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The Psychomachia of Caste and Psychoanalysis in India

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Abstract

Psychoanalytic theory has been invoked to study gender, race, and colonialism, especially Indian postcoloniality, and its claims to cross-cultural relevance have also been interrogated in Indian scholarship from these perspectives. Given that caste determines nearly all aspects of life of both the upper and lower castes in India, a discussion of caste through psychoanalysis and vice-versa is conspicuous by its absence. This is consistent with the fact that the wider discipline of psychology has not adequately confronted the tremendous scale of suffering generated by caste-based inequality in the Indian subcontinent. Rather than assume the value of psychoanalysis in understanding the lived experiences of and attitudes towards caste, we can initiate a reciprocally interrogative encounter between caste and psychoanalysis with a view to examining the psychomachia of caste in contemporary life. The question of psychoanalysis in India should begin with the acknowledgement of two facts: the psychic dimension of suffering that is inflicted on the lower castes by the social order, and the psychic dimension of the denial or *Verneinung* of caste by the upper castes. We will then see how the psychomachia of caste cannot then be treated in the isolation of the clinic but requires sociogenetic theorization or sociodiagnostics (in Fanon's sense) and social transformation. Caste might prove to be the most insightful site for developing a political, that is, emancipatory psychoanalysis which would have to exceed the clinic and intervene in social transformation.

Keywords

Caste, psychoanalysis, psychomachia, Verneinung, sociogenesis, hypophysics, scalology, Dalit

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The Psychomachia of Caste and Psychoanalysis in India

The wider discipline of psychology has not adequately confronted the tremendous scale of suffering generated by caste-based inequality in the Indian subcontinent (Jadhav 2012; Jogdand 2023). Even though the psychoanalytical clinic does not enjoy prominence in the mental health landscape in most parts of the world, it is an important alternative to the increasingly criticized dominance of medicalized and psychiatrized mental health approaches (Leader 2011). Equally, psychoanalytical theory occupies a very significant place in certain dominant traditions of humanities and social science research, including in literary, cultural and political theory, in gender and critical race theories (see for instance Bhabha 2013; Nandy 2000). This is reflected in the fact that despite being marginal to the Indian mental health field, psychoanalysis has been prominently invoked to study gender, race, and colonialism, especially Indian postcoloniality, and its claims to cross-cultural relevance have also been interrogated in Indian scholarship from these perspectives (Boni & Mendelsohn 2023). Even those like Ashis Nandy (who calls himself a "political psychologist") have engaged with the Freudian legacies and attempted to psychoanalyze "Indian" society (2000). Given that caste determines nearly all aspects of life of both the upper and lower castes in India, a discussion of caste and specifically of the lower castes' experience of caste-based suffering through psychology in general and through psychoanalysis in particular is conspicuous by its near absence. When it has been discussed by a practitioner and theorist such as Sudhir Kakar, it has been confined mainly to analyses of the upper caste psyche and the psychosocial dynamics of males in the upper caste family (2012). This pattern of selective invocation accompanied by an avoidance of explicit discussions of caste is at least meaningful and should prompt an examination. Rather than assume the value of psychoanalysis in understanding the lived experiences of and attitudes towards caste, we can initiate a reciprocally interrogative encounter between caste and psychoanalysis with a view to examining the psychopathologies of caste in contemporary life. Among the numerous critical updations and modifications of psychoanalysis, and its various branches and 'schools', it may be best for our purposes that we initiate this encounter through reference to Sigmund Freud himself, the best known and most widely read psychoanalyst outside of the closed circuits of specialization.

From Freud onwards, psychoanalysis implies a theory of civilization corresponding to its clinical locus. According to these civilizational criteria the psychic fitness of the individual and the techniques of its restoration are determined by the theory. It is between these two interdependent domains that "health" and "mental health" of people is broached by psychoanalysis. In the case of India, and the subcontinent altogether, the civilization itself sustains the malaise of caste-based oppression, thus raising two questions for psychoanalysis:

- What would be a psychoanalytical theory of the contemporary social order of caste which we may hope to examine the way Freud examined his own contemporary world?

- And, what notion of "health" attaches to a clinic in which psychoanalysis would seek only to restore the fitness of a suffering patient so as to adjust back into a casteist world which may have engendered the suffering in the first place (as Frantz Fanon, the Martinican anti-colonial thinker and psychiatrist had warned in the context of colonial racism)?

Giving the same importance to caste as Fanon gave to race and racism vis-à-vis psychoanalysis, the exploration of Psychoanalysis in India should have a new beginning which starts by acknowledging two facts: psychomachia or the psychic dimension of suffering that is inflicted on the lower castes by the social order, and *Verneinung* or the psychic dimension of the denial, as we will see, of caste by the upper castes. *Verneinung* or denial (and *Verleugung* or disavowal related to it) is the phenomenon according to Freud where the realities of either the external social world or the forces within the unconscious are not acknowledged (Freud 2006; Laplanche & Pontalis 2022). The withholding of conscious acknowledgment may be an involuntary and unconscious process at the level of the individual psyche, but as a tendency evident in public and institutional life, *Verneinung* must be grasped at the level of socio-political forces. Hence, both the conscious and unconscious motivations for the disavowal of caste in psychology and psychoanalysis in India—which are in themselves always co-articulated—will be revealing. "Passion is better than disavowal," a therapeutic maxim goes (Kerr 2015: 361). A psychoanalytical exploration of a caste-based civilization makes it incumbent on us to critically supplement the relatively a-political character of psychoanalytical diagnosis by attending to politics as the contestation of caste towards its annihilation as B.R. Ambedkar envisaged it.

Psychomachia of Caste

Psychoanalysis reminds us that our understanding of social reality cannot begin from an Archimedean point outside the psyche, but rather should take as its point of departure the lived experience of social meaning and the associated pleasures, sufferings, trauma, doubt, anxiety, and affective identifications and disidentifications with significant others. In the subcontinent and in its diaspora, all these phenomena are determined at the deepest levels by caste which has a primarily birth-based and parentally defined character. The social order of caste generates specific kinds of suffering, both physical and psychic (Jadhav et al. 2016). Crimes of honour killing, lynching and rape as collective caste punishments, stigmatization through verbal abuse invoking caste identities, and many forms of material expropriations are widespread, while the socio-economic indicators for the majority population of India remain abysmally low as indicated by the Indian poverty line (Thorat & Newman 2012). The infliction of suffering is socially sanctioned and often legally excused, including a variety of social and penal incarcerations—economic boycott, social isolation, jail as undertrial,[1] suicide—and painful death where lynching is often preceded by humiliating acts of disrobing, parading, soiling and invasion of the helpless bodies

[1]See Kisana & Hole (2023) and the reports of Project 39 on death row convicts.

(Irudayam et al. 2014). The suicide notes of Dalit students who are driven by the lived experience of caste in elite educational institutions to kill themselves, are only a part of the unseen archives of caste-based suffering (Punia 2023). Generations of Dalit poets, activists, and scholars have given expression and testimony to it. For example, Kanshi Ram, a 22-year-old mason looking for a job in Israel amidst the current war in Gaza, recently reflected on the significance for him of the journey to a zone of death in search of livelihood: *"People like us are at war with society, and internally with our souls, from the time of our birth"* (Kumar 2024). The war in the soul is psychomachia, and its psychogenesis must be understood as, in fact, *sociogeny* as Fanon called it (1986: 4). A lay person, poor and of lower caste, with a technical qualification of an iron bender and a "working understanding of English" has been able to express a *psychomachia*—war within the soul, for which the Greek word was *psyche*—which professional psychologists have neglected.[2]

Psychiatrist and academic Sushrut Jadhav, who is himself Dalit, has described himself as being a rebel in the Clinic, posing to his discipline questions such as:

> How does caste shape individual psyches and determine collective mentalities? How and why does caste-ism impact upon the inner lives of both the perpetrators and their victims; How can their psychological wounds be healed? How is caste-related victimhood constructed, experienced and contested through a cultural psychological language? […] How is it psychologically constructed and managed, both individually and collectively? What might be the cultural pathologies of the psyches of perpetrators of caste-ism? […] To what extent does caste-ism and racism overlap or differ in their psychological antecedents and consequences? (Jadhav 2012)

All these questions should also be posed to discussions of psychoanalysis in the Indian context thus far. The first question requires an account of how caste as a civilizational principle comprehends people's lives and impacts their mental health. It does so by reducing them to their "immediate identity and nearest possibility" in the words of the Dalit scholar Rohit Vemula who committed suicide because of discrimination on the university campus (Vemula and Henry 2016). Immediate identity is the attribution of caste to a person because of the parents to whom she/he is born. Caste is hypophysical since it holds value (superior/inferior) to be intrinsic to human nature and it institutionally ascribes graded value to a person pre-defined as having an immutable nature (Mohan & Dwivedi 2019). The caste order holds people to be *born-as* upper or lower caste because of the parents they are *born-to.* The production of identity by positing *born-as* in the immediacy of *born-to* is hypophysics (Dwivedi 2023).

At birth itself, an individual is defined in all respects according to caste. An individual is not considered to be a personality evolving and mutating through dynamic

[2]New initiatives have emerged on the margins of the field to address the mental health challenges of lower castes, including *We Belong* for students, the *Mariwala* health initiative, the diploma in anti-caste mental health practices offered *Narrative Practices in India*, and the work of Maitri Gopalkrishna, a drama therapist and counselling psychologist.

exchange with the surrounding world, but a bundle of unchangeable qualities or merits (*guna*) and corresponding imperatives (*dharma)* and privileges inherited "by birth". Words for birth and caste are etymological twins if not the same: *janma* (birth) and *jāti* (caste). In this way, intelligence, worth, beauty, fruits and punishments of action, success and failure in this life and even the next—in short, *value*—are held to be transmitted in the nature of the *born body*.

Civilizationally, a scalology corresponds to this hypophysical logic of the intrinsic and permanent residence of value in our *nature* (also etymologically derived from *natus*, birth). The "curse of caste" as Bhimrao Ambedkar (1979) called it is that it is not just the intergenerationally frozen identity belonging to a group: "*caste in the singular number is an unreality. Castes exist only in the plural number.* There is no such thing as a caste: there are always castes" (p. 20). This inter-group hierarchy arranged by graded inequality enables the castes of upper or higher value to *denigrate* the castes assigned "lower" values while confirming their own supremacy and thereby justify their power to *dominate* the lower castes for exploiting them through the combination of duty and right. By "caste" we should therefore understand the name of the structuring principle of a scalology in which the value of each caste is fixed on a scale of superiority, purity, touchability, and freedom.

The *denigrate-dominate function* of caste hypophysics and scalology was formulated as social imperative (dharma) which allowed the upper castes to a) maintain sufficient distinction from each other to preserve specific privileges distributed among themselves—land and other resources, governance, monopoly of force, sacrality—and b) simultaneously regularize and regiment their distance from the lower castes: just sufficient proximity to receive their services and labors without having to share with them the privileges or disrupting the genealogical inheritance of the inequalities. All the while, the upper castes kept their religion strictly to themselves, including temples and other domains of sociality, which were all based on descent. Hence the proscription of commensality and exogamy, whose hyopophysical doctrine of the consecration of value in born nature—*janm-jāt*—was prescribed by one of the upper castes (Brahmin, custodians of scriptures), and whose scalological operationalization and social reproduction was enforced by another (Kshatriya, rulers and warriors).[3] Castes are ceremonial societies eternally repeating their respective caste regularities or dharma and thus ceremonially repeating the scalological order—the upper castes doing so with pride, the lower castes forced to do so with the experience of denigration and exploitative domination.

Thus, the *denigrate-dominate function* instituted inferiority by birth as the material as well as psychic regularities of racialized oppression and stigmatization—what Fanon called lived experience (*expérience vécu*) in the fifth chapter of *Black Skin White Masks*—on the scale of populations and centuries (1986). It distributes differential imperatives for the upper and the lower castes. In this pyramidal bauplan,

[3]The punishments for these crimes against the scalology of caste are excommunication (expulsion from the caste and withdrawal of livelihood or *hukka-pani*) and honor killing (extinguishing of life and reproductive freedom).

the populations of the upper castes have been a numerical minority throughout this period and the lower castes a numerical majority. Its tenacious regularity can be gauged from the fact that even today, of upper castes who are less than ten per cent hold most of the elected positions, and more than ninety per cent of positions in judiciary, financial institutions, academia, media, and culture industry.

In the haunting words of the suicide note left by Vemula (2016), "Never was a man treated as a mind" in India since a mind is capable of interacting with the components of the immediate and mediate world, of thinking and imagining it otherwise, of introducing change in the functions and regularities of the components. The hypophysics of caste is inimical to treating man as a mind because the mind can and will dissociate the value soldered into birth and nature and will revaluate it. The mind can dissociate the racializing pre-definition that caste finds in the child so that other destinies can be discovered and cultivated in her. It will also dissociate groups from their functional isolation in the pre-fixed scalology of caste and invent new functions. The mind can invent new functions for people, spaces and objects outside the caste-prescriptions, and can create new social and political conditions—laws and institutions to materialize these new functions (Mohan & Dwivedi 2019). The polynomia of the mind threatens the ceremonial society and the law-giving perspective of upper caste supremacy. The mind is *polynomial* since it approaches the world as capable of being regulated under multiple laws rather than confined under one eternal law (the *sanatana dharma* where the means is itself the end since observance of caste rules is the means to the ends of reproducing the caste order).

The ceremonial society of caste therefore seeks to decrease individual and collective polynomia as well as the freedom to choose the functions into which one prefers to be isolated. Caste-blindness or *Verneinung* among the upper castes is a function of this conflict, between caste hypophysics and polynomia as is psychomachia among the lower castes. Thinking psychoanalysis in India therefore requires that we critically and politically reinterpret its metasychological concepts through polynomia and functional isolation, recognizing them at work through different functions and effects in the existence of both the oppressors and the oppressed of the caste order.

Verneinung: Evasiveness of Caste and Health Humanities

"Never was a man treated as a mind" is the briefest complete definition of a caste-based society—and of any systemic racism. Vemula's words and his suicide confront us with the stunning and yet mundane fact that the discipline of psychology and the institutions of mental health in India have not concerned themselves with the play of caste in the "mind" whose theory and health are the very reason for their existence.

Jadhav's last question about anti-racist interventions is especially revealing given the long history of critical assessments of the deleterious impact of systemic racism on the psyche and the psychology of perpetration of racism in the colonial context (Feagin 2006; Hook 2012). In this context, race theories and racist practices of slavery, segregation, and the stigmatisation of coloured bodies hypophysically associate them

with bundles of inherited civilizational traits (Omi & Winant 2015). The experience of colonialism in India has driven the research of the past several decades in nearly all disciplines of the humanities and social sciences, often drawing explicitly upon anti-racist thinkers and academics, in particular Fanon, who himself engaged both critically and creatively with psychoanalysis to theorise and clinically treat the psychic life of the victims of racism (Bernasconi 2023; Khalfa & Young 2018; Hook 2008; Boni & Mendelsohn 2024). *The Wretched of the Earth* described the "tinctures of decay" among the Algerians under French occupation suffering from depression, stupor, impotence, anxiety, and suicidal ideation (Fanon & Farrington 1963: 200, 204, 217, 225, 234). Hypophysics and scalology form the architecture of both racism and caste (Dwivedi 2023). The victims of caste did draw inspiration and solidarity from the history of anti-racist literature and scholarship (Immerwahr 2007; Natarajan & Greenough 2009). However, although the academic and public spheres in India have promoted analogies between colonial racism and the "Indian" experience, they have at the same time dismissed and suppressed the analogies between racism and caste (Thorat & Umakant 2013. As the social psychologist Yashpal Jogdand (2023) notes:

> Indian psychologists have […] demanded decolonization of psychological sciences but have not made much effort to address the internal colonialism Dalits experience in Indian society. The psychological thoughts of chiefly mainstream Hindu texts and thinkers such as Patanjali, Gandhi, Aurobindo, and others have been studied and taught in Indian universities (Dalal and Misra 2010). Anti-caste perspectives and radical thinkers such as Ambedkar have been relegated to non-scientific spheres. As a result, psychology in India and elsewhere has remained caste blind. (37)

Caste blindness can be explained by the fact that academics in this discipline—as in all other social sciences and humanities—are predominantly from the upper castes where the lived experiences are different and other psychological priorities prevail. When scholars and practitioners of psychic life look for the "Indian psyche", they see only their own immediate identity. For instance, the prominence given to discussions of widow burning, meditation, and "wellbeing", which are phenomena that do not fall within the horizon of the lower castes, is the index of a collective and institutionalized choice to isolate their discipline to the theorisation and care of upper caste concerns alone.

Indian engagement with psychoanalysis, as found in the writings of Ashis Nandy and Sudhir Kakar, too has evaded the discussion of caste while proposing "Indian" critiques of psychoanalysis based on the cultural difference between "India" and the "West"; the diversity of upper caste gods is asserted (Boni & Mendelsohn 2023) but the hierarchy of caste goes unmentioned in the portraits of "Indian culture" advanced in such critiques. The resistance to psychoanalysis as such by Nandy (1983 & 1995, Nandy & Boni 2023) and Kakar (Kakar & Boni 2023) is precisely symptomatic. They oppose the occidentality of psychoanalysis and the Western ego-ideal of rationality

and secularism to the exceptionality of "Indian culture" (defined, for them, by its upper caste mythology). They also oppose the individualism of psychoanalysis (and of the West) and the oedipal Western nuclear family to the exceptionality of the "Indian" joint family where the upper caste child passes at the breasts of many mothers and wetnurses rather than suffer the Lacanian lack (see Kakar 2012: 146–50). They do not disaggregate "Indian" into the real caste divisions which determine the different lived experiences of the upper and the lower caste family lives. Then, the programmes hitherto undertaken to decolonise "Indian psychology" and address its cultural locus are the products of a universalisation of the upper caste psyche and lifeworld to the whole of "India" and "Indian civilization" (Davar 1999: 181).

Jadhav has suggested that the knowledge generated by the Indian social sciences should be brought into dialogue with the studies of "health" including mental health (2012). We should even consider this a new imperative since the social sciences and theories of psychology and psychiatry are the academic domain that should mediate between the domain of the clinic and that of the world, and this is what we call "Health Humanities". This imperative cannot be pursued until the evasiveness of caste is scrutinized. Postcolonial scholarship insisted that caste was a construct of colonial epistemology reflected in the "ethnographic state" which reified caste "fluidity" through the census and the attendant legislations and policies of electoral representation based on statistical determination of the people (see Dwivedi 2023, Kisana & Hole 2023). The social sciences have been as caste blind as the disciplines of health and mental health.

Why is it that a blindness watches over a society that has been civilizationally comprehended by caste? Why does academic evasiveness accompany a social practice that for the larger part of its history had survived by ascribing, signifying, and apellating everyone's caste identity and not permitting anyone to evade its detection and consequences in everyday life? Ethnographies and statistical analyses of surveyed speech cannot by themselves suffice to explain these real phenomena which condition the everyday experience of caste and the ways in which the different groups in the graded inequality or scalology of caste engage in meaning-making—including denial—with respect to it.

The psychoanalytical concept of *Verneinung* (naysaying) explains denial or negation as an involuntary speech act in the domain of the clinic, occurring due to a shift in the relations between the conscious and the unconscious parts of the psyche and, by extension, of social and public life. The conscious part judges, acts, and evaluates reality, and the unconscious is where our impulses, instincts and the drives which impel them are lodged along with the repressions acting on them on behalf of a world that cannot accommodate or satisfy them. Negation is consequent upon repression. It functions in conscious speech to mention a repressed content but in negative form as that which is there in thought but is not intended or is denied. In the famous late essay of 1925 titled "Verneinung", Freud (2006) proposed that "Negation is a way of taking cognizance of what is repressed; indeed, it is a lifting of repression, though not, of course, an accepting of what is repressed" (p. 667). For instance, a patient tells

the analyst that he saw a woman in his dream "but it is *not mother*". The need to add this negation would not have arisen unless the recollection of the dream woman was already associated with "mother." Conversely, the recollection could not have arisen until a "not" chaperoned this thought. *Verneinung* is a way for the unconscious to allow the repression to be lifted and "mother" to appear to the conscious by adding a "no". In the Indian social sciences, the syntax of negation can be heard as follows:

> *we see poverty / backwardness / malnutrition, but it is not caste.*
>
> *We see the same effects as produced by institutional racism, but caste is not like racism.*

Repression is a formation of unconscious content (not a force acting on prior content) which results from the interaction of forces acting on a shared locus—human beings in socio-political regularities.

Psychoanalysis: The Unconscious, Repression, and the Ego-Ideal

We can understand the psychoanalytic concept of repression and all the subsequent operations ensuing, such as negation, in terms of the dynamic between the functional isolations which can generate "nearest identities" on the one hand and the mind's polynomia on the other. Pure polynomia without any isolation into function is unrealizable. Instead, there are degrees of polynomia or the capacity and freedom of the mind to be functionally isolated under multiple laws, such as when a scientist is also a writer, an educator is also an activist, and a thinker is also a journalist. The psyche—which is a different concept than the mind—is historico-cultural for the very reason that it is formed through the functional isolation of the mind's polynomia under civilizational conditions. The psyche can neither think nor feel absolutely everything. It does so only according to the functional isolations of these two powers—of thinking and feeling—into psychic regularities at different levels. In psychoanalysis, these regularities can also be considered the organs of the psyche—the ego which is conscious, and the id and ego-ideal (also known as super-ego) which are unconscious.

For Freud (2001), "very powerful mental processes or ideas exist […] which can produce all the effects in mental life that ordinary ideas do […], though they themselves do not become conscious" (p. 3949). These psychical processes can be called the Unconscious. The passage of ideas from the Unconscious to the Conscious entails the transformation of those unconscious ideas in keeping with a censorship since all unconscious ideas, feelings and desire cannot be accommodated or expressed in an inter-personal social world. Social imperatives require the suppression of some pleasures, the postponement of others and their sublimation (into a different kind). This primary function is repression ("Two Principles of Mental Functioning" in Freud 2001: 2550-2558). It works by means of a "resistance" encountered, and can be understood as the differential of the impulses that proceed from the internal

world outward and those compulsions that act on the person from the external social world. The repressed ideas persist in the Unconscious along with unrepressed ones (Freud 2001), and continuously seek expression in the Conscious. When repressed ideas re-assert themselves and are opposed by social imperatives and by morals as the internalized form of the latter, they are confronted with two possibilities of unpleasure: that of being denied satisfaction, or else that of discomfiture vis-à-vis the social law if they are satisfied despite its pressure. A path has to be chosen to achieve pleasure with minimum unpleasure—an economy within the psychic apparatus which subserves the social and political economy which Freud called the pleasure principle or the reality principle. This path involves a further transformation of these ideas: condensation, that is, the concentration of several such ideas into a particular thought; and "displacement" or substitution of an acceptable thought for the repressed, unacceptable one (see *Interpretation of Dreams* in Freud 2001). By means of substitute ideas and images, the process of repression produces dreams, fantasies, jokes, Freudian slips, art works, and other effects in everyday discourses, including *Verneinung* (negation).

The ego or the conscious self is "that part of the id which has been modified by the direct influence of the external world through the medium of the perceptual conscious system" (Freud 2001: 3950). It is the isolation of polynomial mental processes into specific psychic regularities and is thus *itself* a function and effect of repression rather than a universal homogeneous "I" —universal theories of "self" are therefore useless for a psychology of caste. The ego in turn furthers the process of repression in accordance with the "reality principle" which involves the task of thinking (instead of blindly desiring), that is, evaluating and judging what the mind encounters. The ego turns away from the thought of repression itself, so as to completely repress it, thus necessarily forgetting that it is repressing at all, and leading to the splitting of a part of the ego itself which thus becomes unconscious. We can say that the unconscious is not a definite repressed content at all but rather it is the very polynomia of mind due to which the psyche can undergo multiple and changeable functional isolations.

Though continuously criticized and modified, psychoanalysis has served as a powerful theory of civilization because of the important role accorded to social milieu in producing not only psychic effects but in shaping the very formation of psychic organs. In light of the way polynomia and functional isolation, in inverse proportion to each other, describe man's relation to his social milieu, we can redefine psychoanalytic repression as the result of the specific disproportion between:

i) The actual functional isolations that specify the existing regularities of society, and

ii) The pure polynomia of man (the unconscious can say and think everything) which can never be realized in experience but is necessary for finding freedom from existing regularities in order to imagine new regularities which entail their own functional isolations.

The most important organ resulting from this disproportion specific to each individual in relation to her social milieu is the ego-ideal or I-ideal, more popularly known as the superego. Freud defined it as a level within the ego or "a Differentiating Grade in the Ego" whose function is repression, reality-testing, punishing, controlling and directing (2001: 3821). It is therefore no longer entirely conscious but rather unconsciously judges and polices the ego, the agent that might be swayed by the drives. Pleasure is submitted to the "pleasure principle", which is effectively the "reality principle" or the determination of the ratio of how much and which form of satisfaction can be achieved while prolonging life and securing the expectations of future pleasure. Psychopathologies are the products of the ratios negotiated by each individual with respect to the world and society starting from the immediate society or the family. Each ego-ideal is the index of social laws and family circumstances which are culturally and historically variant. Thus, the theory of id, ego and ego-ideal forming a circuit of proportions and disproportions with the external social reality comprises metapsychology and frames the account of both phylogeny and ontogeny.

Ontogenetically, before the child is confronted with the oedipal triangle, it only knows the pleasure or unpleasure in terms of sensations perceived through its own body, presumably with the regular rhythms of feeding and expelling. Thus, the first cathexis (discharge and application) of the libidinal drives is auto-erotic in relation to itself and without sensing a distinct other. In the so-called "oedipal situation" the child is faced with the withdrawal of the immediate source of satisfaction, usually the mother, whether due to the father's or family's needs, or her worklife or her own needs. These new compulsions issuing from outside its previous rhythms and incomprehensible to it are experienced by the child as a violent intrusion which may be represented by or affixed to the father, whence Freud's and the psychoanalytic tradition's term for it: *the law of the father*. It is not defined by the actual father, and can command the caregiver (mother or father) in a way that the child cannot but wants to do. The auto-erotic cathexis has to be redirected to another object for satisfaction. By her very withdrawal, the source of care now appears as "mother" and the child's desire may take the shape of *having the object* of/like her. The child may thus form an "anaclitic" attachment, leading it to make object-choices similar to the mother. This also entails that the child identifies with the objects that the mother appears to love, where the desire takes the shape of *being like her object-choice* (for instance the father). Alternatively, the resolution of the oedipal complex may take a different trajectory of *having the object-choice* which she has (the father), while *being like* her, that is, identifying with her ("Some Neurotic Mechanisms" in Freud 2001: 3901).

While Freud's gendered identifications were conservative and heteronormative, their metapsychological structure is insightful: one identification has the character of wanting to *have* the object and the other has the character of wanting to "be like" the object and therefore desire what it desires. *Having* and *being* are both generators of identifications in the same psyche with respect to its immediate society. Identity therefore cannot be theorized in terms of a one-to-one correspondence between the self and the social group, especially in a scalological caste order. Group identity too is

a double identification of *having-in-common* and *being-in-common*. Philosophically, psychoanalysis allows us to think beyond generalizations such as in-group and out-group relations, so that we can ask how social groups, especially in the inter-group relations and hierarchies, are organized through identifications of "having (objects) in common" and of "being-like each other" (Dwivedi 2020; Nancy 2023). Caste as a hypophysical scalology installed social imperatives regarding both types of identifications, as we will see through Ambedkar.

The ego-deal formed in the individual as a precipitate of the conflicting identifications is the moral agent of the social world and its law of sexual difference, operating within the individual her/himself and regulating the two types of identifications in one's social life. The social-imperative function performed through the ego-ideal, or what can be called the father function as a shorthand, is communicated and symbolized through language in the form of symbols which communicate the sources of the imperative. It is represented in discourse in every society and every stage of civilization through symbolized imperatives—totems, ancestors, patronym, honour, and even gods.[4] Psychoanalysis traditionally calls this social imperative function by the name "father" although it is quite independent of actual fathers. The name of the father (as symbol for the meaning of a social imperative) is more powerful than actual fathers and mothers. Such symbols are transmitted as archaic inheritances often resistant to change. Interrogating the father function and the father's name in the symbolic sense can offer a site to confront caste and psychoanalysis with each other.

Given the racialized social order of caste, the first question to be put to psychoanalysis is whether the archaic inheritances of the social imperatives specific to a socio-historical context—and their internalization as ego-ideals along with their corresponding shared symbols or "father" functions—is solely unconscious, or does it also get expressed in public discourse as well. Accordingly, we should also point like Fanon towards the "sociogeny" rather than phylogeny or ontogeny of those publicly symbolized father-functions which are mediated by the graded inequality of castes and of actual fathers and mothers in it. Studying the sociogenesis of caste-based identifications, social imperatives, ego-ideals and corresponding "fathers" requires that we historicize and locate the political agencies that regulated differential identifications in modern India.

Conflict of Imperatives: Resistances and Laws

The earliest surviving description of caste recorded by the upper castes—who also designated themselves as "Arya" (noble, higher)—is the *Puruśasukta* hymn of the

[4]Based on the theory of identifications and ego-ideal, Freud also proposed an elaborate and rightly criticized account of the group bond, group behavior vis-à-vis charismatic leadership, group conflicts, and types of groups such as religious communities, armies and political parties in his 1921 book *Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse* (2004). It offered a theory of the internal connections between phyolgeny and ontogeny or the emergence of the individual psychology through "archaic inheritance", that is, past formations of the psyche-civilization relation. For an analysis of its anti-political character which psychoanalysis in India should eschew, see Dwivedi 2020.

Rigveda followed by the account of *varna-ashrama-dharma* or the law of varnas (colour coded qualities of four major caste groupings) in the canonical *Manu Smriti* (Olivelle & Davis 2018, Witzel 1997; Chakravarty 2000). Their continued and even augmented invocation today by powerful caste-ist organizations like the RSS indicates the epochal work done to attain such a depth of cultural memory or archaic inheritance among the upper castes. These groups did not share this inheritance with the lower castes for identifications of the type "having (things) in common"— things such as their wells, kins, and temples —nor for and of "being-like each other" in attire, language, and salutations. If we give the name "Brahminism" to the hypophysical scalology of caste (Dwivedi & Mohan 2024), then its application to the psychoanalytic theory of identification reveals an anomaly: the plural number of castes would not allow all castes to have the same father function even as the upper castes, especially Brahmins gave the law. In other words, unlike Freud's theory, caste could not even brook the idea of a common father (or common gods) of all castes for fear of identification. Identifications had to be calibrated and segregated scalologically. Kakar (2012) selectively analysed the "Indian psyche" based on the relation of upper caste males to their father function, but did not attend to the same in the case of the lower caste, especially the outcastes who were considered to be born (of) other, which means *not of the same progrenitor* as in the *Rgvedic* myth (pp. 146–150).

Although the subcontinent has been the crossroad of multiple cultures and civilizations (Subrahmanyam 2015), this influx and co-mixing of customs and ideas could not introduce a significant disruption of the caste order. On the contrary, caste spread into all incoming cultures and religions inhabiting the subcontinent (Ansari 2023). However, in modern times this anomaly had to be addressed since it would contradict the idea of national and religious unity of all "Hindus", which the upper castes needed to project for supremacy in the new political structures developing and being negotiated from the later nineteenth century onwards (Dwivedi et al. 2021).

European, especially British, colonialism marked the first material disruption of the comprehending law of caste by introducing a new legal and moral authority, compromised as it was by its own denigrate-dominate function of colonial extraction and civilizational hypocrisy. Colonial interventions in the laws and cultures of the subcontinent were not experienced uniformly by "natives", but rather they often disrupted the upper caste self-assurance in its supremacy and disrupted the immurement of the majority people to lower caste occupations and lack of modern education. Colonial educational and legal policies allowed the lower castes for the first time to escape traditional occupations, and acquire modern knowledge (O'Hanlon 1985; Dwivedi et al. 2021). These disruptions to the traditional patterns of caste became the condition of possibility for challenges to upper caste supremacy by lower caste political groups to irrupt in the mid-19th century in all parts of India, especially in Bombay presidency (now Maharashtra) with Mahatma Jotirao Phule, the brilliant intellectual and activist. The destinal character of caste hypophysics began to fork into a new possible destiny created by the egalitarian critiques and mobilizations of the lower castes. This moment introduced the new regularities of census and proportionate

representation which could transform previous social divisions from dharma inequality to new civil rights and duties.

An anti-caste future thus appeared on the civilizational horizon nearly 150 years ago, but its realization was very quickly resisted by the upper castes. They experienced a new political exigency when the advent of British imperial rule began to prepare a new democratic framework for self-rule in the subcontinent according to the principles of proportional representation. The conventional definition of "modern" prevalent in the upper caste academic and public spheres refers to the adoption of modern institutions of governance and the forms of constitutional democracy—set up from the early twentieth century onwards—by the upper castes who received the transfer of power from the departing British imperialists in 1947. While these constitutional forms and norms were forged under the visionary leadership of the anti-caste thinker, jurist, and Dalit leader Dr. Ambedkar, it was the upper castes that populated the new institutions and controlled the power to govern under them. Hence, "modern" India witnessed the re-organization of some components of society like elections, laws, the judiciary, universities, and newspapers which were specified under "Western" egalitarian and secular rules of a shared public realm in which everyone could identify with everyone in being an equal *citizen*. However, these enlightened components were co-articulated—like a bullock cart with tube tyres—with the older, more powerful components of financial power, inherited primacy in access to elite education and employment, and the very ability to make and break laws, which continued to be specified by the caste law of unequal identification.

Psychoanalysis and India: Social Imperatives, Civilization and State

The first acts of civilizational repression in the Indian subcontinent must be traced in order to understand contemporary psychomachia and the negation of caste. The colonial disruption of caste scalology revealed the polynomia of the people called "lower" and produced new functional isolations—Mahars could become professional soldiers and defeat the Peshwa army, a *mali* (Phule) could become the first theorist of egalitarian education in India, an untouchable child could become a flamboyant lawyer and chair of the Constituent Assembly. To inhibit these new functions, the old and undisguised language of caste could not carry forward in the arena where the transfer of power was negotiated without having to undergo the process of condensation and displacement in order to repress the reality of caste which had begun to intrude into the public domain through the Ambedkar's discourse.

In his famous speech in 1936 titled *The Annihilation of Caste*, Ambedkar (1979) noted the persistence of a fundamental characteristic of society as its elites were debating the form of the new nation taking birth: "Hindu Society as such does not exist. It is only a collection of castes" (50) and "[T]hat is the reason why Hindus cannot be said to form a society or a nation" (50). The criteria for forming one was to *have something in common* rather than simply *having similar things* while remaining

in exclusive zones except during exploitative transactions, which he called the "anti-social spirit" of so-called Hindu society. Such criteria specifies the true meaning of *community* (having and being in common), which is how Ambedkar also explained fraternity:

> An ideal society should be mobile, full of channels for conveying [*communicating*] a change taking place in one part to other parts. In an ideal society there should be many interests consciously communicated and shared. There should be a variety of modes of contact with other modes of association […] This is fraternity, which is only another name for democracy. (57)
>
> We can understand this as: *having in common the polynomia of all members of society as the common project of sustaining everyone's freedom.*

The three citations from Ambedkar made thus far form the syllogism of the new law, the new social imperative, and the meaning of modernity. They can also constitute the fundamental opening to psychoanalysis of caste-based suffering on the one hand and caste-based supremacism on the other. In order to trace the dreamwork with which the upper caste discourse had to respond, and then map the distance between the clinic and civilization, we can grasp the syllogism (in italics) as follows:

> A1) Castes exist only in the plural number, as *components of a collection organized by dharma or the law of the denigrate-dominate function*;
>
> A2) On the subcontinent, "nation" and "Hindu society" does not exist as the collection of caste does not allow having something common among all, and therefore, *the ceremonial repetition of the functional isolation of people under the denigrate-dominate function is anti-social and does not form a society*;
>
> A3) An ideal society should be mobile, with a variety of modes of contact, so that many interests can be consciously communicated and shared. Therefore *a society can only be formed under new laws (historical appearance of a new ego-ideal) which specify new enabling regularities for increase of polynomial*: new conditions for free choice of education, of occupation, of partners, and free creation of enterprises and identifications (friends and families) rather than reproduction of caste identifications and caste belonging.

Freedom is polynomia (*poly-nomos* or multiple laws) rather than anomia (absence of laws). Pure polynomia with zero functional isolation is therefore impossible and can never be achieved (like the Lacanian *real*). Instead, polynomia is the precondition for mobile and changeable functional isolations as Ambedkar outlined for fraternity, and can be realized in higher or lower degrees in any regularity. From the perspective of the anti-caste syllogism, the new regularities proposed for post-Independence India revealed themselves as measurable in terms of whether they increased or decreased polynomia of the human being. This revelation is shrouded by the postcolonialist

theoretical categories of "tradition" and "modernity" which mis-define modernity as anxiety about tradition and therefore repress the encounter with polynomia. Then, polynomia is the unconscious, and the repression of it by the millennial order of caste is the repression of the repression. Anti-caste thought and mobilization was the beginning of the analysis of the malaise of civilization in India and of the psychopathologies of this ceremonial anti-society. We can see Phule and Ambedkar as the first analysists of India, the precursors of psychoanalysis here as they created the conditions for caste to emerge into public discourse accompanied with its negation. The upper caste supremacists, whether they were revivalists or reformists, offered resistance to analysis which generated the first series of negations.

One clear and impactful instance of resistance was Gandhi's opposition to Ambedkar's Mahad agitation and demand for separate electorates in the mid 1930s. At the very moment of Ambedkar's 1936 speech "Annihilation of Caste" came Gandhi's *Verneinung* (negation) in the form of a reformulation of the old laws, which we can understand as the modern syllogism of caste:

> G1) The scalological collection of castes or *varna-ashrama-dharma* is (the essence) of eternal Hindu religion (*sanatana dharma*) and Indian society, and Hind swaraj will be its restoration;
>
> G2) Modern ideals of equality, commensality and inter-marriage among castes and religions are the superstitions introduced by (Western) civilization;
>
> G3) The ancient sages or "forefathers" gave this law to Indian civilization which has lasted for 3000 years because it ceremonially preserves the limits of caste, village, and sexual-dietary-ritual action. Therefore, this law constitutes the ego-ideal which the polynomia of the mind transgresses and which must re-assert its moral-legal authority.

This syllogism has many variants since Gandhi, where the function of the "forefathers" is always the same—giving the law of caste—under the various names of the forefathers: *upper caste supremacism, Brahminism, tradition, Indian culture, indigeneity, native subjectivity, Hinduism, Hindu way of life*, and so on. Corresponding to the choice of the name of the father, the discourse too takes its name: *orthodox*, *revivalist, traditionalist, reformist, nationalist, liberal, postcolonialist, subalternist, Hindutva*.

This game of the father's law and the father's name is well understood through psychoanalysis which shows that the actual father is merely one of the many agents of the ego-ideal or the function of judgement, evaluation and auto-correction on behalf of the law (the prohibitions and prescriptions) imposed by the external world. The caste law imposed by a caste civilization needed a change of "father" figures and names at the first moments of being challenged. The transfer of power from the British rulers back to the old upper caste rulers was therefore accompanied by a transfer of names (which is the analogue of psychic transference or the projection of the existing feelings towards the father to the analyst in the clinic): the invention of a *father of the nation*

and the nomination of M.K. Gandhi in this "father". The ceremonial anti-society of the collection of castes had two possibilities:

1. To re-organize the components under a new comprehending law of democracy which had in fact been birthed in letter—the Constitution—and which already had its new father, B.R. Ambedkar, the *father of the constitution* as he is called; OR
2. To maintain the old law of caste with its old logic of hypophysical paternity in the *Puruśasukta* and *Manu*, but now also present it in a new mask of national and religious unity and similarity.

Gandhi was this old-new father because his uninterrogated language of communal harmony and non-violence was regulated by the law of caste. He himself entered the game of the father's name by baptizing the oppressed outcastes as "*Harijan*" to reiterate that they were not born of proper fathers (but of caste mixing as asserted in *Manu Smriti*) and at the same time to pretend that the god "*Hari*" had fathered them although the scriptures did not assert this. The "father of the nation" was therefore the name that could symbolize the place of both the caste reality and the *Verneinung* and evasion of caste. This "father" could be defended so long as the relevant war was against the "West" and European colonialism, that is, so long as the war against caste led by Ambedkar did not have to be avowed even though it was declared and being fought. Indian psychologists have been of service in this negation through the decolonial agenda to which Jadhav and Jogdand have pointed.

"Ambedkar", "father of the constitution", "annihilation of caste", "social justice", "Bhim", "Babasaheb" – these are not all names of fathers or even all proper names but rather the synonyms of the *other* "father" function which symbolizes the new ego-ideals of egalitarianism, of the democratic law of freedom, and of politics as the common project of holding polynomia in common. This law has enabled another *game of names* which marks the resistance to the law of caste and to its father's names: "Dalit" displaces "*chuhre ke*" (caste slur referring to manual scavenging) and "Harijan", "Dalit-Bahujan" (majority) displaces "Hindu majority", and "Liberty, equality, fraternity, justice" displace *Manu Smriti* and *Hind Swaraj*. Ambedkar (his name, statues, life and works) displaces Prajapati, Manu, and Gandhi. With this displacement, and despite all upper caste resistances, emerges the "now" of modernity as an origin of something other than the ceremonialised past. One possible interpretation of Dhasal's numerous annual poems and others like "Now, Now" which nominated Ambedkar as the force as well as the polynomial symbol of new laws, new beginnings and new directions, is that they are archives of the generative power of the egalitarian social imperative in India. In an autobiographical essay, the social scientist Sukhadeo Thorat (1993) too testifies to Ambedkar as an ego-ideal when he describes his search for a new social identity that he sought as an alternative to the caste ego-ideals which he was determined to reject.

The legacy of the reckoning with the forked destiny of caste civilization has been that today, private discourse remains the ceremonial discourse shaped by caste, as does private life, where people's names more or less directly announce their caste

identities, and caste occupations are used when identifying people often in place of their given names—for lower castes, *mali*, *paravan*, and *chuhra* as recorded in the famous Dalit autobiography *Joothan* by Omprakash Valmiki; and for the upper castes, *pandit-ji, Sami, Nair*. Matrimonial columns in newspapers explicitly identify the castes which are sought after, and even those lower castes which "need not apply". Every token of these invocations of caste recalls the caste hypophysics of birth and caste abuses are invariantly a reminder of one's paternity and ancestry: "*chuhre ke*" or "(born) of sweeper" and "*pulayadi-mon-ey*" or "son of pulaya". On the other hand, public discourse in and about "India" is structured by the conflict between the law of caste through the denigrate-dominate function with its corresponding language of inherited inequality, and the modern law of equality implemented through the official hierarchy of the parliamentary election, cabinet, courts, police and civil service with its corresponding language of constitutionality. These resistances and conflict generate the psychopathologies of caste which are a function of repression, negation, and denial since Phule began writing and even before that as recent researches on anti-caste Tamil 17th and 18th century thinkers show (Ayyathurai 2024, 111-116). The turmoil expressed by the aforementioned anti-caste writers is largely evaded by psychologists like Kakar (2012). He analyzed what he called the "guilt" and "considerable emotional stress" that an upper caste person, for example, a Bania experiences due to the "conflict between rational criteria of specific tasks and institutional goals rooted in Western social values" and "his own deeply held belief" that he must put his family and caste members' interests first (pp. 149–150). Strikingly, he did not analyze the stress of the lower castes or furnish evidences of upper caste guilt, or demonstrate how considerable the stress is especially when considered alongside the suicides of the lower castes.

Psychomachia and the dawn of Another Psychoanalysis

Since there are few clinics to recognize and address the pathologies of psychomachia where living breathing sufferers can narrate their symptoms, psychoanalysis as the talking cure—which has talked not only to analysands on the couch but to the works of literature, religion, and art—can be brought into an encounter with the other archives of this psychomachia of caste. Poems, autobiographies, literature form such an archive along with responses given to an occasional journalist and suicide notes on the few occasions when they are left behind. Then, a great ethics must prepare for this encounter in which neither psychoanalysis nor caste must be taken at their extant articulations.

For this reason, only a tentative outline of psychomachia can be drawn from the scenes of suicides—the walls separating a dead student from the campuses or homes which cannot address her vulnerability, and the locks drawn from inside by a soul that sees no path leading from the door to a liveable world. As in Vemula's note, symptomatic names can be found in other notes too. Recently a teenager from the Valmiki community killed herself under pressure of a national engineering entrance test, writing to her parents: *sorry, I am loser, worst daughter*. The word "loser" comes

from the language of caste which disguises birth-based privileges as "merit" and calls those "loser" whom the casteist reality of our world has not given the conditions to compete. The word "worst daughter", however, may whisper another language: of the aspiration to educate oneself and become a "good" daughter" annulling the "bad" birth in the caste that the world considers "worst" (Dwivedi 2024). The aspiration to exit the conditions imposed by caste is already overdetermined by the liberal meritocracy (Punia 2023, Pathania et al. 2023) which masks the modern ego-ideal of constitution. It is never clear which law and which father are being avowed. The aspiration is then not a straightforward intentional state but rather it is a strong wish engendered by the modern super-ego of legal equality but repressed when confronted with the actual external reality which is hostile to the wish. And what that external reality is, given the game of masks—are we an egalitarian country or the same "old stuff" as in Dhasal's poem. Are we dreaming that we are in the now? This too is a decision whose burden falls on the already fragile soul: either the beloved law of equality is a lie or the fault lies with the daughter.

Freud's influential essay "Mourning and Melancholia" explored the structure of such fatal decisions in which the ego faces the choice of negating either what it has taken to be real (whether the social reality of parents, entrance exams, job markets, and caste abuses, or the legal ideality of Modern nation, egalitarian constitution, meritocracy, and aptitude tests) or the worthless being that it (ego-ideal) judges itself (ego) to be by comparison:

> The patient represents his ego to us as worthless, incapable of any achievement and morally despicable; he reproaches himself, vilifies himself and expects himself to be *cast out and punished* […] commiserates with his own relatives for being connected with anyone so unworthy […] extends his self-criticism back over the past; he declares he was never any better. This picture of a *delusion* (mainly moral) *inferiority* is completed by […] an overcoming of the instinct which compels every living thing to cling to life. (Freud 2006: 584, emphases added)

Suicide appears as a self-punishment following upon a self-criticism, self-denigration, and self-abasement. In modern India, where excommunication and lynching take both physical and verbal forms, the law of caste judges (denigrates) and punishes (dominates) not only in old ways which continue in both towns and villages, but also in new ways that are modulated in accordance with the mask of egalitarianism. Thus, something like an introjection—turning of the ego's power of destruction/aggression/consumption towards itself as the object to be finished according to Freud—is maneuvered which intensifies self-denigration and self-harm.

The account of such melancholia and suicidal depression, preponderating among Dalit-Bahujan students in urban institutions calls for a Fanonian emphasis on "sociogenesis" of psychopathologies of racism (p. 4). In hindsight, it is evident that sociogenesis itself becomes visible only in the perspectives of the oppressed groups who, to use Fanon's phrase, *suffer in the their bodies and souls differently from the oppressing groups*.

The clinic fails the oppressed because of a theoretical failure which is itself a political failure: neither psychological theory not clinic include the lower caste perspective. As Fanon wrote in *Wretched of the Earth*:

> We have since 1954 in various scientific works drawn the attention of both French and international psychiatrists to the difficulties that arise when seeking to 'cure' a native properly, that is to say, when seeking to make him thoroughly a part of a *social background* of the colonial type. (1963: 200, emphasis added)

Without a politics that changes the *social background*, the clinic will welcome the oppressed not to cure—which will never properly happen—but to rehabilitate her to the world of oppression which, of course, is organized to profit from her suffering in the "social background" of poverty, self-doubt, humiliation (Jogdand 2018) and denigration. For a long time, elite educational institutions did not admit Dalit students with the excuse that there were not enough qualifying candidates; the architecture of institutionally assisted suicides complements this phenomenon as the student "opts out" herself (Punia 2023). Hence, Jogdand (2023) concludes that, "For those who strive toward bringing dignity and civility to Indian society, only a critical psychology with anti-caste vision will provide scope for resisting and eliminating caste—the root cause of humiliation" (p. 59).

Variant syntaxes of *Verneinung* (negation) can be heard in public and scientific discourse today where the negative is implicit:

> "caste is consensus" (it is not oppression);
>
> "caste is religious belief shared by the upper and the lower alike" (it is not denigration by the former of the latter);
>
> "caste is culture and tradition" (it is not the right object for annihilation);
>
> "caste exists only in the obsession of the anti-caste crusaders" (it is not discrimination);
>
> "forget caste, we are a modern country";
>
> *"rise above caste, don't you have anything else to talk about?"*

It is easy to imagine how this *Verneinung* prevails in the clinics too, where it may contribute to the worsening of a Dalit-Bahujan patient. The "not" of resistance and repression in the clinic finds its equivalent in the world (civilization) in the form of physical acts of negation and denial: pogroms, lynchings, velivadas (Dalit ghetto), forced suicides.

The first step to intensify the anti-caste imperative is to lift and acknowledge the negation of caste in social sciences and health humanities in general and psychology in particular. Since *Verneinung*, as we saw, indicates the return of the repressed unconscious ideations without yet the acknowledgement of the repression itself, the negation of caste by the upper caste spheres of the scalological world of India

is the sign or symptom of a disproportionate articulation between the dominant regularities of caste and the emergent regularities of constitutional democracy which themselves came about through negotiations and compromises between the upper caste supremacists and the anti-caste fighters for freedom. It is the symptom of an unresolved and unstable war of forces which is itself treated as unmentionable—untouchable—in the upper caste sphere, and is hence repressed: the resistance to this repression, that is, the attempt to "lift" and then "accept" it, is also resisted.

The second step would be to show by the example of its own failure in the clinic that a critical psychoanalysis of caste is not possible without an accompanying political struggle to change the social milieu and intervene in external reality. Since ego-ideals are formed under the pressure of social reality, psychology will always be the instrument of the persecution of the lower castes, whether by their own ego-ideals or by casteist ego-ideals of the upper caste psychologists and analysts who dominate the theory and the practice, and bring their own caste imperatives and negations into the clinic.

Psychoanalysis has been criticized, revised, adapted and widely deployed in clinics in Europe where it provides an alternative and/or supplement to pharmaceuticalized mental healthcare. The Lacanian emphasis on language, as seen in the British psychoanalyst Darian Leader's work, indicates the possibilities in psychoanalysis to relate to the sufferer through her own narrative, speech, as well as silence, rather than be reduced to a dosable body. As a theory of civilization and of society and politics, it can furnish resources to conceptualize and grasp those aspects of social life that are structured by evasiveness. However, it can also prove to be a retrogressive and universalizing theory of society and politics unless contextually specific sociogenesis of psychopathologies. This might even make of psychoanalysis a tool for further evasion and Verneinung of caste. *Acknowledgement* of Verneinung would then constitute a new and necessarily social and political process that cannot begin in the clinic but must take place in civilization itself. This process is none other than politics or the fight to acknowledge caste as the systemic racism of inherited inequality which must be addressed as that which is to be annihilated.

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