually liberated woman.

From a Poem

ORIGINALLY WRITTEN IN HINDI	TRANSLATED TO ENGLISH
मन को भाता है कभी-कभी यूं बेतरतीब रहना कुछ भी परवाह ना करते हुए बेपरवाह रहना	Sometimes My mind feels like to be so random without caring about anything to be careless/carefree
बिखरी रसोई सिलवटें पड़ी हुई चादर बिना सिमटे लिहाफ अक्स बन जाते हैं खुद की बेपरवाही का पर यूं रहना कभी कभी अच्छा लगता है	Messy kitchen, crumpled bedsheet unwrapped quilt become mirror of one's own carelessness But sometimes it feels good to live like this
उलझी हुई मोबाइल की तार , अपनी स्थाई जगह से गायब चप्पल जूते, टीवी का रिमोट, दर्ज कराते रहते हैं अपनी मौजूदगी का एहसास, जो अगर तरतीब से रखे होते तो शायद ज्यादा सुकून देते, पर कभी कभी यूं ही अच्छा लगता है	Tangled mobile phone wire, missing slippers, shoes, TV remote, from its defined place Keep making their presence felt, which if kept in order Maybe it would give more relief, but sometimes it feels good just like this
बिना परेशान हुए खाली दिमाग के साथ पूरे दिन बिस्तर पर पड़े रहना, अखरता नहीं है बिल्कुल भी उस दिन का आलसीपन, बेफिक्र अपनी मौज में पड़े रहना अच्छा लगता है। मन को भाता है कभी-कभी यूं बेतरतीब रहना	Without bothering about anything with an empty mind lying in bed all day, doesn't make awkward at all of that day's laziness, to be without any work enjoying being carefree feels good Sometimes My mind feels like

Shabnam Khan completed the internship with Sukrut's ICC in 2021 and is a Psychoanalytical Psychotherapist. She is a Senior Program Manager at Vishakha, an organization fighting against gender inequality.

From a Blogpost

Courtesy: Psyche on Campus. 22 August 24

Psychohistory is a concept that blends psychology and history to understand how large-scale historical events are influenced by the collective behavior and psychological state of populations. The term is most famously associated with Isaac Asimov's science fiction series, where it refers to a fictional science that combines statistical analysis and psychological principles to predict future events on a grand scale.

In real-world academic contexts, psychohistory can involve examining historical patterns and trends through psychological theories and principles. It looks at how mass psychology, collective emotions, and societal stressors influence historical events and movements. While not a formalized discipline in the same way as economics or sociology, it draws on insights from psychology, history, and social sciences to provide a more nuanced understanding of historical dynamics.

The Disavowal of Psychohistory and the Teaching of History by Brian Connolly

The relationship between history and psychoanalysis has always been a bit vexed. Joan W. Scott has written of the "incommensurability of history and psychoanalysis," which "provides the ground for continued conversation and debate about the possibilities, and also the limits, of a collaboration between the different temporalities of psychoanalysis and history" (2012, 82). If there is a trajectory of possibilities and limits that might propel critical historical thinking, there are also dangers. Michel de Certeau, himself one of the great practitioners of a psychoanalytic history, put it this way:

Since these Freudian "concepts" are supposed to explain all human endeavor, we have little difficulty driving them into the most obscure regions of history. Unfortunately, they are nothing other than decorative tools if their only goal amounts to a designation or discreet obfuscation of what the historian does not understand (1988, 288-89).

Another advocate of a psychoanalytically inflected history was less circumspect. "My plea for history as an elegant, fairly rigorous aesthetic science," Peter Gay wrote in *Freud for Historians,* was powerfully assisted by my commitment to psychology, in particular to psychoanalysis. I saw it then, and see it even more now, as a rewarding

auxiliary discipline that the historical profession has so far inadequately trusted, and certainly far from mastered. The much canvassed disasters of psychohistory, on which its detractors have fastened with a kind of unholy glee, are ground for caution rather than despair—or for disdain (1985, ix-x).

Taking these cautions seriously, we might still ask, what was/is psychohistory? What has the discipline of history lost by effectively disavowing it? And what might this mean today for the teaching of history in the United States (and elsewhere), as the university itself crumbles?

Historian Peter Loewenberg noted the virtues of psychohistory in relation to other methods:

I believe psychohistory to be the most powerful of interpretive approaches to history because (1) it is the only model of research that includes in its method the countertransference phenomenon—the emotional and subjective sensibility of the observer—and (2) it enriches the historical account of political, social, and cultural-intellectual events with a perception of latent or unconscious themes, of style, content, and conflict, that integrate apparently discordant data from a specific historical locus (2017, 3).

In other words, psychohistory attends to the conundrum of desire in history, and it does so in a way no other method can.

The origins of psychohistory are, like all origin stories, a bit contradictory. While Freud certainly pursued numerous historical and psycho-biographical forays—one thinks of anything from the book on Leonardo da Vinci, the mythic history of Totem and Taboo, the speculative history of Moses and Monotheism, and the strange, co-authored book on Woodrow Wilson—he never used the term. It was first used by American psychoanalyst L. Pierce Clark in the 1920s and then popularized by Erik Erikson's 1958 book Young Man Luther. In between, Isaac Asimov, in a series of short stories published between 1942 and 1944, invented a different mode of psychohistory: a kind of algorithmic prediction of the future, based on aggregated data from large populations. It shared with the psychohistory of academic historians a penchant for the speculative, but it sought to tame the wildness of desire that animated the best psychoanalytic history.

Psychohistory consolidated in the mid-twentieth century—not surprisingly, since psychoanalysis had permeated much of American culture by that point. References to

it could be found everywhere, from scholarly writing to comic books, advice columns, and television programs. Perhaps the best-known essay in American historiography, Richard Hofstadter's "The Paranoid Style in American Politics," was, if not explicitly psychohistorical, a nonetheless compelling and daring exploration of conspiracy through psychological and historical methods, conversant in psychoanalytic concepts like projection, sadomasochism, defense, phantasy, and so on. The final sentence is a beautiful evocation of the psychic life of history: "We are all sufferers from history, but the paranoid is a double sufferer, since he is afflicted not only by the real world, with the rest of us, but by his fantasies as well" (2008, 40).

By the 1970s, psychohistory was in full bloom. In 1958, William L. Langer, historian of France, president of the American Historical Association, and sibling of the psychoanalyst Walter Langer, had still been calling for the urgently needed deepening of our historical understanding through exploitation of the concepts and findings of modern psychology. And by this…I do not refer to classical or academic psychology…but rather to psychoanalysis and its later developments and variations as included in the terms "dynamic" or "depth psychology." (1958, 284-285)

But by the 1970s there was a scholarly journal (*The Journal of Psychohistory*), a scholarly organization (The International Psychohistorical Association), and numerous monographs.

Yet this heyday was short-lived. In 2021, a dissertation on the history of psychohistory —the subtitle of which was "The Rise and Fall of Psychohistory"—captured the declensionist narrative of the field. One problem was that the psychohistory that coalesced around the journal and the organization, while taking its cues from early practitioners like Erikson, Bruce Mazlish, and Robert Jay Lifton, was often dogmatic and reductionist, tending toward psychobiography and concentrating its attention on either childhood or authoritarian leaders.

Yet the decline of psychohistory as a subdiscipline didn't do away with all psychoanalytically informed history. There were, for instance, the idiosyncratic and brilliant psychobiographies by Fawn Brodie; the Marxist-Freudian work of Eli Zaretsky in *Capitalism, the Family, and Personal Life;* and Michael Paul Rogin's stirring, incisive exploration of the Oedipalized scene of settler colonialism in *Fathers and Children: Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of American Indian* (1975). There were also far-reaching reconstructions of the historical discipline itself, for example in Norman O. Brown's *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History,* the oeuvre of de Certeau, the work of intellectual historian Dominic LaCapra, and in the socialist-feminist work of Juliet Mitchell and others.

Psychoanalysis has also informed such fruitful, surprising, speculative, and critical work as Lynn Hunt's *The Family Romance of the French Revolution,* John Demos's A *Little Commonwealth,* Nell Irvin Painter's "Soul Murder and Slavery," and Hortense Spillers's "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book." While none of these works would be classified as psychohistory (indeed, some of it actively opposed psychohistory), they nevertheless took seriously the conjunction of history and psychoanalysis.

The field of psychoanalysis itself has always been at least minimally historically engaged, and this engagement has been documented in recent histories of psychoanalysis by Dagmar Herzog, Hannah Zeavin, Élisabeth Roudinesco, Omnia el Shakry, Camille Robcis, and many others. And journals like *Psychoanalysis and History and Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society* have attained prominence in the field.

And yet, for all of this intellectual excitement and for all of the forms of institutionalization that accompany field growth, psychohistory remains largely absent from undergraduate history curricula. There have been some important exceptions—at UCLA , for instance, where Peter Loewenberg long taught courses on psychohistory (and where Fawn Brodie was a professor of history until her death in 1981). And some of the dyed-in-the-wool psychohistorians—those associated with the *Journal of Psychohistory,* the International Psychohistorical Association, Clio's Psyche, and the Psychohistory Forum—have taught courses here and there. For instance, David Beisel's courses on psychohistory were among the most popular history courses at Rockland Community College (1998). In the mid-1960s, the university-adjacent Wellfleet Group formed by Lifton, Erikson, and Mazlish received funding from the American Academy for Arts and Sciences meant to support, among other things, the teaching of psychohistory. But that vision was never realized.

Consequently, our undergraduate history programs remain ill-equipped and unmotivated to teach psychoanalytic approaches to history. Indeed, most departments remain organized around geography and period rather than method and theory. The ongoing "crisis of the humanities" that has afflicted all humanities and many social science disciplines—a crisis of manufactured austerity, rabid vocational drive, and administrative short-sightedness—has made most history departments risk-averse and intellectually conservative. In over two decades of teaching, I've had only two opportunities to teach courses on psychoanalysis and history, and they were constrained to histories of psychoanalysis (once as a history of science course and once as a history of psychoanalysis in the U.S.). The impoverishment of

undergraduate curricula dedicated to history and theory, on the one hand, and psychoanalysis, on the other, makes it close to impossible to address psychohistory and the many interpretive and analytic enrichments it has to offer our students. Indeed, in those courses psychoanalysis was an object to be studied, not an interpretive frame for thinking. Of course, students came with some preconceptions and the familiar pop-Freudian lexicon, and we spent a lot of time doing the work of contextualization so common in history. But we didn't have time for the analytic and interpretive promise of psychoanalysis for history (and of history for psychoanalysis). The semester was too short, the aims of course didn't include historiography, and, in any case, the rest of the history curriculum would have made such an approach a potentially bewildering anomaly.

Where it is taught at all, psychohistory has served as a convenient and easy synecdoche for the much more wide-ranging relation between psychoanalysis and history. Indeed, psychoanalysis, where it is taught at all, is taught as something belonging to the past-that is, as history. That such a complex and unruly way of thinking about history is largely excluded from the contemporary teaching and writing of history robs our students of the most generative way of thinking about the turbulence of desire in history, the wildness of historical narrative, the relevance of unconscious determinism, and, not least, the limits of empiricism. Indeed, in history curricula increasingly constrained and foreshortened by declining faculty positions, fewer and larger courses (more and more of them rote "general education" courses) taught by contingent instructors, and routinely subjected to right-wing attacks and censorship justified by "facts only" approaches, the very idea of history in under assault.

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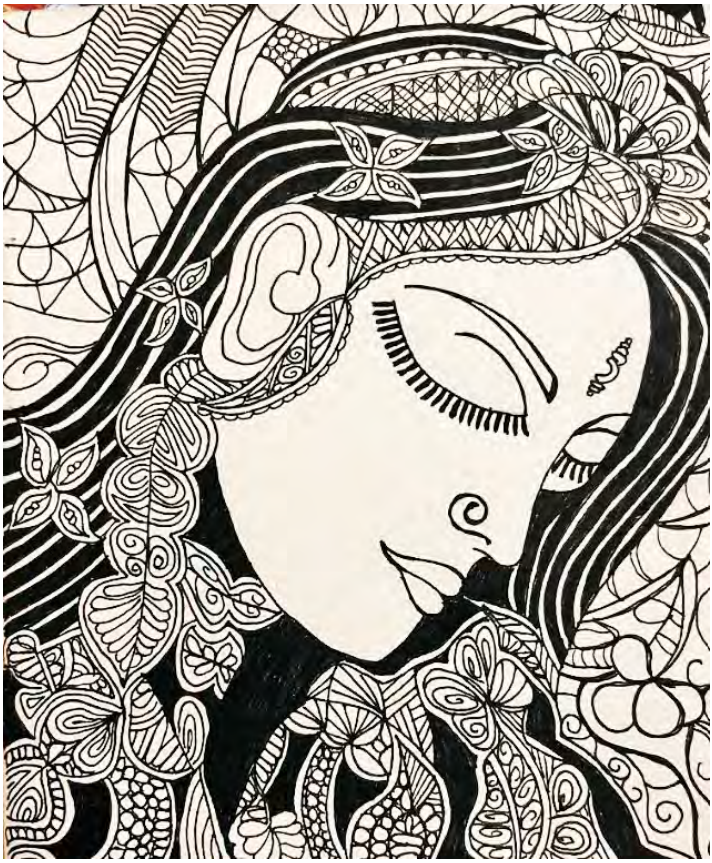
Courtesy Psyche on Campus. 22 August 24

From Reflective Art Work



"She" is harmed, abused, and violated, and while society talks about it, the question of real change still lingers. The fear is genuine, safety is a constant worry, and the harm is immense. Amidst these concerns, there is a constant wonder: Where can I go? What else can I do? How safe can I be to protect "She"? These questions follow me everywhere, with everyone, reflecting a feeling of insecurity that is not new but deeply rooted in cultural norms and now more triggered than ever. There is anger towards this feeling, yet a profound sense of helplessness. "She" isn't the problem or the source of abuse; "She" is human too. I remind myself not to just live in fear but to embrace my femininity, to feel powerful rather than insecure, and to find the courage to voice out and dare greatly, instead of numbing myself to the pain.

Varalakshmi GN

Reflections from Sukrut's Inward Change Conference (ICC)

Sukrut's ICC was started in 2003 by a small group of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapists trained in India and overseas, addressing challenges in mental health by applications of the talking cure. Sukrut soon began to offer internship in psychoanalysis, supported with intersubjective study and seminars. The training draws on relational psychoanalysis which emphasizes the real-time presentation of internal dynamics within the therapeutic relationship, and privileges authenticity. Psychoanalytic psychotherapists trained in Sukrut loathe separating transference from the actual professional relationship. They conceive transference and countertransference as features of all relationships. They comfortably connect with the inner world of feelings and thoughts to identify the toxicity that builds in the self and in systems.

The ICC Summer Event 2024 was held in Masinagudi, Tamil Nadu.

Below are reflections by Facilitators and Participants of the various events:

Explorations in Identity

The bell tolls for me
Even the sea of seas must give up its dead

John Donne

Working with a group of adolescents left us with the kind of hope the poet John Donne. Over a six-day period we witnessed psychological shifts, both in the adolescents and us. This was made possible through designing "inner change" processes keeping in mind two important facets: an approach that acknowledges the systems that manifest as adverse conditions in which the adolescents grow up, and the nature of the relationship between facilitators and participants. That is, we approached inner change through an approach that anchors the possibility of change by being mindful of systems in which individual change takes place and the dynamic and dialectical relationship between the facilitators and the adolescents.

The Context

India presently has the highest number of young people in the world, yielding the country a rich demographic dividend; more specifically 600 million people under the age of 25 years, more than half of India's total population are youth (Jack, 2018). However, varied factors, be it a changing economic landscape, sociocultural shifts, paucity of infrastructure in education along with adverse factors, including poverty and malnutrition, amongst others, has led to an environment of uncertainty and stress for

many youth. Importantly growing up in adverse conditions in India manifests itself in a significantly high percentage of children as physical stunting, malnutrition, mental health, psychosocial and emotional issues (UNICEF 2009).

Inner Change:

The Dialectical Nature of Facilitation

As facilitators we were guided by the dialectical nature of psychoanalytical psychotherapy.

> *Of central importance in interventions using psychoanalytic psychotherapy is the role of the facilitator / therapist, and the close rapport between the latter and the participant / patient. Therapy is a dialectic process in which two psychic realities confront each other, and both must be affected and changed in the encounter. The Facilitator / therapist, no less than the participant / patient, cannot be immune from the experience if the intervention is to be effective. Concepts and theories are instruments of protection from experience, thanks to which the Facilitator / therapist can maintain a convenient distance, and besides, there is no obligation to concepts and theories. Facilitators and therapists equally should not shield themselves behind the screen of professional authority, for by this attitude they deprive themselves of important information gained through the channel of their unconscious* ***(Jung).***
>
> *Sukrut's facilitation / psychotherapeutic model aims to bring about in participants and patients a state of fluidity in which they experience change and growth without being attached to any fixed condition. At the same time, participants and patients begin to enlarge their capacities of awareness beyond personal consciousness*

Designing the process for adolescents, we reflected on the transferences and counter-transferences between us each day; transferences that challenged us. Bringing these to awareness, principally, anger and shame stemming from our respective life-scripts, enabled fluidity both within us and the processes that we designed. We reflected with every passing day how we were moving from positions that were guided by the need to be in control of the processes to being part of the process, open to experiences and the unanticipated revelations of our individual and collective psyches. This fluid and flexible state stemming from the ability to actively listen, both to us and the adolescents within a space that was supportive, guided our approach as facilitators.

As I was facilitating the Explorers of Identity group in ICC, understanding the participants' struggles and helping them to get in touch with their feelings from the narratives of their life experiences in the Lab, I was struggling to understand the dynamics and tension which I projected into the facilitators who worked with me. I had to deal with the transference and countertransference within the facilitators I worked with to help the participants much more efficiently.

Facilitator G

The Design

A Safe Space

To create a sense of support and flow, we first created a space within which participants felt supported principally through creative arts activities and body movements. As we moved in body rhythm in a large group, facilitators, and participant adolescents alike, we felt a sense of kinship. Claxton (2015) writes cogently that the Cartesian approach foregrounds mind over body; the body though has an intelligence that through movement and awareness can enable experiential shifts. The adolescents, through a creative arts activity introduced themselves in unique ways going beyond introductions by name.

The process of individuation within a community characterized by kinship in a space that felt supportive had begun. These safe and welcoming spaces through small and large groups through the six-day program facilitated trust; the adolescents were able to get in touch with trauma of varied kinds in powerful ways that touched the facilitators in profound ways. The possibility of change in the individual psyche was anchored within a broader safe space.

I thought ICC would be like normal sit and listen classes, but I was wrong.

Adolescent S

I am compassionate, I am kind.

Adolescent J

Throughout the ICC, the small groups really helped me share. I was surprised how much I shared. Initially I was crying inside, unable to share with anyone, even my family and partner, but after sharing my pain, I felt big relief from my pain.

Adolescent S

In our small groups, the adolescents were asking many questions. Though I was unable to give them satisfying answers in logical and reasonable ways, I was able to empathize with them and connect to them at the feeling level which helped them to understand themselves.

Facilitator M

Disruption

We chose several different techniques; namely, art, photography, games, moments of silence, storytelling, and psychodrama, amongst others, to facilitate a movement of repressed thoughts and feelings from the unconscious/preconscious realms of the psyche to the conscious realm. These processes encompassed projective techniques, causing disruption in the participants. For example, two processes on the first two days, namely, life history through art and identity explorations through photography brought out themes like abandonment, shame, mistrust, and abuse powerfully.

Adolescent R, for instance, spoke about her sense of inadequacy on account of being a girl. Not having cleared all papers in her exam, she was being pressurized to get married. Comparison with siblings, body shaming, made her feel hopeless. The top half of her life history through art depicted the inner storm she was experiencing. An education system that foregrounds marks as a marker of success, and a patriarchal system that slots women into domesticated roles, amongst others, had her feeling of hopelessness. As she and her peers shared their life histories, aspects of their life scripts triggered difficult memories for both them and the facilitators alike.

Adolescent M shared the persecutory anxiety she felt through a photograph of a tombstone in a graveyard. Symbolic of death, she shared the depth of her hopelessness and shame triggered by her father abandoning the family. This sense of hopelessness resonated with her peers. A sense of inadequacy due to failure in exams, forced isolation depicted through photographs as an empty and small space due to perceived abandonment of adult care takers from childhood, parental rejection of romantic partners, peer ragging, were some narratives the adolescents shared. These narratives reinforced how their explorations around identity were anchored in systems of patriarchy, socio-cultural values that define societal shame, and an education system that foregrounds marks as a key aspect of self-worth, amongst others.

When my friends cry, I feel connected and I would not even control myself any longer.

Adolescent V

I expressed my sadness that I lost my father to COVID 19. But Ma says that what has happened has happened. I have to move forward.

Adolescent A

My father used to drink and he left us. I feel so much shame.

Adolescent M

I feel shame as I did not clear some papers.

Adolescent J

I don't trust my peers.

Adolescent V

It amazes me how powerful silence can be, as silence kindled a lot of emotions among the participants and within me.

Facilitator G

They wanted their family to support them, missing their parents/siblings love and care.

Facilitator M

As the adolescents started delving deeper into their identities, activities within groups with their peers and other older participants at the ICC, be it games, storytelling, and psychodrama around themes of trust and mistrust, shame, and abuse furthered their explorations into themselves and helped them articulate the challenges they felt both individual and systemic. The trust games revealed how feelings of abandonment in early childhood manifested as trust issues or how a sense of powerlessness especially amongst a few male adolescents manifested as exertion of power over the female peers they were partnered with in a blindfold exercise; for example purposefully taking them along a rough terrain rather than being a trustworthy guide. This lack of power, especially among the male adolescents, manifested in exaggerated behaviours of bravado, rebellion, and isolation.

Psychodrama around themes of shame and abuse revealed a powerful dialectical relationship between individual explorations of identity and systems within which such explorations are anchored. In the skits around abuse, that gave the adolescents creative freedom to articulate their perspectives and struggles, patriarchal systems that manifest themselves in families and the Indian education system with its emphasis on exams were revealed as powerful challenges within which adolescents develop their sense of self. An adolescent challenged our design; we had not designed for what they perceived as abusive education spaces. Most adolescents chose the group around the theme abuse in undefined relationships; they enacted unsafe classroom spaces with its emphasis on achievement as marks, teachers who discipline them without leaving space for them to express themselves, and peer ragging, amongst others. This was a powerful moment for the educators, teachers, and facilitators about how education spaces are crucial to craft our identities and enable ways for adolescents to express themselves more equally. The psychodrama sessions that were designed on the fourth day of the program revealed the importance of creating the kind of spaces where adolescents felt that were being actively heard, where facilitators did not hold themselves at a distance, such that adolescents could articulate the ways in which they wanted changes in systems scripts.

I felt there are people willing to listen to me and my feelings. I liked the activities that were conducted, and specially the skit.

Adolescent J

The adolescents looked tough but were very sensitive and emotional. Through psychodrama and conversation, they were given the opportunity to explore ways to handle their feelings.

Facilitator M

I had to be aware of the transference from the participants, and be conscious of my counter-transferences, because these triggered the unresolved parts in me.

Facilitator G

How do we facilitators hold ourselves, what are we mirroring?

Facilitator K

Embodied Disruption

I must have the strength to live alone in the future. Helen Keller wrote about her experiences: I understand that if I try, I would be able to do some work unknown to me now.

Adolescent A

Adolescent A embodied disruption: she was differently abled with partial eyesight and hearing. Furthermore, she initially spoke Bengali, her mother tongue, while the sessions were in English. At the beginning of the ICC, her presence triggered reactions.

She makes me feel helpless, I don't think I will be able to facilitate with her in the group. She does not speak English and she speaks slowly so others don't get a chance to speak.

Facilitator K

Why don't you wait for a day more and see how it goes? Also, try and understand the helplessness you are feeling.

Facilitator M

Let us see how we can make this happen.

Facilitator G

Facilitators got in touch with the feeling of helplessness. It came from her feeling of abandonment during childhood. We paired Adolescent A with female peers by rotation to help her around the campus and arranged to have a Bengali-speaking facilitator translate her thoughts and feelings in some sessions. We requested her to attempt to speak in both English and Hindi, in which she had some fluency. She felt heard.

On the first two days, my Ma and I stayed together because classes started on the third day. Then I was shifted to another room to stay with my course-mates whom I did not know earlier. They were nice and helpful to me; they are M, J, and JS. It was a new experience for me. I was speaking in Bengali for which a Madam came to my class and translated into English. But from the second day I was trying to speak in English or Hindi. Another Madam translated them into English. I took more time than others while speaking in English as I was rephrasing while speaking. I understood that I have to learn to speak soon in English.

Her peers listened to her actively and felt moved. At every stage she attempted to overcome her challenges. All of us, the adolescents and facilitators alike, got in touch

with how we were all differently abled: each one pf us with our vulnerabilities and unique strengths. She not only felt profound shifts but also helped us all go deeper into our inner change processes.

I spoke about my life journey. I had bad experiences of rejection in my first two schools where I was not allowed to enter the classroom. I used to roam around the school campus. I felt happy when I was first allowed to enter and sit with my classmates in Ma's school. It was in Class I in 2016.

She reinforced our psychoanalytical psychotherapy practices and belief that welcoming spaces facilitate shifts in psyche through processes that facilitate disruption: the nature of the spaces within which inner change happens. The design of the inner change process, and the dialectical nature of facilitation, is all important.

Group Relations

The challenge for the adolescents to integrate into more formal systems around three principal themes of time, task, and territory, was another disruptive process that revealed how they struggle transitioning from school spaces to more formal systems post school. This process on the last day of the ICC revealed that keeping time was a principal challenge for them. That said, a few of them showed resolve in exploring their ability to negotiate and assert themselves in this formal system. Facilitator K witnessed many adolescents trying to explore formal roles that involved taking on individual responsibility to articulate their group concerns and/or negotiate with the Management Group to change process conditions.

The adolescents were struggling to maintain time boundaries.

Facilitator M

I have come to the Management to be part of it. I am exploring what it is like to take a stand.

Adolescent S

We have come here to the Management to negotiate some flexibility in the rules that have been made.

Adolescent S

I learned to value time.

Adolescent O

Powerful Reflections

The adolescents shared their reflections after every event and at the end of the conference too. The processes helped them get in touch with trauma, pain, shame, a sense of abandonment, and abuse, amongst others. Their reflections, especially in visual form, reveal the shifts they felt within themselves and a greater sense of individuation.

The adolescents had different and unique life experiences though a common facet was the adversity that they faced from childhood. Each one experienced a different kind of shift; what was common though was the greater sense of individuation they experienced, though the extent differed. On the one hand was a sense of *I found myself.* On the other hand was a sense of a continued challenge, a reminder that inner change is a process.

I am thankful that at the ICC , I experienced people keenly listening to our problems and find solutions, but the outside does not work like that. There is no one to even care or listen to us. I would never share things with others, but I felt so comfortable to share in the ICC program because I felt I could trust. I am eagerly waiting for the next year to join ICC.

An Adolescent

This note was compiled by **Kanthi Krishnamurthy**. She is a psychoanalytically informed psychotherapist and a Doctoral student in the Department of Psychology at Christ University. She was helped with inputs from **Aishi Sengupta, Akash Singh, Anupam Das, Maria Leena, Merlyn Rao, Priyadarshan Kansara,** and **Shabnam Khan** – all completed the internship with ICC.

Internship Phase 1

1. I look forward to attending the ICC every year, as this is one event where I get to meet my old friends and confidants with whom I enjoy a close bond. The venue invariably in the lap of nature is an added attraction. This is one place to spend time with like-minded people and touch upon areas generally left untouched.

   The series of online Facilitator Meetings leading up to the actual event helped me to get involved with the detailed planning of the events for each of the groups, besides brainstorming on specific activities which would strike a powerful chord with participants. During the event, I came in touch with an affable but evasive male participant, about 18 years old, who was continuously trying to either avoiding or trivializing others intense experiences. His tendency to deflect serious conversations with humor or change the subject was evident, and it seemed like he was protecting himself from confronting something painful. However, during the marathon session, he showed extreme courage. In a moment of collective vulnerability, he broke his silence and shared his distressed relationship with his father. The room grew quiet as he shared how he felt abandoned and angry because his father was never around when he needs him. His voice wavered as he recounted instances from his childhood, moments when he longed for his father's presence and support, but found only absence and neglect.

   As a father, I found myself connecting with my vulnerability, reflecting on my relationship with my own children. I started to question whether I was truly present for them, both physically and emotionally, being so engrossed in my own pathos. The adolescents outpouring stirred a deep sense of empathy and introspection within me. I found myself getting in touch with my own vulnerabilities as a father and a human being and the need to be understood and accepted with my own imperfections.

   In earlier times, seeking help from others somehow made me feel very inferior or incompetent, due to which I had the tendency to struggle / get stuck and yet not seek help out of the fear of being judged. In my journey through the current ICC, I found myself more accepting of my inabilities and open to seeking help from others whenever I felt incapable or stuck at times. This also helped me to venture out and take initiative, without the compelling need for validation from others.

2. I was touched by A's will to surmount her condition, keeping aside shame and fear. She helped me get in touch with my handicaps - both psychic and physical. I am unable to bear the strain of a steep hike in the mountains. I feel sad that I did not use the time I had with my younger brother to tell him how sorry I was for my insensitivity towards him. Like A, he was handicapped from the age of seven months, infected with Polio, and I was about four. Our mom's attention shifted to him, desperately nursing him to regain fitness. Consequently, I felt abandoned by her and blamed my brother for my loss. My helplessness often turned to violence, and I never realized his helplessness and his anguish. A's will to rise above her condition during the Community Sessions brought me face-to-face with the will of my brother to rise above his condition, and accomplish so much. He died of cancer earlier this year, and I miss him.

   I have begun to identify my many handicaps and hold them without regret and shame. Many of my colleagues join me in psychoanalytic reflections, both during ICC as well as otherwise. I wish many more would join too, holding the boundary between intellectual/cognitive analysis and expression of the feelings that lie in our unconscious.

3. I had an enriching experience at ICC 2024 in the role of a facilitator. Initially I had a lot of anxiety, but the space given to me to explore the role in my own style helped me to ease the anxiety. The collaboration with my peer facilitator S helped me to get connected to each other, and also the connectedness in the group helped me facilitate. The observations-cum-learnings in the previous two years also helped me in the present ICC. Thanks for the opportunity to explore. The theories and discussions also made me open to others perspective, and mindfully become aware of the transference and counter-transference effect.

4. My experience at the ICC 2024 was truly insightful, allowing me to delve into new aspects of myself. One significant area of growth was learning to embrace spontaneity, which has always been a challenge for me. Through facilitation, I found opportunities to practice spontaneity effectively. When my group members struggled to express or share, I had to quickly introduce various interventions. If words alone did not suffice, I brought in objects to help them relate and speak. If objects failed to work, I introduced movements that encouraged participants to open up. The challenge was to make spontaneous decisions during the facilitation process and engage others with those decisions.

Another important discovery was my difficulty with exercising authority through my voice. Speaking firmly, sharply, and crisply has been challenging for me. I explored this aspect by taking on the role of Director in the Group Relations event. This role empowered me to feel more authoritative from within. Announcing instructions, addressing Members from different groups, handling their concerns, and providing reflections on the issues they raised were some of the ways I exercised my authority through my voice.

5. ICC has always been an important part of my journey of self-exploration. One of the significant awareness in this ICC was how I have handicapped my mother in her role. A specially-abled adolescent in the group helped me to get in touch with my fear of embracing my vulnerable self and my difficulty of accepting my mother as a woman with flaws. This realisation has brought a significant shift in me as I have been able to accept myself not just when I'm boxed in inside the various roles I play, but also as a woman with desires and wishes which are socially judged.

Internship Phase 2

The personal self, who is the therapist, is an essential element of the therapeutic process that we follow at the ICC. It is because the core of our work is through intense human engagement with participants, and for us facilitators this is the medium through which our work of therapy is accomplished. Many theorists have propounded that it is the therapist and not the therapy model per se that is more influential in the outcome of the therapeutic process: I did experience this while I facilitated this phase.

I experienced the need for self-awareness and self-mastery that are required for the facilitator in the context of the psychoanalytic process and insights that we follow in ICC. I also experienced that as a facilitator I had to undergo my own unresolved blocks, in order to enhance my connectedness with the participants. These experiences not only enabled me to gain more intimate insights into what clients were experiencing, but also facilitated greater sensing into the dynamics of the experiences of my participants at the moment of connection.

Finally, reflecting on personal experiences in the Facilitators Meeting offered valuable insights into my feelings, the triggers, and behaviour patterns while facilitating the small and large group sessions. Setting aside time for regular self-reflection allowed me to understand and decode mine and other facilitator's internal experiences and how these impacted their effectiveness, including identifying and reflecting on their transferences and counter-transferences.

Internship Phase 3

1. Each time I attend ICC, I go with an open mind and have always come away to the real world with key realisations. This year, meeting A, who was part of the adolescent group, made me go through several feelings, also as a mother. A is a 16-year girl with disabilities but a lot of clarity in her thoughts. However, during my interactions with her, and her mother and a teacher, I came across the information that one of the conditions that caused her disability during her mother's pregnancy is similar to my daughter's condition. This triggered several feelings in me, and I felt drawn to her in many ways. I was inspired seeing A and her mother, and came back home resolved to support my daughter better and be more patient with her.

   My daughter is a child full of energy and very spirited. She has a mind of her own, and at times she is extremely naughty. She is also growing at her own pace and is a smaller child compared to other children her age. This is because she was born under extremely difficult circumstances along with her twin brother, at just 800gms. My son was a bit more stable at birth, but my daughter was in the NICU for more than three months. As a mother, each day during the three months was extremely challenging. I feared that she might not survive and, if she did, she would grow up with difficulties. While my twins were in the NICU, I also witnessed other parents going through many problems and breaking down looking at the suffering of their children. This had shaken me as well.

   When I met A at ICC, some of these feelings got triggered, and I was reminded that my daughter could also have the disabilities or difficulties that A has today. I was brought face to face with my fear of what it is to raise a child with disabilities. I was left with the feeling that I have to accept my child as she is, and not push her to be like other children. I have also realised that not everything can be by the rule book. I can encourage and support her, but above all, I have to accept her as she is with all my heart. I also got in touch with my feeling of wanting to keep doing what I like and not becoming a person to please others. During this process, and through interaction with other facilitators, I felt the growth I had in the work I was doing and didn't seek validation for the same. This came from feeling confident and constant with me and with people around me.

The Intersubjective Study & Seminars over the last two years, and the interaction with my colleagues, helped me to balance my theoretical knowledge and practical experience.

Conclusions and the Way Forward

Inner Change as foundation to learning and life: In traditional constructs, working towards inner change has been looked at as a value-add to academic learning and outcomes. What we felt post this session was that inner change is foundational to overcoming adversity and developing the capacities needed to thrive in an increasingly complex and uncertain future. This has strong implications for education policy, strategy, and implementation. Does this mean work on inner change must start during the early years of learning? Does this mean redesigning the school calendar to incorporate inner change processes being as critical as numeracy and literacy? Do education approaches need to have more project-based learning, experiential learning, and empathy-based pedagogies? Do teachers and facilitators also need to regularly participate in inner change sessions?

Redefine the definition of success: Success in traditional parameters have been defined as scholastic achievement that assures career success; that is in economic terms. In an increasingly complex and uncertain future scenario, we need to redefine and reimagine success that goes beyond economic success. Hannon & Peterson (2017), as an alternative, suggest that *thriving shifts the focus to what children and young people need to be allowed to experience, and do now as part of their experience of school - not to develop a set of abstract skills, but to learn to live in new and better ways, taking charge of the future so they can shape it and deal with its challenges.*

Contributors to this note are **Gracy Jebastina, Shreeranjini GN, Varalakshmi GN**.

Photographs from ICC Summer 2024

Large Group Session in progress

Large Group Reflective Art Work

Reflections and News from India

***Listening to the Unconscious,* reflections from a Group Relations event by Group Relations India**

Group Relations (GR), like other methods of developmental training, aims to provoke new thinking and, axiomatically, allow divergences from conventional thinking. It is, therefore, foundational to create a space that nurtures freedom of thought and its expression. Autonomy to exercise one's leadership and authority is of the essence.

Sukrut nominated two of its members to attend a short GR event offered by another organization so as to gain experience. Below are edited reflections from their notes.

Member A

The awkward silence about the unknown was making me feel anxious, and it triggered me to do something in action because words didn't work. I realized my pattern of not doing things spontaneously; I either take time or do it under pressure.

To explore this, though I was nervous, I went to unfamiliar people in the group and introduced myself. The fear was actually not about the unknown but withholding me from what I want to do. There was a disconnect between my thoughts, feelings and action. In familiar situations I take up the role and responsibility only when I know that people will comply. If not, I become an observer or a listener. Anything contradictory to my presumptions immobilizes me.

To bring an authentic balance between thoughts, feelings and actions in the unknown, I pushed myself to mobilize and exercised my spontaneity through action.

The small group discussions helped me to understand and explore the unconscious. I was expressing my fears about connecting with males because of the fear of safety. Surprisingly, after hearing me, the group also began to share. They suggested if I could invite others to use my language to own up feelings in a powerful way, and become conscious about one's vulnerabilities.

The group process helped me to shift from "me" and the group to "me" with the group. The moment I started connecting with the other in the group it helped to understand and reflect better with my thoughts and feelings. I have my way and others have their own ways; I can try to find connections through that rather than expecting others to choose my way. This shift was helpful as it created more openness to learning.

I was able to introspect and realize that my desires from the system are of care, attention and power. If these desires not met, I feel abandoned and behave in certain ways to avoid abandonment. I also sense and connect with those who are unnoticed in the system. So, I am now looking into how can I express my desires and also be open to collaboration in the system with *the other.*

As a whole this GR experience gave me the opportunity to not only understand myself from my experiences but also through others experiences.

Member B

As we are not we, I sometimes could also not be I: this was the first thing that I heard when I told the Large Group that I was unable to understand what they said because most of them kept using we in every sentence they spoke. I didn't want to ponder over this at that time because I felt it made no sense. Through this process of listening to the unconscious there were a lot of critical insights that I got in touch with, for which I kept seeking for validation and for which I tried to look at myself from different perspectives.

I was really perplexed about the way people had their own definitions for leadership and the word unconscious. I felt so funny when most of the Members in my Small Group sat quietly, and when I asked them they said they were listening to their unconscious. I was trying to tell them that without any basic data about oneself we will not be able to understand the unconscious. I felt that I kept trying to make them understand this for getting into a conversation. In the Small Group I saw how uncomfortable I was with strangers, so I asked them to introduce themselves, and only then I felt comfortable to share. I was seeking safety and familiarity in my group so that I could feel belonged.

I was trying to contain myself from not facilitating the group but later on when I felt that the group was not progressing I helped my group by facilitating. There was a clash between one of my group members and I because she took up the role of facilitation, and later when I spoke she shared that she felt powerless which really shook me.

On the 2nd day, I realized that I buy what people tell me and feel low about myself. I also wanted to see how it feels to be in a conflict or argument with men, but the person I chose numbed himself initially. Later, I shared with him why I behaved that way, but when he asked why I thought only an argument with a man would solve the problem it provoked me to think from where had I picked this up this transference.

The Review and Application Groups were very crucial because I gained a lot of insights about myself. The major things I was able to understand were the two hooks in me about my role as a facilitator and how I unconsciously used my profession as a saviour.

In the Closing Plenary, I picked this line that said that *the self* is dynamic and changing, it's not predefined. What is the need is to stay with past concepts of self. That's when I reflected again on the opening line *As we are not we, I sometimes could also not be I.*

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Dreams, Creativity and Hope in a Polarised World: A Group Relations Conference in July 2024, at Tavistock Clinic, London

I attended this in-person event. There were 43 Members and 09 Staff. Maxine Dennis and Sarah Wynick were Co-Directors, both female.

The design was unique: 510 hours of a Dynamic Systems Event (DSE) plus 195 hours of Small Study Group. Another 540 hours of other sessions in a 03-day design.

Polarization emerged almost immediately – Male / Female, Eastern / Western, White / Colored, Young / Old, Indigenous / Immigrant and multiple religions. I was confirmed that polarization is an inevitable fact of life because of our unique genders, geographies, races, age, religions, and human conditions. Yet, we have we been persecuting the other using fantasies of superiority?

Franca Fubini's use of the Social Dreaming & Dreams Move space was a new experience. Invitation was to translate themes from SD into explorations through silent movement. A Member from USA explored and sprained his ankle, then reflected on the experience.

I hope violence ends in my lifetime. I have a part to play, however insignificant. I also hope that senior GR practitioners from across the world would attend such short events and take away new learning.

Manab Bose

Reflective report: Our Identities Lab at Leslie Sawhny Centre, Deolali

The Lab allowed me to explore the different facets of myself—those that are warm, tender, and cold. I experienced a sense of freedom in the role I embraced. As I delved deeper, feelings of helplessness, insensitivity towards my loved ones, and my insecurities surfaced. Throughout this journey, I found it easy to express myself and recognized various instances in my life where I had been insensitive. Guilt washed over me as I reflected on how I had projected my anger onto those I care about, and I gained insight into how I displace my anger. I examined critical moments in my life that have contributed to my resilience today. As I articulated my overwhelming feelings of deep sadness related to my father, I uncovered more memories I had tucked away, as they reminded me of him. I learned to differentiate between my sadness and my anger, and in that moment, I encountered both grief and love intertwining. My boundaries became clearer, helping me understand why I struggle to connect with others.

Moving forward, I want to recognize myself as a courageous and resilient individual. I will make a conscious effort to be aware of my behaviours towards my loved ones and to foster deeper connections with others.

Gracy Jebastina

Culture and Psychoanalysis by Sudhir Kakar

My interest in the role of culture in psychoanalysis did not begin as an abstract intellectual exercise but rather as a matter of vital personal import. Without my quite realizing it at the time, it commenced when I started as an analyst more than 30 years ago upon entering a five-day-a-week training session with a German analyst at the Sigmund-Freud-Institute in Frankfurt. At first, I registered the role of culture in my analysis as a series of niggling feelings of discomfort whose source remained incomprehensible for many months. Indeed, many years were to pass before I began to comprehend the cultural landscape of the mind in more than a rudimentary fashion and to make some sense of my experiences, both as an analysis and as an analyst, in cross-cultural therapeutic dyads (Kakar 1978, 1982, 1987, 1989, 1994, 1997).

After undergoing analysis for some months, I realized that my recurrent feelings of estrangement were not due to cultural differences in forms of politeness, manners of speech, attitudes toward time, or even differences in aesthetic sensibilities. (To me, at that time, Beethoven came across as just so much noise, while I doubt if he even knew of the existence of Hindustani classical music, which so moved me.) The estrangement involved much deeper cultural layers of the self, which were an irreducible part of my subjectivity as, I suppose, they were a part of my analyst's. In other words, if during a session we sometimes suddenly became strangers to each other, it was because each of us found himself locked into a specific 'cultural preconscious', consisting of a more or less closed system of cultural representations that were rarely raised to conscious awareness. In my case, what I have termed the 'cultural preconscious' referred to the 'Indian-ness' of an upper-caste Hindu, which I was to spend many years elucidating.

Culturally shared Indian-ness is not an abstract concept, a subject of intellectual debate for academics, but something that informs the activities and concerns of daily life for a vast number of Indians while at the same time guiding them through the journey of life. How to behave toward superiors and subordinates in organizations, the kinds of food conducive to health and vitality, the web of duties and obligations in the family—all are as much influenced by the cultural part of the mind as are ideas concerning the proper relationship between the sexes or one's relationship to the Divine. Of course, for the individual Indian, this civilizational heritage may be modified or overlaid by the specific cultures of one's family, caste, class, or ethnic group. At first glance, the notion of a singular Indian-ness may seem far-fetched: How can one generalize about a billion people—Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, and

Jains—who speak 14 major languages and are characterized by pronounced regional and linguistic identities? How can one postulate anything in common among a people divided not only by social class but also by India's signature system of caste, and with an ethnic diversity typical more of past empires than of modern nation-states? Yet as attested to by foreign travelers throughout the ages, there is a unity in this diversity that is often ignored or unseen because our modern eyes are more attuned to discern divergence and variance than resemblance. Indian-ness, then, is about similarities rather than differences among the inhabitants of this vast sub-continent, similarities produced by an overarching Indic, pre-eminently Hindu civilization that has contributed a lion's share to what we would call the 'cultural gene pool' of India's people. This civilization has remained in constant ferment through the processes of assimilation, transformation, reassertion and re-creation that came in the wake of its encounters with other civilizations and cultural forces, such as those unleashed by the advent of Islam in medieval times and European colonialism in the more recent past. The contemporary buffeting of Indic civilization by a West-centric globalization is only the latest in a long line of invigorating cultural encounters that can be called 'clashes' only from the narrowest of perspectives. Indic civilization—as separate from, though related to, Hindu- ism as a religion—is thus the common patrimony of all Indians, irrespective of their faith. Indians, then, share a family resemblance that is seen in sharp relief when it is compared to the profiles of peoples of other major civilizations or cultural clusters. This is why, in spite of persistent academic disapproval, people (including academics in their unguarded moments) continue to speak of "the Indians," as they do of "the Chinese," "the Europeans," or "the Americans," as a necessary and legitimate shortcut to a more complex reality.

The Hindu World-View

Every civilization has a unique way of looking at the world. This world-view, the civilization's center of gravity, is a cluster of ideas that define the goal of human existence, the ways to reach this goal, the errors to be avoided, and the obstacles to be expected on the way. The world-view interprets central human experiences and answers perennial questions on what is good and what is evil, what is real and what is unreal, what is the essential nature of men and women and the world they live in, and what is man's connection to nature, to other human beings, and to the cosmos. For instance, if we look at China (and Chinese societies around the world), we can define the following elements in the dominant Confucian world-view: There is no other world than the one we live in. The ultimate meaning of life is embedded in and not separate from ordinary practical living. The meaning of life is then realized through a

personal self-cultivation within the community and through mutual aid in the family, clan, school, and workplace. The glue that binds society is not law but what the Chinese call li, a civilized mode of conduct. A predominant feature of the Chinese world-view is a sense of duty rather than a demand for rights.

When we talk of a world-view, we are not speaking of philosophical doctrines that are relevant only for religious and intellectual elites. We are talking about the beliefs and attitudes, many of them not conscious, that are reflected in the lives, songs, and stories of a vast number of Indians. Disseminated through myths and legends or proverbs and metaphors, enacted in religious rituals, conveyed through tales told to children, given a modern veneer in Bol- lywood films, glimpsed in admonitions of parents as also in the future vistas they hold out to their children, a world-view is absorbed from early on in life—not through the head, but through the heart.

Let me begin with three interlinked elements that compose a major part of the Hindu world-view: moksha, dharma, and karma. My interest in these concepts is not philosophical, textual, or historical; rather, it is psychological. What I want to look at closely here is the contribution of this ancient trinity to the formation of the Indian mind and its reverberations in the thoughts and actions of contemporary Indians.

I and The Other: Separation and Connection

If each of us begins life as a mystic, awash in a feeling of pervasive unity in which there is no distance between things and ourselves, then the process of sorting out 'me' from 'not-me' is one of the primary tasks of our earliest years.

This task involves the recognition—later taken for granted, at least in most of our waking hours and in a state of relative sanity—that I am separate from all that is not-I, that my 'Self' is not merged with but detached from the 'Other'. The experience of separation has its origins in our beginnings, although its echoes continue to haunt us till the end of life, its reverberations agitating the mind, at times violently, during psychological or spiritual crises.

The Indian gloss on the dilemmas and pain of banishment from the original feeling of oneness, the exile from the universe, has been to emphasize a person's enduring connection to nature, the Divine, and all living beings. This unitary vision of soma and psyche, individual and community, and self and world is present in most forms of popular culture even today. From religious rites to folk festivals, from the pious devotion of communal singing in temples to the orgiastic excess of holi (the color of festivals), there is a common negation of separation and a celebration of connection.

The high cultural value placed on connection is, of course, most evident in the individual's relationships with others. The yearning for relationships, for the confirming presence of loved ones and the psychological oxygen they provide, is the dominant modality of social relations in India, especially within the extended family. Individuality and independence are not values that are cherished. It is not uncommon for family members, who often accompany a patient for a first psychotherapeutic interview, to complain about the patient's autonomy as one of the symptoms of his or her disorder. Thus, the father and elder sister of a 28-year-old engineer who had psychotic episodes described their understanding of his chief problem as one of unnatural autonomy: "He is very stubborn in pursuing what he wants without taking our wishes into account. He thinks he knows what is best for him and does not listen to us. He thinks his own life and career are more important than the concerns of the rest of the family" (Kakar 1987: 446).

The high value placed on connection does not mean that Indians are incapable of functioning by themselves or that they do not have a sense of their own agency. What it does imply is a greater need for ongoing mentorship, guidance, and help from others in getting through life and a greater vulnerability to feelings of helplessness when these ties are strained.

The yearning for relationships, for the confirming presence of loved ones, and the distress aroused by their unavailability in times of need are more hidden in Western societies, in which the dominant value system of the middle class prizes autonomy, privacy, and self-actualization, and holds that individual independence and initiative are 'better' than mutual dependence and community. But whether a person's behavior on the scale between fusion and isolation is nearer the pole of merger and fusion with others or the pole of complete isolation depends, of course, on the culture's vision of a 'good society' and 'individual merit'. In other words, the universal polarities of individual versus relational, nearness versus distance in human relationships are prey to culturally molded beliefs and expectations. To borrow from Schopenhauer's imagery, human beings are like hedgehogs on a cold night. They approach each other for warmth, get pricked by the quills of the other, and move away until, feeling cold, they again come closer. This to-and-fro movement keeps being repeated until an optimum position is reached wherein the body temperature is above the freezing point yet the pain inflicted by the quills—the nearness of the other—is still bearable. The balancing point is different in various cultures. In India, for example, as com- pared to modern European and North American cultures, the optimum position entails the acceptance of more pain in order to get greater warmth.

The emphasis on connection is also reflected in the Indian image of the body, a core element in the development of the mind. In the traditional Indian medical system of Ayurveda, everything in the universe, whether animate or inanimate, is composed of five forms of matter. Living beings are only a cer-tain kind of organization of substances, and their bodies constantly absorb these five elements of environmental matter. For Ayurveda, the human body is intimately connected with nature and the cosmos, and there is nothing in nature without relevance for medicine. The Indian body image, then, stresses an unremitting interchange taking place with the environment, simultaneously accompanied by a ceaseless change within the body. Moreover, in the Indian view, there is no essential difference between body and mind. The body is merely the gross form of matter (*sthulasharira*), just as the mind is a more subtle form of the same matter (*sukshmasharira*); both are different forms of the same body-mind matter — sharira.

In contrast, the Western image is of a clearly etched body, sharply differentiated from the rest of the objects in the universe. This vision of the body as a safe stronghold with a limited number of drawbridges that maintain a tenuous contact with the outside world has its own particular cultural consequences. It seems that in Western discourse, both scientific and artistic, there is considerable preoccupation with what is going on within the fortress of the individual body. Pre-eminently, one seeks to explain behavior through psychologies that derive from biology, to the relative exclusion of the natural and meta-natural environment. The contemporary search for a genetic basis to all psychological phenomena, irrespective of its scientific merit, is thus a logical consequence of the Western body image. The natural aspects of the environment — the quality of air, the quantity of sunlight, the presence of birds and animals, the plants and the trees — are a priori viewed, when they are considered at all, as irrelevant to intellectual and emotional development. Given the Western image of the body, it is understandable that the less conventional Indian beliefs concerning the effects on the *sharira* of planetary constellations, cosmic energies, earth's magnetic fields, seasonal and daily rhythms, and precious stones and metals are summarily consigned to the realm of fantasy, being of interest solely to a 'lunatic fringe' of Western society.

It is not only the body but also the emotions that have come to be differently viewed due to the Indian emphasis on connection. As cultural psychologists have pointed out, emotions that have to do with other persons, such as sympathy, feelings of interpersonal communion, and shame, are primary while the more individualistic emotions, such as anger and guilt, are secondary. The Indian psyche has a harder time experiencing and expressing anger and guilt but is more comfortable than the

Western individualistic psyche in dealing with feelings of sympathy and shame. If pride is overtly expressed, it is often directed to a collec-tive of which one is a member. Working very hard to win a promotion at work or admission to an elite educational institution is only secondarily connected to the individual need for achievement, which is the primary driving motivation in the West. The first conscious or pre-conscious thought in the Indian mind is "How happy and proud my family will be!" This is why Indians tend to idealize their families and ancestral background, why there is such prevalence of family myths and of family pride, and why role models for the young are almost exclusively members of the family, very frequently a parent, rather than the movie stars, sporting heroes, or other public figures favored by Western youths.

The greater "dividual" (Marriott 1976) or relational orientation is also congruent with the main thematic content of Indian art. In traditional Indian paint- ing, and especially in temple sculptures, for instance, man is represented not as a discrete presence but as absorbed in his surroundings, existing in all his myriad connections. These sculptures, as Richard Lannoy (1971: 78) remarks, are an "all-encompassing labyrinth flux of animal, human and divine … visions of life in the flesh, all jumbled together … suffering and enjoying in a thousand shapes, teeming, devouring, turning into one another."

I am, of course, not advancing any simplified dichotomy between a Western cultural image of an individual, autonomous self and a relational, transpersonal self of Indian society. These prototypical patterns do not exist in their pure form in any society. Psychotherapy with middle-class Western patients tells us that autonomy of the self is as precarious in reality as is the notion of an Indian self that is merged in the surroundings of its family and community. Both are fictions; their influence on behavior derives not from their actual occurrence but from their enshrinement as cultural ideals. Let us call them visions, and as such the two visions of human experience are present in all the major cultures, though a particular culture may, over a length of time, highlight and emphasize one at the expense of the other. Historically, man's connection to the universe, especially his community, has also been an important value in Western tradition, though it may have been submerged at certain periods of history, especially in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This so-called value of counter-enlightenment is part of the relativist and skeptical tradition that goes back to Western antiquity. It stresses that belonging to a community is a fundamental need of man and asserts that only if a man truly belongs to such a community, naturally and unselfconsciously, can he enter the living stream and lead a full, creative, spontaneous life.

Male and Female

Another fundamental aspect of the Indian mind that differs from its Western counterpart is related to the dawning realization in infancy of the difference between genders. It involves the profound realization of the child that all living beings, especially its beloved caretakers, belong to either one sex or the other. This differentiation is indeed universal, but it is our cultural heritage that further elaborates what it means to be, look, think, and behave like a man or woman.

This becomes clearer if one considers Greek and Roman sculpture, which, we believe, has greatly influenced Western gender representations. Here, male gods are represented by hard-muscled bodies and chests without any fat. In comparison, the sculpted representations of Hindu gods or the Buddha depict bodies that are softer, more supple, and, in their hint of breasts, closer to the female form. Many Buddhist images of Avalokiteswara (the Lord Who Listens to the Cries of the World) are of a slender boyish figure in the traditional feminine posture—weight resting on the left hip, right knee forward; they are the Indian precursor of the sexually ambiguous Chinese goddess Kuan Yin. This minimiz- ing of difference between male and female figures finds its culmination in the *ardhanarishvara* (half-man and half-woman) form of the great god Shiva, who is portrayed with the secondary sexual characteristics of both sexes.

The diminished differentiation between male and female representations in Indian culture is further reinforced by an important, perhaps dominant aspect of religiosity that not only provides a sanction for man's feminine strivings but raises these strivings to the level of a religious-spiritual quest. In devotional Vaishnavism, Lord Krishna alone is male, and all devotees, irrespective of their sex, are female. It is a culture where one of the greatest Sanskrit poets of love, Amaru, is reputed to have been the hundred and first incarnation of a soul that had previously occupied the bodies of a hundred women—where the voice of the Tamil saint-poet Nammalavar, who wrote 370 poems on the theme of love, was always that of a woman. It is a culture where in superior human beings feminine traits are joined to masculine ones. It is a culture where a luminary like Gandhi can publicly proclaim that he had mentally become a woman and that (well before the psychoanalyst Karen Horney) there is as much reason for a man to wish that he was born a woman as for a woman to do otherwise, and take it for granted that he will strike a responsive chord in his audience.

These contrasting cultural interpretations of the universal experience of differentiation are responsible for the insidious British labeling of Indian men (excepting the 'warrior races', such as the Sikhs, Rajputs, and the Jats) as 'effeminate' in the colonial era. Such judgments are a reflexive outcome of deep-seated and rarely examined convictions regarding what is masculine and what is feminine, what is 'manly' and what is 'effeminate'. Between a minimum of sexual differentiation, which is required to function heterosexually with a modicum of pleasure, and a maximum, which cuts off any sense of empathy and emotional contact with the other sex (which is then experienced as a different species altogether), there is a whole range of positions, each occupied by a culture that insists on viewing its stance as the only one that is mature and healthy.

Psychotherapy in Cross-Cultural Dyads

The Hindu world-view, I have repeatedly stressed, is not a system of abstractions to be more or less hazily comprehended during the adult years. It is a fundamental part of an Indian's mind, absorbed by the child in his relation- ship with his adult caretakers from the very beginning as the underlying truth of the world in which he will spend his life. Rarely summoned for conscious examination, the cultural part of the mind is neither determinedly universal nor utterly idiosyncratic but shares the space with the other two. All three aspects of the mind—the universal, cultural, and individual—are streams that flow into the same river where none of the streams can be 'deeper' than the others. Or, to change metaphors, beginning at birth, the three strands of mind jointly evolve through the life cycle, each constantly enriching, constraining, and shaping the others.

With regard to my own sense of estrangement, what could my analyst have done? Did he need to acquire knowledge of my culture, and, if so, what kind of knowledge? Would an anthropological, historical, or philosophical grounding in Hindu culture have made him understand me better? Or was it a psycho-analytic knowledge of my culture that would have been more helpful? Psycho-analytic knowledge is primarily the knowledge of the culture's imagination, of its fantasy as encoded in its symbolic products—its myths and folktales, its popular art, literature, and cinema.

Besides asking about the kind of knowledge, we also need to ask the question, which culture? Would a psychoanalytic knowledge of Hindu culture have been sufficient in my case? Yes, I am a Hindu but also a Punjabi Khatri by birth; that is, my overarching Hindu culture has been mediated by my strong regional culture as a Punjabi and further by my Khatri caste. This Hindu Punjabi Khatri culture has been further modified

by an agnostic father and a more traditional, believing mother, both of whom were also westernized to varying degrees. Is it not too much to expect any analyst to acquire this kind of prior cultural knowl- edge about his patients? On the other hand, is it acceptable for an analyst not to have any knowledge of his or her patient's cultural background? Or does the truth, as it often does, lie somewhere in the middle?

But now comes the surprise. My analyst was very good—sensitive, insight- ful, patient. And I discovered that as my analysis progressed, my feelings of estrangement that had given rise to all these questions became fewer and fewer. What was happening? Was the cultural part of my self becoming less salient as the analysis touched ever-deeper layers of the self, as many psycho- analysts have claimed?

Georges Devereux, a psychoanalyst who was also an anthropologist and a pioneer in addressing the issue of culture in psychoanalytic therapy, claimed that in deep psychoanalytic therapy, the analyst needed to know the patient's specific cultural background less fully ahead of time than in more superficial forms of psychotherapy (Devereux 1953). In his conception of psychoanalysis as a universal, a-cultural science, the personality disorders that were the object of psychoanalysis represented a partial regression of (cultural) man to (uni- versal) Homo sapiens. "For this reason," he writes, "children and abnormal members of our society resemble their counterparts in other cultures far more than the normal members of our society resemble the normal members of other ethnic groups" (ibid.: 632). A deep analysis would reveal the same uni- versal fantasies and desires, although, he allowed, the constellation of defense mechanisms could be culturally influenced.

In fact, for Devereux, the most important (and harmful) influence exerted by culture on psychoanalytic therapy was not an analyst's indifference but rather her interest in cultural factors. Devereux rightly pointed to the counter- transference danger of an analyst getting too interested in her analytic patient's culture. Sensitive to the analyst's interest, the patient would either gratify this interest by long discourses on his cultural practices or use these as red herrings to divert the analyst from probing deeper into his personal motivations. Freud is reputed to have sent a prospective patient, an Egyptologist, to another analyst because of Freud's own interest in Egyptology.

Most analysts have followed Devereux's lead in maintaining that all those who seek help from a psychoanalyst have in common many fundamental and universal components in their personality structure. Together with the universality of the psychoanalytic method, these common factors sufficiently equip analysts to

understand and help their patients, irrespective of the latter's cultural background, a view reiterated by a panel of the American Psychoanalytic Association on the role of culture in psychoanalysis more than 35 years ago (Jackson 1968). There are certainly difficulties, such as those enumerated by Ticho (1971), in treating patients of a different culture: a temporary impairment of the analyst's technical skills, empathy for the patient, diagnostic acumen, the stability of self and object representations, and the stirring up of counter- transference manifestations, which may not be easily distinguishable from stereotypical reactions to the foreign culture. Generally, though, given the analyst's empathetic stance and the rules of analytic procedure, these difficulties are temporary and do not require a change in analytic technique. It is useful but not essential for the analyst to understand the patient's cultural heritage.

I believe that these conclusions on the role of culture in psychoanalytic therapy, which would seem to apply to my own experience, are superficially true but deeply mistaken. For what I did, and what I believe most patients do, was to enthusiastically, if unconsciously, acculturate to the analyst's culture—in my case, both to his broader Western, northern European culture and to his particular Freudian psychoanalytic culture. The latter, we know, is informed by a vision of human experience that emphasizes man's individuality and his self-contained psyche. In the psychoanalytic vision, each of us lives in our own subjective world, pursuing pleasures and private fantasies, constructing a life and a fate that will vanish when our time is over. This view emphasizes the desirability of reflective awareness of one's inner states, an insistence that our psyches harbor deeper secrets than we care to confess, the existence of an objective reality that can be known, and an essential complexity and tragedy of life whereby many wishes are fated to remain unfulfilled. I was, then, mov- ing from my own Hindu cultural heritage, which sees life not as tragic but as a romantic quest that can extend over many births, with the goal and possibility of apprehending another, 'higher' level of reality beyond the shared, verifiable, empirical reality of our world, our bodies, and our emotions.

It is acknowledged that every form of therapy is also an enculturation. As Fancher (1993: 89–90) remarks: "By the questions we ask, the things we empathize with, the themes we pick for our comment, the ways we conduct ourselves toward the patient, the language we use—by all these and a host of other ways, we communicate to the patient our notions of what is 'normal' and normative. Our interpretations of the origins of a patient's issues reveal in pure form our assumptions of what causes what, what is problematic about life, where the patient did not get what s/he needed, what should have been otherwise."

As a patient in the throes of 'transference love', I was exquisitely attuned to the cues to my analyst's values, beliefs, and vision of the fulfilled life, which even the most non-intrusive of analysts cannot help but scatter during the therapeutic process. I was quick to pick up the cues that unconsciously shaped my reactions and responses accordingly, with the overriding goal being to please and to be pleasing in the eyes of the beloved. My intense need to be 'understood' by the analyst, a need I shared with every patient, gave birth to an unconscious force that made me underplay those cultural parts of myself that I believed would be too foreign to the analyst's experience. In the transference love, what I sought was closeness to the analyst, including the sharing of his culturally shaped interests, attitudes, and beliefs. This intense need to be close and to be understood—paradoxically, by removing parts of the self from the analytic arena of understanding—was epitomized by the fact that I soon started dreaming in German, the language of my analyst, something I had not done before nor have done since.

The analysis being conducted in German fostered the excision of important parts of m self. One's native tongue, the language of one's childhood, is intimately linked with emotionally colored sensory-motor experiences. When the language used by the analysis and is not his or her own, the alien language often lacks what Bion (1963) called "alpha elements." Psychodynamic therapy in a language that is not the patient's own is often in danger of leading to "operational thinking" (Basch-Kahre 1984), that is, verbal expressions lacking associational links with feelings, symbols, and memories. However grammatically correct and rich in its vocabulary, the alien language suffers from emotional poverty, certainly as far as early memories are concerned. To give an example, one of my bilingual patients often uses an impersonal tone characteristic of operational thinking when reporting significant experiences in English and much greater variations in affect when the same experiences are described in Hindi, his native tongue. When in one of his sessions the patient reported, in English, that the previous night he had said to his wife, "Let's have sex," his tone was detached, even slightly depressive. When asked what exactly he had said in Hindi, the answer was, "Teri le loon" (I'll take yours). The much more concrete Hindi expression demanding the use of the wife's vagina, objectifying the person, not only evoked in him greater feelings of an aggressive excitement (and shame while reporting it) but also was associated with fearful memories of childhood play when the same expression was directed at him by an older boy.

How should a Western psychoanalyst, then, approach the issue of cultural difference in his practice? The ideal situation would be that this difference exists only minimally, in

the sense that the analyst has obtained a psycho- analytic knowledge of the patient's culture through a long immersion in its daily life and myths, its folklore and literature, its language and music, an absorption not through the bones, as in the case of the patient, but through the mind—and the heart. Anything less than this maximalist position portends the danger of the analyst succumbing to the lure of cultural stereotyping in dealing with the particularities of the patient's experience. In cross-cultural therapeutic dyads, a little knowledge is indeed a dangerous thing, collapsing important differences, assuming sameness when only similarities exist. What the analyst needs is not a detailed knowledge of the patient's culture but a seri ous questioning and awareness of the assumptions underlying his own, that is, the culture he was born into and the culture in which he has been professionally socialized as a psychoanalyst. In other words, I am suggesting that in the absence of the possibility of obtaining a psychoanalytic knowledge of his patient's culture, the analyst needs to strive for a state of affairs wherein the patient's feelings of estrangement because of his cultural differences from the analyst are minimized and the patient does not cut off the cultural part of the self from the therapeutic situation (or does so only minimally). This is possible only if the analyst can convey a cultural openness that derives from becoming aware of his culture's fundamental propositions about human nature, human experience, and the fulfilled human life and can then acknowledge the relativity of these propositions by seeing them as cultural products, embedded in a particular place and time. The analyst needs to become sensitive to the hidden existence of what Kohut (1979: 12) referred to as the "health and maturity moralities" of his particular analytical school. He needs to root out cultural judgments about what constitutes psychological maturity, gender-appropriate behaviors, and 'positive' or 'negative' resolutions of developmental conflicts and complexes, which often appear in the garb of universally valid truths.

Given that ethnocentrism (the tendency to view alien cultures in terms of one's own) and unresolved cultural chauvinism are the patrimony of all human beings, including psychoanalysts, the acquisition of cultural openness is not an easy task. Cultural biases can lurk in the most unlikely places. For instance, psychoanalysts have traditionally accorded a high place to artistic creativity. However, engaging in visual arts and literary and musical pursuits has not always and everywhere enjoyed the high prestige that it does in modern West- ern societies. In other historical periods, many civilizations, including mine to this day, placed religious creativity at the top of their scale of desirable human endeavors. Psychoanalysts need to imagine that in such cultural settings, the following conclusion to a case report could be an example of a

successful therapeutic outcome: “The patient’s visions increased markedly in quantity and quality, and the devotional mood took hold of her for longer and longer periods of time.”

I would suggest that for optimal psychotherapy with patients from different cultures, what a psychoanalytical therapist needs is not knowledge of the patient’s culture but a reflective, conscious openness to his own. A therapist can evaluate his progress toward this openness by the increase in his feelings of curiosity and wonder in his counter-transference when the cultural parts of the patient’s self find their voice in therapy, when the temptation to pathologize the cultural part of his patient’s behavior decreases, when his own values no longer appear as normal and virtuous, and when his wish to instruct the patient in these values diminishes markedly.

It will be evident from my remarks that I have been primarily addressing the issue of psychotherapy in cross-cultural dyads with the assumption that the therapist is Western whereas his or her patient belongs to a non-Western culture. What about the dilemma of a non-Western analyst, such as myself, practicing a Western discipline in an Asian country? Here, the initial feelings of estrangement between the therapist and the patient are not dyadic but have their origin in the therapist. At the beginning of my practice in India, I was acutely aware of the struggle within myself between my inherited Hindu culture and the Freudian psychoanalytic culture that I had recently acquired and in which I had been professionally socialized. My romantic Hindu vision of reality could not be reconciled with the ironic psychoanalytic vision, nor could the Hindu view of the person and the sources of human strength be reconciled with the Freudian views—now also mine—on the nature of the individual and his or her world. With Goethe’s Faust, I could only say:

Your spirit only seeks a single
quest so never learns to know
its brother

Two souls, alas, dwell in my
breast

And one would gladly sunder from the other.

Some colleagues try to sunder the two souls by unreservedly identifying with their professional socialization, radically rejecting their Indian heritage. Many of them have migrated to Western countries to work as therapists, to all apparent purposes indistinguishable from their Western colleagues. Some who stay struggle to hold onto

their professional identity by clinging to each psychoanalytic orthodoxy. Loath to be critical of received wisdom and exiled from Rome, they become more conservative than the pope. Others, like myself, live with the oppositions, taking comfort from the Indian view that every contradiction does not need a resolution, that contradictions can co-exist in the mind like substances in water that are in suspension without necessarily becoming a solution.

I think I resolved this dilemma as do some men in Indian families who, after marrying, are caught up in the conflict between their mothers and wives, each asking the husband/son to choose between them. Unable to make this choice, the men often react by becoming detached from both. I found that the only way I could keep my affection for psychoanalytic and Hindu cultures intact was by loving each less—not by cutting myself off from one or the other but by engaging more critically with each. The loss of a certain measure of innocence and enthusiasm is the price paid for this strategy, a price that may not be too high for preventing a closing of the mind and for keeping intact a curiosity that is not satisfied with easy answers.

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This is an excerpt. The full paper is available on https://www.academia.edu/84121157/Culture_and_Psychoanalysis_A_Personal_Journey_

Upcoming Events

Group Relations Conference on Authority, Leadership and Power – Sacrifice and Loss in a Shared World

Authority, leadership, and power dynamics are central to how we meet the threat of loss. The importance of leadership is apparent from observing the intense competition for authority and power in our world. Authoritarian political systems are competing with democratic systems. Nationalistic and religious groups, often led by demagogues, are competing for dominance over minorities.

Given these challenges, can we hope and work for ethical leadership that considers the human needs of the wider society and our shared world? Can we be more conscious about choosing our leadership models? Can the repair of accumulated, historical trauma occur if leaders and followers sacrifice the comfort of righteous grievance and, instead, open themselves to the feelings of grief, shame, and humility that follow recognition of complicity in perpetuating harm?

IGRC is conducting an online Group Relations Conference from 1st to 5th of October. This conference will be bilingual i.e., Chinese and English.

You can find the details in https://www.igrcconference.org/

The Twelfth European Psychoanalytic Film Festival: Theme- Journey

The idea of a journey evokes many associations, offering a broad scope for film, from road movies and migration tales to introspective mental voyages.

A psychoanalyst's daily work revolves around each patient's internal journey. Filmmakers, whose creative process is a journey in itself, excel in portraying their characters' journeys through time, space, relationships, and across countries and cultures.

The 12th European Psychoanalytic Film festival honors the tradition of bringing together film makers and psychoanalysts to discuss the resonance between our different but overlapping journeys.

You can find the details in https://psychoanalysis.org.uk

SUKRUT
announces
The 28th. Inward Change Conference 2024 (ICC 24) Winter
from 14 to 20 December 2024
at Yuva Mitra campus, Sinnar, Maharashtra

Sukrut is an institution committed to the promotion of knowledge and practice in psychoanalysis. Starting in 2003, a small group of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapists trained in India and overseas, began to address challenges in mental health by applications of the talking cure. Sukrut soon began to offer internship in psychoanalysis, supported with intersubjective study and seminars. The training draws on relational psychoanalysis which emphasizes the real-time presentation of internal dynamics within the therapeutic relationship, and distinguishes itself by emphasizing the effect of real interpersonal relationships on development. Sukrut psychotherapists privilege authenticity. They liberally self-disclose. They loathe separating transference from the actual professional relationship. They conceive transference and countertransference as features of all relationships. Psychotherapists trained in Sukrut comfortably connect with the inner world of feelings and thoughts to identify the toxicity that builds in the self and in systems. In both personal and group relations, as well as in consulting with education, social entrepreneurship, government, and industry, Sukrut helps leaders identify the psychodynamics of systems that inhibit growth and development.

The INTERNSHIP

Nominations are sought for entry to Phase 1 of the internship. Internship with Sukrut is informed by applied psychoanalysis and intersubjective study, thereby creating a containing, holding, protective environment, attuned to the needs of interns and providing them with high levels of close, careful listening and attention. They embrace Winnicott's oft-quoted phrase that it is a *joy to be hidden, but a disaster not to be found.*

ICC has morphed into immersions across three phases, offered annually in Winter and Summer.

Phase 1 offers exploration into the world of feelings as central to decision-making. This stand-alone phase seeks to help individuals become aware of, make sense of, regulate, accept, express, and transform emotional experiences. It is based on an evolutionary understanding of feelings as an innate and adaptive system which helped us survive and thrive. Our feelings give us important information about the world, and about our wellbeing and the toxicity within; they inform us of our needs and guide our actions. Acquiring new perspectives, in an atmosphere of sharing without being judged, opens new insights into a world of being (the internal world) and of becoming (the external world). The immersion also helps explore and arrive at new meaning-making and choice-making for the actual decisions that we take.

The Summer event is normally offered in May.

If you are curious to learn more about ICC, please contact any of the following:

Aishi Sengupta, in Chennai at +91 87908780657 / aishisengupta@hotmail.com

Anupam Das, in Mumbai at +91 99209 93140 / anupamdas@hpcl.in

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SUKRUT
announces
THE INDIA CONFERENCE 2024
A Group Relations Conference / समुहा सम्बंध सम्मेलन
on the now-familiar theme
"Exploring Leadership, the Exercise of Authority, and Management of Self in Organization (ELAMSO)"
from
Date: March 2025
Venue: To Be Confirmed

THE CONTEXT

Personal anxiety can significantly impact an individual aspiring to grow into a senior leadership position in the organization. The key performance areas that will be impacted are:

1. **Decision-Making:** Anxiety clouds judgment and makes it harder to make clear, confident decisions. A senior person needs to make numerous high-stakes decisions, often with incomplete information. Anxiety will lead to overthinking, second-guessing, and potentially slower decision-making,

2. **Leadership:** Anxiety affects a senior individual's ability to lead effectively. It leads to difficulties in communication, reduced ability to inspire and motivate employees, and problems in managing conflicts or crises. Employees look to senior people for stability and direction, and if this person appears anxious, it will create uncertainty and concern within the organization,

3. **Strategic Thinking:** Anxiety narrows focus and makes it difficult to think strategically. A person in a senior position must see the big picture and plan for the long-term, but anxiety will make it harder to step back and take a broad view,

4. **Interpersonal Relationships:** Anxiety strains relationships with other stakeholders, eg. for a CEO with his Board,

5. **Risk:** Excessive anxiety makes an individual risk averse. This will result in missed opportunities and a reluctance to innovate, hindering the organization's growth and adaptability.

6. Increase Personal Stress: Senior roles are inherently stressful, and anxiety can exacerbate this stress. Chronic stress and anxiety leads to burnout, which can diminish personal effectiveness over time. It will impact physical health, further affecting performance.

TIC 24 will address this anxiety in individuals so that they can learn to de-risk themselves and maintain effective leadership demanded in a senior position. Both Staff (aka Facilitator / Faculty / Trainer) and Members (aka Participant / Student) will address the personal psychological challenge of letting go familiar behaviors and solutions that provide a comfort zone, a safety net which over time become roadblocks in senior roles where the individual must ensure that accountabilities are appropriately delegated.

The intention of Group Relations (GR), like other methods of developmental training, is to provoke new thinking and, axiomatically, allow divergences from conventional thinking. It is, therefore, foundational to create a space that nurtures freedom of thought and its expression. Autonomy to exercise one's leadership and authority is of the essence.

THE CONFERENCE DIRECTORATE

The Conference Directorate is made up of Manab Bose as Conference Director, with Pushp Joshi and Vinay Ranjan as Associate Conference Directors.

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Pushp Joshi pushpj@hpcl.in

Vinay Ranjan dpcil@coalindia.in

You can write to the above should you wish to know more about TIC 24.

Note to Contributors

A. Name:

Citta, a Pali and Sanskrit word, is derived from the root word cit, meaning to perceive. For our purpose, we have used Citta to capture feelings that arise both from the unconscious and the conscious in the human psyche, leading to perceptions.

B. Purpose:

Citta is a Sukrut India bi-annual response to the need to bring together various schools, practices and clinical experiences from across the world that have relevant applications in the context of India, thereby promoting psychoanalytic reflections in India.

Submissions demonstrating psychoanalytic reflections from actual experiences in personal and collective history will find priority. Intersubjective submissions that are a blend with history, geography, sociology, economics, politics and religion are also welcome.

Of special interest are submissions that reflect India's civilizational ethos, highlighting the tensions that surface between the lived reality in India, and primarily Western theory. Contributions that draw on personal experience of psychoanalysis and processes of identity development are welcome.

Citta hopes to foster dialogue among practitioner-scholars working with intersubjective perspectives and enhance the richness of the psychoanalytic process.

C. The Editorial Process:

Editorial support is sought from practicing non-academic psychoanalysts.

D. Guidelines for Contributors:

Citta and Sukrut India promise contributors that submissions will not be subject to the frustrations of technicalities imposed by screening agencies. However, Citta and Sukrut India will request data confidentiality and reserve the right to edit personal attacks.

After a submission is accepted, it will move towards legal and administrative formalities, and on to publication.

A manuscript must be presented in the following order: the title; an abstract (about 150 words); keywords (not more than 5); the main text (not more than 5000 words; a list of references; notes and appendices; tables with captions. Please include a word count. Submissions must be in Word format. Please do not submit a PDF. Figures should be saved separately from the text.

Please use English spelling style consistently throughout your manuscript.

Please use double quotation marks, except where "a quotation is 'within' a quotation". Make sure that all identifying information, including author names, and all citations that reveal the author's identity, are included in the **List of References.**

All contributors should include their full name and affiliation after the List of References.

If there is a data set associated with the contribution, please provide information about where the data supporting the results or analyses presented in the manuscript can be found. Where applicable, this should include the hyperlink, DOI or other identifiers associated with the data sets.

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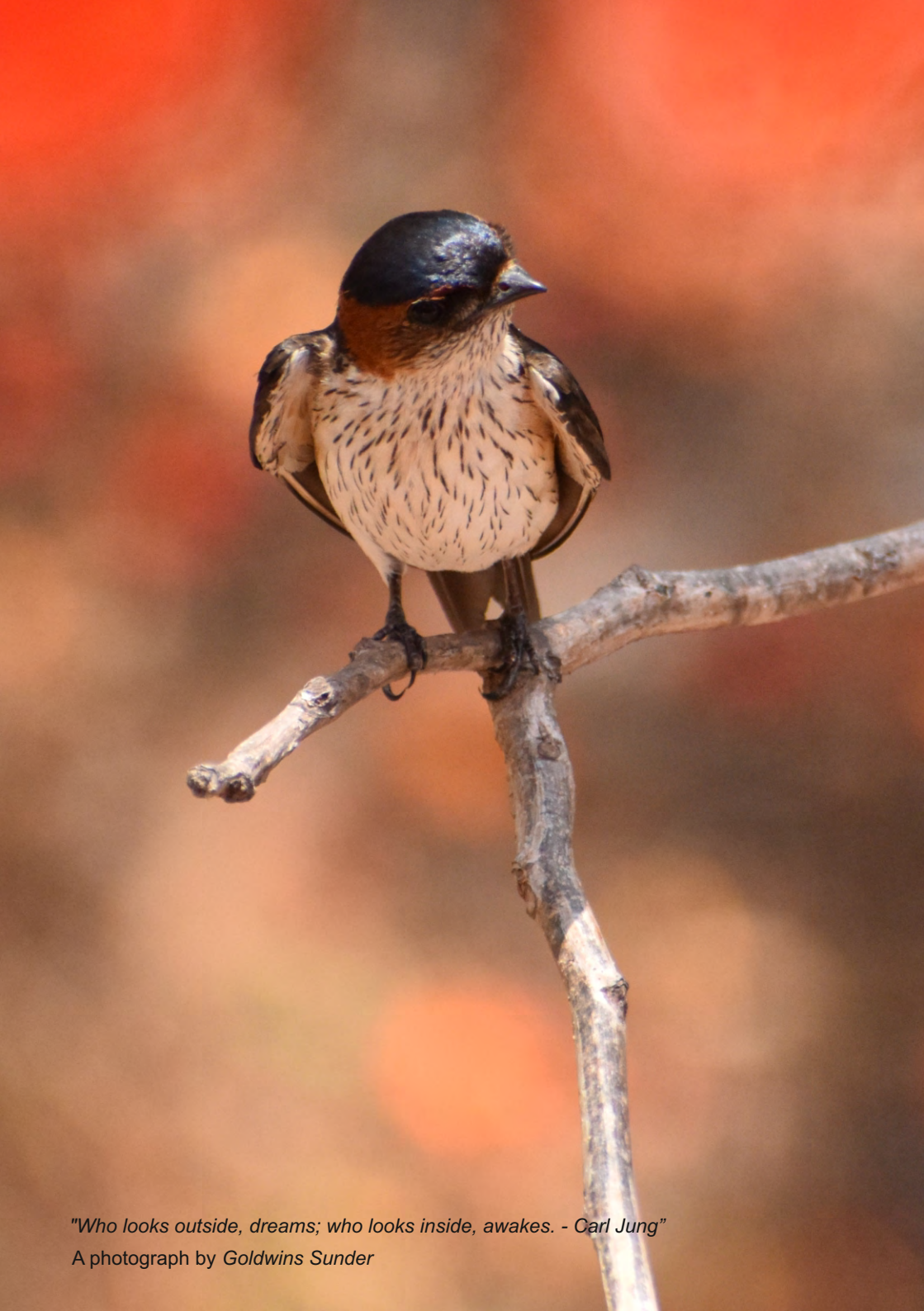
We recommend that you keep a copy of your manuscript. Find out more about sharing your work. Citta and Sukrut India will assume ownership of a published contribution. However, on publication, you will be able to view and download your contribution online, enabling you to share your work with friends and colleagues. We are committed to promoting and increasing the visibility of your contribution.

Contributors are encouraged to share or make open the data supporting the results or analyses presented in the contribution where this does not violate the protection of human subjects or other valid privacy or security concerns.

Citta and Sukrut India have no submission fees, publication fees or page charges.



"Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes. - Carl Jung”
A photograph by *Goldwins Sunder*

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