

Whither the (Post)Colonial?

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Deconstruction does not say there is no subject, there is no truth, there is no history. It simply questions the privileging of identity so that someone is believed to have the truth. It is not the exposure of error. It is constantly and persistently looking into how truths are produced. ... Deconstruction ... is, among other things, a persistent critique of what one cannot not want. And in that sense, yes, it's right there at the beginning.”
(Spivak, 1996: 9)

In that sense, Derrida/deconstruction is right here at the beginning; at the moment the letter gets purloined (Derrida, 1987); at the moment the ‘subject of colonialism’ is put under erasure. We have Lacan/psychoanalysis in the end; at the moment the letter purportedly reaches its destination (Lacan, 2006: 30); at the moment the subject of colonialism is rehabilitated in a contingent and partial sense.

Right here at the beginning, “deconstruction opens up the personalist belief in identity-as-origin not by denying experience, but by insisting upon the need to examine the processes whereby we naturalize personal experience and desire into general truth” (Landry and Maclean, 1996: 10); right here at the beginning, deconstruction precludes the possibility of any *pre-given Subject* of colonialism; there is no such conscious ‘Self’ who naturally and almost instinctively colonizes the ‘other’. There is no such ‘other’ either. Colonialism is not the *simple* victory of the colonizer over the colonized, of the White and the Western and the Civilized and the Modern – of the *Sage* over the *savage* – one who is always already ‘savage’. Colonialism is not essentially given by birth in a particular land-mass; or by birth with a certain color of the skin, with a certain amount of melanin: *melanin* is any of the

polyacetylene, polyaniline, and polypyrrole "blacks" and "browns" or their mixed copolymers. Melanin exists in the plant, animal and protista kingdoms, where it serves as a pigment. In humans, melanin is found in skin, hair, the pigmented epithelium underlying the iris, the medulla and zona reticularis of the adrenal gland, the stria vascularis of the inner ear, and in pigment bearing neurons of certain deep brain nuclei such as the locus ceruleus and the substantia nigra.

Perhaps, it would be no overstatement to say that the amount of melanin would not necessarily be a causal explanation for colonialism (that of course, does not preclude a *politics of color*, that gives in turn to politics its color, its racial-colonial color [Hale, 1998]). The *contingent* of colonialism has to be produced, produced discursively out of the infinitude of overdetermined processes. The contingent of colonialism is in itself a process; *another* process produced out of the mutual constitutivity of processes. In fact, *colonialism* is the provisional name given to a particular process; a particular relation; a (dis)position: colonialism "is not an institution, and it is not a structure; it is not a certain strength (*puissance*) [or impulse] that some are endowed with; it is the name that one *lends*" (Spivak, 1996: 143, italics mine); it is a name and like all names it is a misfit; a sort of proximate naming – a 'catachresis' (Spivak, 1996: 143).

'Colonialism' is thus a name given to a *process* – "process without a [pre-given] [S]ubject". This particular process (produced discursively and given a name to render intelligible its exercise), in turn, can be produced from the overdetermination of economic, political and cultural processes constituting a 'totality' (here society). For the clarity of such production, one can discursively privilege one process over the others. *Here the privileged process is the process of the irruption-production-dissemination of meaning*. This privilege/focus is not due to any pre-supposed ontological primacy of one process over the others. It is an epistemological closure – contingent and provisional.

One cannot *start* from colonialism – from an ontological commitment to a generalized natural referent, a *thing* called ‘colonialism’. One *arrives* at colonialism. The unmaking of the Subjects (the pre-given colonizer or the naturally colonized) of colonialism makes way for the “retroactive construction” of colonialism. But how does one, *produce* ‘colonialism’? How does one re-produce the seeming asymmetry of ‘colonizer’ and ‘colonized’ in a space that is conceptually overdetermined? Who emerges as ‘colonized’; who emerges as ‘colonizer’. Or perhaps, what is the ‘moment of colonization’ and what is the ‘moment of decolonization’? In other words, how does one theorize ‘colonial hegemony’ where ‘colonial hegemony’ is representative of a *thin* and *contingent* understanding of ‘colonialism’, where ‘colonial hegemony’ is understood as organized through nodal moments of partial fixation/anchoring? Chaudhury (1994, 2000) had asked these questions years back; only to remain unnoticed.

In this paper, I arrive at colonial hegemony through an analysis of *cultural processes*, of the irruption-production-dissemination of *meaning*, in a word, of the *flow of meaning*; or more precisely, the *gradient* in such flow of meanings. We arrive at colonial hegemony through an analysis of the ‘anchorage/slippage’ of meaning, of the ‘*capittonage*/sliding’ of meaning, of the ‘negation/negotiation’ of meaning, of the ‘determination/overdetermination’ of meaning, of the ‘hegemonization/disaggregation’ of meaning. Through such processes what gets ‘foregrounded’; what remains, what languishes as the ‘background’; what emerges as ‘natural’ and ‘given’, what remains as ‘rem(a)inder’; what emerges as the ‘inside’, what is put ‘outside’? What emerges as ‘major’, what remains as ‘minor’ (Deleuze, 1993: 145-46)? We arrive at colonial hegemony through an appreciation of language that emerges as *hegemonic* (albeit contingent) and language that remains *repudiated*, that remain as the realm of the *unspoken*. Like any theory, this arrival of mine remains perpetually *partial*, and subject-subservient to the epistemological entry point I privilege. It also remains open to the

overdetermination of the flow of value and power and hence to the supplementing or subduing *effects* of both.

To think the moment of ‘colonial hegemony’ in its fractional irruption we would take a look in this paper at a particular space, the space of ‘mental health science’ in what can be provisionally termed ‘Bengal under the rule of the English’; or perhaps, not Bengal in general but Calcutta or perhaps ‘elite Calcutta’. We cannot make a general claim to the contours of ‘colonial hegemony’. We can make a *show* of colonial hegemony in its particularity; that too, in a particular time-space-person; the particular time of early twentieth century, the particular space of mental health science in elite Calcutta under English rule and the particular person Girindrasekhar Bose. Colonial hegemony is not *said* as such; neither is it *unsaid*; colonial hegemony just about *shows*; it *shows* in its particularity, in its contingency.

From Lunatic Asylums to Mental Hospitals to the Rise of Psychology:

The early history of western style ‘mental health science’ in Bengal is the history of the establishment of ‘lunatic asylums’. The establishment of lunatic asylums points at the same time towards a particular relation between Reason (that is, what *was* understood as Reason in *that* particular time-space) and non-reason; non-reason as that which was *not* reason in *that* particular time-space, relative to that which emerged *as* Reason. The second important moment in the history of ‘mental health science’ in colonial India is the moment of the founding of *Mental Hospitals*. With this shift from asylums to mental hospitals, along with the setting up of outdoor clinics, the relation between Reason and non-reason would undergo an institutional shift, as also a conceptual displacement.

The question of conceptual displacement can also be located at another plane, at around the same time, i.e. at the understanding and positioning of psychology with respect to, on the one hand, philosophy and on the other, science. Was psychology an ‘art of healing’ or was it a ‘science of cure’? Was it an ‘art of interpretation’ or was it a ‘science of a change of state’? Would it focus on ‘introspection’ or would it focus on ‘experimental methods’? Would it be rational deduction or would it be mere empirical observational?

The question that could therefore be asked here: did Girindrasekhar try to work out his *own* version of psychoanalysis *within* the philosophy-science contradiction-continuum? Was his own version his *own*? Or was it what he thought to be his own? Was his science constituted by philosophy? Which philosophy was it then? Which philosophy of mind was at work in his reinvention of psychoanalysis? What were his philosophical leanings? Was it *Indian* philosophy? Was it *Hindu* philosophy? Which school or schools of *Hindu* philosophy did he invoke? Or was he bringing up in his invocations once again the *19th century re-invention of Indian/Hindu philosophy* – a re-invention that emerged out of a certain interpellation of the native other by *their* structures of knowing? What was his conception of self; which understanding of self was informing his version of psychoanalysis – the non-modern self or the modern self – or the modernist rendition of the non-modern (Matilal, 2002: 299-314)?

The disjunction between philosophy and science perhaps found expression in the syllabus formulated by Brojendranath Seal (1905). It was primarily a syllabus for the study of the *then reigning experimental psychology in Europe*; the department of Psychology, also exuded an image of “German scientific austerity” (Hartnack, 2001: 92); in this respect, our colonization by Western conceptualizations of the mind-body-self continue unabated; their conceptual structures come to rule our thought, our wor(l)d. However, besides founding their own association “psychologists sent representatives to both the Indian science Congress and

the Indian Philosophical Congress. ... these affinities reflected the hybrid status of this new field as [being still] a mixture of science and philosophy” (Hartnack, 2001: 92).

When graduate training in psychology was introduced in Calcutta University, Girindrasekhar, already a medical professional, obtained a Master’s degree in psychology (1917). He was awarded the first doctorate in psychology at an Indian university in 1921. But then the topic and content of his doctorate was in no way related to experimental psychology. Titled ‘The Concept of Repression’ it was related more to psychoanalysis than psychology. On the whole, Girindrasekhar was not too enthusiastic about the application of western experimental psychological techniques in the Bengali context. In fact, Girindrasekhar left nearly no doubt about this view that the most important psychological method of the *Hindus* was ‘introspection’: India’s ancient learned men had a genius for introspective meditation and the Indian psychologist has that heritage. In this respect he enjoys an advantage over his colleagues in the west. (Girindrasekhar, as quoted by Hartnack, 2001: 101)

A somewhat similar feeling was expressed by Jadunath Sinha in his preface (July, 1933) to the first edition of *Indian Psychology* (1996: xvii-xix): “The crowning achievement of the Hindus was metaphysical speculation. ... The Hindu mind is essentially synthetic. ... There is no empirical psychology in India. Indian psychology is based on Metaphysics. ... Indian psychology is based on introspection and observation; it is not based on experiments”.

These pronouncements reflect the impact of Indian traditions, especially the understanding of *Yoga* (that *was* then prevalent, perhaps that *was* then hegemonic), on Girindrasekhar’s own and distinctive ‘method’; something that could go provisionally by the name ‘our method.

Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee, the vice-chancellor of Calcutta University (1906-14 and 1921-24) also dreamt of a certain ‘Indianization of higher learning’. Mukherjee wanted to forge an Indian elite, well trained by *native* institutions in topics that were relevant to the

Indian people and not only to British administration. Mukherjee envisioned Indians studying and doing research in a wide range of sciences, as well as in *Indian* languages, *Indian* history and *Indian* philosophy. Mukherjee set out to transform Calcutta University into a place where this *heritage and the modern sciences* could be integrated. Mukherjee's struggle made possible the comparatively early institutionalisation of psychology, which led in turn to the teaching of psychoanalysis. Did Girindrasekhar's version of psychoanalysis fundamentally fulfill Mukherjee's dream, dream of an integration of heritage and modern science? Did it grow out of the dual need to revive on the one hand the indigenous intellectual tradition and on the other be a part of the western scientific community? Did Girindrasekhar, in the tone and spirit set in process by Mukherjee, try to integrate the 'philosophy of the east' and the 'science of the west'? Such a binary would itself be problematic; their integration would be a further problem; *but then, did he in the process of such integration drown some of Freud's dreams?* One can ask in this context: what's wrong in drowning some of Freud's dreams? What's wrong in *displacing* some of Freud's concerns and questions in *our* setting? Is it not a necessity? Is it not a necessity to think psychoanalysis and the *subject* of psychoanalysis (as also the constitution of the psychoanalytic *subject*) once again in *our* context? What's wrong if such a thinking radically displaces Freudian psychoanalysis? In fact, such a displacement of psychoanalysis is a necessity? But then, was this displacement informed by the question of the construction of *our* subject-subjectivities in *our* particular setting, *our* context? Was Girindrasekhar's version of psychoanalysis – that was definitely a displaced version of the (Freudian) Original – that was perhaps 'ab-Original' – that was other than the Original – *also* 'aboriginal'? Did it attend to the 'aboriginal', to 'aboriginality'? Did it find-found 'aboriginal psychoanalysis'? Or was it merely 'ab-Original'? Was it informed by the understandings and invocations of our selfhood and our subjectivity that was then emerging as hegemonic, *that was then emerging as our own*, under the rubric *Indian* or *Hindu*? Was it informed by what

was then being *invented* as our own, as *our* tradition? Was it informed by what was then being *invented* as *Hindu*, as *Indian* – invented by *us* as also by *them*? “In his 1938 speech ... Girindrasekhar proposed that more work should be done in the field of *traditional Indian psychology*. The *mystical experiences* of saints and yogis should form the subject matter of psychological research, he argued, and India is the best place for this study. He added that the Board of Higher Studies in Psychology, University of Calcutta, had recently proposed to include the study of *Yoga* in the syllabus. ... Work on *traditional Indian insights into the ‘inner world’* belonged to Bose’s primary interests besides psychoanalysis” (Hartnack: 2001: 102 - italics mine).

Given the area of Girindrasekhar’s interest, we ask in this work: did such an interest in ‘traditional Indian psychology’ and in the ‘traditional Indian insights into the ‘inner world’” serve Girindrasekhar well in the invocation of his particular version of psychoanalysis. Would it help focus and fix attention on the particularities of *our* subjectivity? Would it help us attend to the complex vicissitudes of *our* subjectivities? It would be worth noting in this context that Freud had moved out of the understanding and analysis of the subject at moments of hypnoid states and had in turn moved over to the analysis of the ‘speaking subject’. What does this turn to the mystical experiences of saints and yogis imply – imply with respect with the question of the colonial and the post-colonial? Does this turn to mystical experience mean a turning away from the conceptual field of Freudian psychoanalysis? Would it mean a marking of *differance* in the milieu of Freudian psychoanalysis? Would it mean a marking of the post-colonial at the level of meaning? Or would it mean a more far-reaching colonization of minds by what was then being invented as *our own* – invented in curious connivance – invented by *them* (the colonizer) as also by *us* (the colonized). Was the very moment of marking difference, marked, in turn, by our getting steeped in a more far-reaching colonization – colonization at the level of idea(l)s ? How was

the turn to the mystical experience of saints and yogis helping us? Would it help us attend to the subject, to *our* subjectivities? Further, which mystical experiences were being privileged at this moment? To whose mystical experiences were we turning to? How did we know that mystical experience was *our* attribute; was an attribute specific to *our* selves? Was Girindrasekhar speaking in the process his *mother tongue* as opposed to a *foreign idiom*? For Deleuze there is no mother tongue; “only a power takeover by a dominant language that at times advances along a broad front, and at times swoops down on diverse centers simultaneously” (1993: 145-46); instead of the distinction between mother/native language and foreign/alien language, Deleuze makes a distinction between two other kinds of language – major and minor – where, major would be defined by the power (*pouvoir*) of constants, and minor by the power (*puissance*) of variation. For Deleuze, it is only “by using a number of minority elements, by connecting, conjugating them, [that] one invents a specific, unforeseen, autonomous becoming”. While Freud was inventing an unforeseen, autonomous becoming with respect to (western) psychiatry and psychology as also with respect to hegemonic western philosophy, was Girindrasekhar in his effort at speaking his mother tongue, his native language end up speaking the hegemonic language or the language of the hegemonic; the only difference was that it was not the western or the Occidental hegemonic; it was at best the Oriental hegemonic; at worst, it was what was made of the Orient by the Occidental hegemonic.

From Psychology to Psychoanalysis:

The rise of psychoanalysis in colonial India could be broadly mapped through the following events: the introduction of the study of psychoanalysis in the course of psychology

in the year 1917 by Girindrasekhar and a subsequent shift of focus to the interpretative mode of psychoanalysis and to the workings of the ‘unconscious mind’ since 1917; the shift somewhat institutionalised with the formation of the Indian Psychoanalytic Society in 1922¹ and the publication of the journal *Samiksha* in 1947; and the setting up of a certain relation of the concept of ‘mind’ in Girindrasekhar’s version of psychoanalysis with the introspective tradition of Indian philosophy. In 1939 the Indian Psychoanalytical Society opened its own mental health institution, the Lumbini Park Mental Hospital. In 1959, *Chitta*, a Bengali journal was brought out by the Indian Psychoanalytical Society.

In fact, as early as 1922, Girindrasekhar became a co-editor of the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*. His name continued to be the first on the changing list of editors of this journal for over more than thirty volumes, until his death. Freud writes in a letter dated October 27th 1922 (Wien IX, Bergasse 19): “I heartily congratulate you on the reception of your Society as one of the groups of the Internat. Ps. Associate which occurred at the Berlin Congress a month ago. Now, as I am Editor of the German Zeitschrift for Ps. A. as well as of the English Journal of Ps. A., I beg you to consent that your name be printed on the cover of both journals as the leader and representative of the Indian group ...” (Bose-Freud Correspondence, 1999:10).

Girindrasekhar thus moved out of the space of western medicine and moved over to experimental psychology. He thereafter moved over to psychoanalysis. Is his turning to psychoanalysis representative of his *return to non-reason*; a *return* inaugurated by Freud? Or is it a *turning away* from ‘hegemonic western styles of reasoning’, styles of reasoning in medicine as well as in psychiatry (Davidson, 2000)? Girindrasekhar started off from anatomo-clinical medicine, i.e. at the very outset from a certain medicine of the body, the

¹ While the Department of Psychology was founded inside the premises of the University in 1915, the Indian Psychoanalytic Society emerged somewhat outside the academia in 1922.

body located in three-dimensional tissue space. Anatomico-clinical medicine had its own style of reasoning, its own gaze, the eye that sees, governs, and rules. Somewhat discontent with such a style of reasoning Girindrasekhar moved over to a certain medicine of the mind, to experimental psychology and clinical psychiatry; from experimental psychology and clinical psychiatry he moved over to psychoanalysis; from psychoanalysis he moved further to an ensemble of oriental cares/cures of the mind. What was his relation to psychiatry and experimental psychology on the one hand and psychoanalysis and oriental cares/cures of the mind on the other? What was the nature of the psychoanalysis he invoked in his clinic? What were his similarities and differences with his western counterparts? What was the nature of the oriental cares/cures he invoked in the later part of his life? With regard to oriental cares/cures what were his similarities and differences with his oriental counterparts?

In order to delineate the contour and nature of Girindrasekhar's version of psychoanalysis one needs to locate Girindrasekhar first within a certain history of 'mental health science'. But to write *a* history (not *the* history) of 'mental health science' in the orient one needs to *write also a history of concepts* – how certain concepts have evolved over time and in certain spaces. One such concept, crucial to any attempt at writing a history of 'mental health science' in the orient is the concept of the 'mind'. In other words, the history of 'mental health science' is also the history of the 'mind' – history of the 'mind' as concept – how the notion of 'mind' developed and evolved. One needs to locate Girindrasekhar first within this history of concepts (about the mind) in order to delineate thereafter the epistemic structure of Girindrasekhar's version of psychoanalysis. One then tries to understand Girindrasekhar with respect to his relation with Freud, with respect to his conceptual (dis)agreements with Freud, with respect to the correspondences and dissonances in the Bose-Freud Correspondence.

Bose-Freud Correspondence:

Girindrasekhar had established communication with Freud: “I take the liberty to send you under separate cover a book entitled *The Concept of Repression*” (Bose-Freud Correspondence, 1999:1). Freud had also acknowledged receipt of the book: “I acknowledge the receipt of your book ... and am glad to testify the correctness of its *principle views* and the good sense appearing in it. ... It is interesting that *theoretical reasoning and deduction does play so great a part in your demonstration of the matter, which with us is treated rather empirically*” (1999: 2). Note once gain the posited binarism between rational deduction and experimental observation. The west is experiment and observation driven, driven by a certain relation of the subject of knowledge to the object of knowledge as it is in the outside world; driven by objectivity and inductive logic; the east on the other hand is as if driven by deductive rational subjective introspection. Freud in a letter dated February 20th 1922, further added:

It was a great and pleasant surprise that the first book on a psychoanalytic subject which came to us from that part of the world (India) should display so good a knowledge of psychoanalysis, so deep an insight into its difficulties and so much of deep-going original thought [as if such insight was not expected of the nat(i)ve!]. Dr. Bose has singled out the concept of repression for his inquiry and in treating this theoretical matter has provided us with precious *suggestions* and intense motives for further study. Dr. Bose is *aiming at a philosophical evolution and elaboration of our crude, practical concepts* and I can wish, psychoanalysis should soon reach up to the level, to which he strives to raise it. (1999: 7)

Once gain, the west is crude practical and the east philosophical. Is this humility? Or is this a condescending pat on the back? We come to know from a letter dated 31st January, 1929 that Girindrasekhar had sent once again some of his own works to Freud:

I would draw your particular attention to my work on Oedipus Wish where I have ventured to *differ* from you in some respects. ... I also enclose a Bengali book on dreams, which I have just published. ... Please accept the book as a token of my deepest regards for the *Father of Psycho-analysis*.

How would Freud respond to the dent in the theory of the Oedipus that Bose was trying to institute? Was Bose trying to think the question of the ‘subject’ of psychoanalysis, think “the Subject Who Is Finally in Question” (Lacan, 2006: 229), think its specificity in *our* context? Was Bose trying to think the historical-cultural-social *particularities* of the ‘subject’ of analysis? Was he trying to move out of the particularities of the subject of analysis in the West, in its Judeo-Christian moorings? Was he trying to extricate his version of psychoanalysis from its particularly white bourgeoisie moorings, from its western moorings? But how would Freud respond to this critique and obeisance, critique masked in obeisance; or is it obeisance that drowns the critique; but then, this obeisance to whom; to which Freud; to a particular Freud; to Freud’s Anglo-American invocation? Freud in a letter dated 09.03.29 acknowledged the receipt of Girindrasekhar’s works:

You directed my attention on the Oedipus wish ... *In fact I am not convinced by your arguments*. Your theory of the opposite wish appears to me to stress rather a formal element than a dynamic factor. I still think, you underrate the efficiency of the castration fear ... I never denied the connection of the castration wish with the wish to be a female nor that of the fear with the horror of becoming a female. ... But I confess I am by no means more convinced of the validity of my own assumptions. We have not yet seen through this intricate Oedipus matter. We need more observations.

Girindrasekhar wrote back on the 11th of April 1929:

Of course I do not expect that you would accept off-hand my reading of the Oedipus situation. I do not deny the importance of the castration threat in European cases; my argument is that the threat owes its efficiency to its connection with the wish to be female. The real struggle lies between the desire to be a male and its opposite the desire to be a female. ... The Oedipus mother is very often a combined parental image and ... I have reasons to believe that much of the motivation of the 'maternal deity' is traceable to this source. ... My theory of the opposite wish is not a mere formal philosophical statement as you suppose it to be. Like any other scientific theory it is a specific formulation that will explain many facts of mental life. ... it gives the exact dynamics of repression when a particular wish is pushed into the unconscious; it explains in a simple manner the mechanisms of imitation, retaliation, conscience, projection, etc. ... The theory of the opposite wish will explain the occurrence in pairs in the same individual of such traits as sadism and masochism, observationism and exhibitionism etc. ... This theory enables the analyst to predict beforehand the possibility of emergence in consciousness of a particular repressed wish from an examination of the grammatical forms of speech².

Freud wrote back on 12.05.29 ...

I am fully impressed by the difference in castration reaction between Indian and European patients and promise to keep my attention fixed on the problem of the opposite wish which you accentuate. ... I wonder what the relation of the opposite wish to the phenomena of ambivalence "may be" ...

And again on 01.01.33:

² In this invocation of the examination of grammatical forms of speech, in this return to "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis", in this attention to the subject's relation to the signifier does Bose mark his difference with the Anglo-American invocation of Freud, an invocation marked by a turn to ego-psychology? Is Bose torn between meta-psychology and hermeneutics, between ego-psychology and a turn to "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis", between psychiatry and psychology, between psychology and psychoanalysis, between Freudian psychoanalysis and what emerged as Oriental philosophies of the mind?

... the theory of the opposite wishes strikes me as something less dynamical than morphological which could not have been evolved from the study of our pathological material. *It appears to me flat so to say, it seems to lack a third dimension.* I don't think it is able to explain anxiety or the phenomenon of repression. ... we did neglect the fact of the existence of opposite wishes from the three sources of bisexuality (male and female), ambivalence (love-hate) and the opposition of active-passive. These phenomenon have to be worked into our system to make us see what modifications or corrections are necessary and how far we can acquiesce to your ideas.

Girindrasekhar did not wish to give too much importance to Freud's 'third dimension' – to the dynamics of a 'mutually constitutive three'. He remained instead within a 'morphological two' – within the conscious/unconscious dialectic of a wish couple. He believed that every wish had its opposite wish *in the mind; in the mind; within the mind.* This distinction between a 'mutually constitutive three' and a 'morphological two', between an ever-present 'third dimension' and an absent 'third' marks in turn the distinction between Freud's approach to psychoanalysis and Girindrasekhar's approach to psychoanalysis, an approach drawn out of a not too non-explicit *panpsychism; panpsychism*, because the play of the contradictory forces are marked out *only* in the mind, the realm of the 'socio-cultural' remain altogether absent. It marks in turn their distinctly different approach to the question of the 'mind' and *repression* – to the question of the conscious and the *unconscious* – to the question of analysis and cure as well. Girindrasekhar explains further his differences with Freud with respect to (1) the unconscious or complex wish (*avadamita iccha* or *gudhaisa*), (2) the resistance (*badha* or *pratibandha*) and (3) the censor (*prahari*). For Girindrasekhar this censor is the opposite wish of the repressed one:

According to Freud ... shame, hatred and fear represses our wish and unconscious feelings like Love, Violence, Jealousy can influence us without our knowledge ... but I think in the unconscious, only wishes exist; ... this wish has a dynamic character in our mind. ... In fact, shame and fear is the result of particular repressed wishes, they are not the cause of repression. ... an opposite wish to our sexual wishes holds us back from being sexually attracted towards our relatives. ... if the resistance is only external, then our wishes wouldn't have remained unconscious. Because external resistance cannot drive a wish from the conscious. To do that, we need another wish. So the main reason for not having a sexual wish towards our relatives, is having an opposite wish ...

Somewhat consonant with the hegemonic philosophies of mind in early 20th century Bengal, Girindrasekhar also turns *inward*. He turns towards the mind in singular, to a certain panpsychism, a certain mentalism. This turning away from the psycho-physical parallelism of the West, from the mind-body dichotomy, which was in itself problematic, to a certain panpsychism, to an erasure of the 'third' – this *recoil* into the mind, into the interior of the mind as the repository of the opposites, of opposite wishes could perhaps be traced in the philosophy of mind, drawn from *our* philosophical systems, that hegemonized the intellectual milieu in early 20th century Bengal, a time when we, interpellated by *their* structures of knowing were trying to re-invent *our own, our own structures of knowing* (see speech delivered at an Open Meeting of the Quest Society on June 2nd 1921 by S. N. Dasgupta where he delineated the general structure of 'Yoga Psychology'). In *Bhagavad-Gita* published in the year 1948 Girindrasekhar writes:

All traditional sacred texts have as their main objective, the desire to resolve [internal] grief [*atyantik dukkha*]. Desire for *moksa* (ultimate liberation) is also driven by a wish to resolve grief or pain ... The ideology and means of resolving grief is quite different in the Orient and Occident. The West teaches: make yourself capable of struggling in society; while competing with others ... change your surroundings

according to your convenience. In this thorn ridden society, try to uproot as many of them as you can. ... the *sanatan* (age-old/traditional) ideology here teaches us something else: you will never be able to uproot all the thorns, so you must build yourself in a way that you are not hurt by the thorns. It is better to wear a pair of shoes instead of attempting to sweep away all the stones and dust from the road. One ideology tries to overcome nature; the other tries to overcome and discipline the Self ... Hindu ideology will say that it is possible to resolve grief, disease, bereavement, pain, poverty, death, fear ... if you and I try to reach the state of not being affected by sufferings.

Is this ideology as also the idea(l) of a disciplining of the Self not totally opposed to the spirit of Freud's thought which emphasizes the *nostalgia* binding the subject to the *lost object* and yet marks the *impossibility* of his/her repetitive attempts at finding the lost object. Freud had repeatedly emphasized the profoundly conflictual relationship of the subject to the world, so that theories, such as those of the American ego psychology, of the adaptation of the individual to 'reality' could be made into a justification for social conformism.

Girindrasekhar would not deny the importance of conflict in the production of symptoms and in the functioning of the psyche. But then he would also include an area of mental functioning in the self, which is conflict free, which is a "nonconflictual sphere", which is "sheltered from the person's internal conflicts" (Lacan, 2006: 493). This was as if an approach towards a "cure form the inside" (Lacan, 2006: 492). American ego-psychology also has the notion of a conflict free portion of the ego, with the ego functioning as an apparatus for regulation of the organism and adaptation to reality: "certain individuals on the other side of the Atlantic felt the need to introduce a stable value here, a standard by which to measure reality: the autonomous ego" (Lacan, 2006: 493).

The *Lacanian return to Freud* would show how Freudian psychoanalysis is entirely incommensurate with American ego-psychology, with any notion of a *conflict-free-area* of the subject, with the very notion of *adaptation* to thorns: "I have long stressed the Hegelian

procedure at work in this reversal of positions of the beautiful soul in relation to the reality he accuses. The point is not approach is not to adapt him to it, but to show that he is only too well adapted to it, since he assists in its very fabrication” (Lacan, 2006: 498). Perhaps, the point is to show that Girindrasekhar is only too well adapted to the Occidental invention-invocation of the Orient; in fact, he assists in its very fabrication.

(Un)Critical Engagement with Received Theory

... given radical iterability, how have the right-handed hitters in India dealt with the pitcher they perceived to be the scientific dominant discourse of psychoanalysis?
(Spivak, 1994)

One is tempted to say that the will to gain political independence from the colonizer in the guise of a new independent nation-state is the ultimate proof that the colonized ethnic group is thoroughly integrated into the ideological universe of the colonizer.
(Slavoj Zizek, 1999)

What does the Bose-Freud correspondence show? Correspondence? Correspondence between a white man and a brown man’s worldview? Correspondence between a thinker moored to West European subjectivities (however much he may try to extricate himself; Freud’s effort in *Moses and Monotheism* is reminiscent of Marx’s effort late in life to unmoor his philosophy from a particularly west European context) and a thinker moored to a culture that was tied to its experience of economico-political colonialism? Or was there dissonance between the two? Or at least a resonance of dissonance? Dissonance of idea(l)s? Dissonance over a philosophy of mind? Dissonance over a care and cure of the mind? Dissonance of their

respective understandings of the sexed subject? Dissonance over what constituted the subjectivities of their respective cultures?

With respect to the above discussion one can possibly think of three types of engagement with received theory – (1) uncritical acceptance, though no acceptance is absolutely uncritical – the act of subjection concurrently *enacts* the subject – power *produces* the subject – ‘subjection-subjectivation’ remain enmeshed in an overdetermined knot (2) uncritical rejection, which is perhaps no engagement at all and (3) critical acceptance.

The works of Girindrasekhar Bose (1886-1953), the first *savage* psychoanalyst, serve as an example of critical acceptance of (a) received theory of the mind in colonial India. Bose re-read psychoanalysis as another version of “the older theories of consciousness in India” and thus transformed the “introspective project of Indian philosophy into a new prose of liminal psychoanalysis” (Nandy, 1995). “(T)he tenets which Bose formulated, despite having Freudian traits, were notably different. ... The world of dreams is made available for another explanation by a non-western psychoanalyst, whose interpretation makes the ‘wish’ a dialectical and dynamic category” (Basu, 1999).

But did such a form of ‘critical acceptance’, a form of ‘critical acceptance’ that remained overdetermined by hegemonic Oriental philosophies of mind as also hegemonic Oriental forms of cure (*hegemonic* Oriental philosophies of mind and forms of cure were being invented, imagined, constructed and produced in those tumultuous days of opposition to foreign rule) serve *our* psychoanalysis well in its engagements with *our* subjectivities? Were we giving in to Anglo-American idea(l)s at the moment of opposition to British political rule? Were we giving in to Anglo-American epistemes while we were opposing the political regime of the Anglo-Americans? Were we being further colonized by the Anglo-Americans while we purportedly opposed them? Was this idea of the Orient or of Oriental philosophy our discovery, our discovery of ourselves; or were they, somewhat like

psychoanalysis introduced amidst us by the west; introduced as part of *our* self-description? In *turning away* from psychoanalysis – turning away from the *margins of western philosophy* (because in its criticism of the hegemonic philosophies of the west psychoanalysis had come to occupy the margins) were we inadvertently *turning towards* other western philosophies – philosophies that were somewhat hegemonic in the west – philosophies from which psychoanalysis had marked its difference – philosophies that privileged the Conscious Cogito and the transcendental Ego (Achuthan, 2004, 2005) ? Does psychoanalysis, psychoanalysis as the *other* of mainstream psychiatry (as well as mainstream psychology), lose in the process its *otherness*? Does the *other* lose, in the invocations of the *colonial other*, its own *otherness*? Further, in turning away from psychoanalysis were we turning to western theories about us; to what western theories said about who or what we were; that we were a philosophical and introspective lot?

One needs to ask: what were *our* available epistemological repertoires, repertoires from which Girindrasekhar was drawing out his version of psychoanalysis? Did we not *re-invent our* structures of knowing once again in the nineteenth century? That of course brings to mind the concomitant question: what do we mean by *our*? By the use of the word *our* as a prefix to ‘knowing’ do we understand ‘oriental’ structures of knowing as against ‘occidental’ structures. But then there is *no one* structure of knowing; the orient is *not* an undivided perspective. There are structures and structures and contestations within structures, both oriental and occidental. What were then our structures of knowing? There was no one structure and each structure while contesting the other structures also produced constitutive moments; produced intricate imbrications and curious interstices. Epistemological encounters within *our* tradition produced perhaps *hegemonic* structures of knowing; structures that first passed off as *the* knowledge of the (normal) mind or the mind in general and then passed off as *the* knowledge of the ‘mad’. What happened when other structures of knowing arrived on

our shores? What structures of knowing were further produced out of epistemological encounters that ensued thereafter; encounter between the occident and the orient, between the west and the east, between ‘theirs’ and ‘ours’. Did we give in completely to ‘their’ structures of knowing? Was there an unquestioned consent to ‘their’ structures of knowing? Or were there some contestations, some disagreements? What was the nature of our disagreements? Were they merely empirical ones; like say, the generalizations rampant in assertions like ‘Indian/Hindu Oedipus is different from the Western Oedipus’; ‘Indians/Hindus have castration wish but do not have castration anxiety’. Did we merely lend ‘our’ bodies to ‘their’ thoughts? Only ‘our’ bodies happened to be empirically different! Or were there theoretical disagreements; disagreements that could put in doubt and in question ‘their’ structures of knowing? What structures of knowing emerged out of such encounters? What relations emerged out of the seeming sedimentation of certain structures of knowing? Did the encounter produce relations of *lordship* and *bondage*; relations that were fundamentally *hegemonic*; hegemonic even in an apparent milieu of being equal? Or did the very process of *enunciation*, enunciation of ‘their’ knowledge introduce in a certain simultaneity a *split* in their performative present; introduce a moment of representational undecidability; a “zone of occult instability”? Did the ‘Word of the Western God’, the ground of psychoanalytic certainty undergo a ‘loss or change of meaning’ during the process of colonial *translation*? Between the Western ‘sign’ and its colonial signification there emerges perhaps a *territorium* of (mis)reading; a moment of ‘critical engagement with received theory’; a *savage* moment. Does the colonized (re)write in the process? Even while working well within *science*, *science* as *the* sign of modernity, does the encounter produce in turn an incalculable subjectivity – *our* subjectivity – half-acquiescent, half-oppositional – neither colonized nor free? Does the surveillance of western science and the science of western surveillance *re-turn* as the *displacing* reverse gaze of the disciplined? Does the western *I/eye* find its mastery undone,

even if, for a moment? And yet there is no fixed, *point de capiton* of 'savage' agency. Girindrasekhar, in his *complicity*, becomes the unwitting and unconscious agent of resemblance *and* menace; his sameness quietly slips into otherness. He simultaneously stabilizes and *destabilizes* their structure of 'knowing'. Girindrasekhar is a colonial subject – 'same but not quite' ... not white. Girindrasekhar is the mimic man ... scientific ... psychoanalytic ... analytic ... but not quite. *Mimesis*, the construction of the colonial other as a stereotype, becomes a kind of *mimicry*, a reverse agency, agency without a subject, without a form of *representation*, but which, nevertheless produces *affects-effects*. Instead of a mere copy the colonizer (here Freud) is confronted by the grossly and grotesquely dislocated image of his self.

What was then the contour and nature of *our* 'critical engagement' with received theories of the mind (here Freudian psychoanalysis)? What was the nature of our reception of western theories? What was the nature of our critique of psychoanalysis? What were *our* invocations as against psychoanalysis, psychoanalysis as a western science of the mind? Did we in the process of critique invoke hegemonic oriental cares/cures of the mind? Did we in the process of critique give in to *hegemonic* oriental philosophies of the mind? Did we in the process do away with some of the more radical potentials of and within psychoanalysis? Did we in the process of assimilating western psychoanalysis somewhat critically within oriental cultures do away with one of Freud's more radical notions: the notion of the 'Unconscious', the unconscious as that which *puts under erasure* Cartesian consciousness? Did *our* process of critical assimilation shear off from Freudian psychoanalysis its radical sheen and retain instead a more conservative core? Western psychoanalysis was the *other* of western psychiatry. From the west psychoanalysis as the *other* of western psychiatry arrived on the shores of *other* cultures, *other* structures of meaning, *other* epistemes. What did *other*

cultures with their own existing-evolving structures of meaning and knowledge do with the *other* of western psychiatry? Did the *other* of the west lose in the hands of the cultural-colonial *other* its otherness? Did such a thing happen in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when the cultural-colonial other was re-inventing its own tradition – when the colonial other was re-affirming its own otherness – cultural-spiritual otherness – epistemological otherness – to be precise – when the other was asserting its otherness – when the other, interpellated as it were by the *their* structures of knowing, was now somewhat self-consciously positing *difference* – possibly what could possibly pass off as *ours*.

Did the other end up speaking the language of the Self, not necessarily the language of the occidental/western self but the language of the oriental/eastern hegemonic self? What were the affinities between the hegemonic language of the occidental/western Self and the hegemonic language of the oriental/eastern Self? Do the moments of affinity stand in direct contradiction to the more radical moments in psychoanalysis? Does an allegiance to the hegemonic episteme of the oriental/eastern Self rob the colonized of the possibility of an appreciation of the more radical moments of psychoanalysis – moments that could possibly facilitate the setting up of a dialogue with the question of *our* subjectivities?

Whither then the postcolonial?

Psychoanalysis as the *other* of western psychiatry and western psychology – as that, which marks a difference with the then hegemonic western philosophies (of mind) – arrives on the shores of the *colonial other*. The *colonial other* receives the *other* of western psychiatry and western psychology. The *other* of the West finds itself refracted through the knowledge systems of the *colonial other* – knowledge systems that were re-invented as *our*

own in late 19th and early 20th century. In the process of passing through the *hegemonic knowledge systems of the colonial other* – in other words, in the process of passing through the *epistemological Self of the colonial other* – the *epistemological other of the West* loses its otherness.

Would that mean a loss just for the West?

Or would it mean a loss for the *colonial other* as well?

Would it mean that the *colonial other* would have to be critical not just of the hegemonic Self in the Occident but also of the hegemonic Self in the Orient?

Did the *other* end up speaking the language of the Self, not necessarily the language of the occidental/western self but the language of the oriental/eastern hegemonic self?

What were the affinities between the hegemonic language of the occidental/western Self and the hegemonic language of the oriental/eastern Self?

Do the moments of affinity stand in direct contradiction to the more radical moments in psychoanalysis?

Does an allegiance to the hegemonic episteme of the oriental/eastern Self rob the colonized of the possibility of an appreciation of the more radical moments of psychoanalysis – moments that could possibly facilitate the setting up of a dialogue with the *colonial other* – with the subjectivities of the *colonial other* – as also with the moments of *unreason* within colonial subjectivities?

A possible *critical engagement with received theory* would perhaps be possible through a critical engagement with the hegemonic Selves of *both* Occident and Orient.

Otherwise the radical import of psychoanalysis – a radicalism that makes possible a ‘speaking with the (colonial) subject’, as also a ‘speaking with the unreason of the (colonial) subject’ is lost. The impact of the loss is profound for the native.

Having stripped psychoanalysis of its radical sheen 'Native Psychoanalysis' fails to address the native itself; it fails to address both native and native unreason.

In lieu of a Conclusion:

How would we then think coloniality and postcoloniality? How would we think colonial hegemony and a critique of colonial hegemony? Hitherto, the distinction was marked in terms of 'native language' and 'alien language' – in terms of the 'mother tongue' and the 'foreign tongue' – if, of course, it was thought in terms of language and not in terms of 'birth'. In this rendition, one thought that whoever spoke native language was decolonized; and whoever spoke alien language was colonized. One also fought over the contours and the understanding of the native and the alien. Some thought there was such a thing as native and alien; others thought native and alien would need to be understood in terms of their constitutive hybridity. But then, one needs to question this understanding of colonial hegemony and its critique, understanding in terms of a *given* rendition of native and alien language. We suggest instead a thinking of colonial hegemony in terms of hegemonic language, in terms of hegemonic language (anchoring signifiers, contingent albeit) and foreclosed language (unspoken, repudiated signifiers; contingent albeit). Let us represent hegemonic signifiers as 'p'. One can be entirely taken up, integrated within the wor(l)d of 'p'. One is then colonized; one speaks the language of the hegemonic; Narendra Nath Sengupta and Suhrit Chandra Mitra were doing just this. One can operate as *lacking other* of 'p' – as '~p' – as 'p-negative' or 'minus p'; as the *lacking other* of 'p' the na(t)ive can then serve as 'raw data' or at best as 'data retriever' of and for 'p'; one can serve as ground for providing empirical validation to 'p' as theory; one is then still colonized. One can resist one's

colonization and aspire to being 'p' himself; one can be nationalist; one can say that I *am* 'p'; or I am just about 'p'; I am 'p-prime'; I am a slightly displaced or a slightly different version of 'p'; one is then still colonized by the universe of 'p'; even in one's (nationalist) opposition to 'p' one remains colonized by the thought wor(l)d of 'p'; perhaps Jadunath Sinha and S. N. Dasgupta were doing just this. To produce a critique of 'p', to produce a moment of the critique of colonial hegemony, to be post-colonial one needed to extricate oneself from the universe of 'p', of the hegemonic; perhaps one needed to think a 'q' in terms of what 'p' forecloses; in terms of what remains unspoken in the world of 'p'. Girindrasekhar, in his *turning towards* hegemonic Oriental (as also at times Occidental) philosophies of the mind and in his *turning away*, turning away from medicine-psychiatry-psychology and thereafter from Freudian psychoanalysis as well appears to be torn between 'p' and 'q'.

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