

My experience with ‘Others’

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Abstract: *This is an autobiographical paper which intends to explore my ‘Self’ and my relationship with ‘Other’ in the continually changing world. It is presented in two parts. The first part is comprised of some discriminatory norms which I have identified in my lived experience from the very childhood. These norms are usually unwritten, but embedded in rituals, cultural traditions and discourse. I have tried to define my perception of ‘Other’ with respect to the agents of these norms in my life journey. I have always been in suspicion with such agents as they usually create pressure, put someone on the margin, and try to deprive one of exercising one’s agency. Interestingly, I observe that my relationship with ‘Other’ is not also static. My emotional reaction associated in the journey of perceiving ‘Others’ has also been changing with time. The second part of the paper tried to explore these interactions in my professional life with a client of mine in my counseling chamber who came to seek professional help and whom I perceived as an agent of the discriminating dominant discourse. I have tried to explore how I suffered from a role conflict; a split between ‘me’ and ‘the counselor in me’ and how I could slowly resolve the split and enrich my insight both as a human being and as a professional.*

Keywords: Relational-Self, Dominant Discourse, Stories, Subjectivity, Otherness, Alienation, ‘Us vs Them’, Patriarchy, Stereotypes, preferred identity.

The unwritten norms

On an occasion of writing something on ‘self and lifeworld’, I started focusing on myself. When I observe myself, I observe the path I have followed; watch the map of the landscape I have explored; the time space I revolved around with family, friends and significant others; co-travellers I met in my journey. The journey starts when I am born. The path is not always smooth. At times it is rough, I stumble; sometimes it is rugged, I fall down; sometimes it is beautiful, I enjoy. When I look back, I find many

things other than humans. There are other creatures, objects and articles, different norms, beliefs, values, dominant habits of the family and society, different discourses and many more. There are many stories. Those are my stories. Those stories of my life encompass varieties of entities. In the journey, with every appearance of new visual a new story begins. These observations are exclusively subjective. My observations are limited to the extent of my own relatedness; my own emotions and all that matter to me. And it really matters how I am related with the observed. How do we develop such a relationship? Is the self-relational? Is it always a happy experience or it involves pain/distress too? In this context I started thinking of 'Others'.

What does the term 'Other' signify to me? Is it what I find dissimilar with respect to my 'self'? I may have certain mental picture to depict me, certain notion of myself. I love to see myself in a particular way; my preferred way. I have my own likings, disliking, fascination for something, may be aversion to something, some beliefs, some values— all these define my comfort zone. If I am forced to behave opposite to the way I define myself, I immediately react by saying like *Chitrangada*”,
 "সেআমি যে আমি নই আমি নই"(Sheyami je aminoi, aminoi)! (taken from the dance drama *Chitrangada* of Rabindranath Tagore which means 'It's not me, not my right depiction'. In order to impress Arjuna *Chitrangada* prayed to God Cupid who transformed her to a physically good-looking woman. Here she perceived that portrayal of herself as something which is alien to her own identity. It seems that as if I am observing a piece of 'Other' in myself.

Is there a set of rules in the society which try to control my 'self'? These rules may be unwritten but embedded in the structure; enmeshed in the rituals and discourses; hidden in the daily practices?

It is neither a configuration, nor a form, but a group of rules that are immanent in a practice, and define it in its specificity (Foucault 1972: 46)

I have been watching these rules since long time while travelling along the path of my life journey. I have come to the conclusion that I cannot second Sukumar Ray when he says that ("এই দুনিয়ায় সকল ভাল", "কিন্তু সবার চাইতে ভাল পাঁউরুটি আর ঝোলাগুড়") 'everything is nice in this world'. Sukumar Ray who is one of the greatest humour writers in the world, concluded that everything is nice; be it real or imitation; cheap or expensive; you or me... But the best of all the things is

a loaf of bread served with runny jaggery. It has been a very favourite childhood poem of mine and none the less the meal, which I cherish at this age too.

But here I am talking about the discriminatory attitudes or rules or dominant discourses which put someone in the margin of the society on the basis of some defined attributes. The definition comes from the society itself. It may be on the basis of gender, race, religion, economic status, disability, mental illness! In the process of marginalisation the person who does not fit into the rule sometimes becomes 'Others'; sometimes 'Alienated'; 'Helpless'; distressed and 'Oppressed' may be.

I spent days in the foothills of Himalaya surrounded by forest and river in the first seven years of my life. Nights were lit with kerosene lanterns in that part of my life. Down memory lane I find so many things which immerse me in deep comfort and happiness. It was the 'sound of silence' of the jungle; the excitement of waiting in the wooden veranda every day to witness the small blue toy train going to Darjeeling; my playmate little sweet pet dog Jerry; memory of watching 'The Sound of Music' in a Darjeeling show house, playfully learning in the kingdom of nature with my mother. The story of breaking of innocence probably started when we left that place as my father got transferred to southern part of West Bengal.

While growing up, I gradually understood that most of the people in our society put a special weight on boys. This special emphasis gets reflected in everyday life; in linguistic connotations; in rituals; in cultural practices. It was the beginning of seventies. I came to realise that when a baby is born people generally become happier if it's a boy. Boys are compared with gold or diamond, which are precious and expensive metals. There is a Bengali saying which says "সোনার আঁঙুটি আবার বাঁকা না সোজা" (sonar angti abar soja na banka)! It means that a golden ring is always perfect and precious even if it is broken or has a bad shape. This saying actually indicates that boys are always precious and faultless as the material they are made of is gold.

To me, Essentialism encourages reductionism, a crude form of stereotyping and over-generalisation. I used to wonder, is it a world of males actually? They are the first-class citizen of the world and other things come in relation to them?

She is not regarded as autonomous being (Simone de Beauvoir 1948: 26)

I was a student of a school which was meant for girls only. There were frequent regrets from my friends. ‘Ohh! Why am I born as a girl? Boys are so privileged! Starting from a big piece of fish to juicy portion of a mango — all travel towards their dishes! This is the rule.’ It was a shock for me. Being their only child, I never faced such discrimination from my parents. I used to feel guilty for being so fortunate! At the same time, I could remember a joke of my uncle! He used to say ‘ I really don’t know how much amount we have to spend as a ‘ferry-charge’ for you to get you across the river of marriage! You are so dark! But there is a hope too. You are glamorous’. When I was very small (in preschool) I could only understand that there was something insulting in the sentence. I used to complain my mother about it saying ‘he is calling me glamour!’ My mother assured me that it was a joke and advised me to ignore it! As I grew up, I tried to answer back and my enquiry was always on the line of questioning the norms.

‘What is wrong in being black?’

‘Is the colour black considered to be shameful? Why?’

‘Why marriage of a girl is the responsibility of elders?’

‘Is it mandatory to get married?’

‘Why we always say the act of marriage as ‘being’ in case of girls and as an act of ‘doing’ in case of boys?’

The person who is supposed to answer all these questions (generally an elder) used to declare ‘end of session’ by taking privilege of his/her age after giving me a scolding.

Friends used to narrate their stories. It has been a common practice that girls take care of household works. The roles are defined! Her elder brother is never assigned with such responsibilities! She doesn’t get time to study where her brother can. In many families I observed that objective of educating a girl child is to make her more presentable in the market of marriage! I used to get very angry and annoyed against such practices.

‘Have you just realised how free they are?’

‘Rules and restrictions are only for us, not for them!’

‘Don’t do that! Hey! Don’t sit like that! That is not the gentle way for girls to sit! Don’t dress yourself in such way! Don’t laugh like that!’

There are so many unwritten norms for girls! A mentality of 'Us vs Them' was automatically being created without our conscious effort.

On the other hand, if a boy behaves in a different way which is contrary to the defined dominant role of a male, there was immediate sarcasm towards the boy.

'Why are you behaving like a girl? Boys do not cry! You are a boy! You have to be brave!'

In this context, I remember a short story of Tagore. It is 'Ginni', which means mistress of the house. It is a story of a boy Ashu who was a shy and introvert student of a primary school. Sibnath Babu, the teacher-in-charge of that school was famous for naming his students with innovative sarcasm. It was scarier than physical assault for the victims. An example of such name was "ভেটকি" (Vetki) which was the name of a fish with wrinkled blunt face. Ashu had a younger sister who was very dear to Ashu. They used to spend time together playing happily. The climax of the story was naming Ashu 'Ginni' in front of his class after witnessing Ashu to play with her sister. It was an auspicious occasion of marriage of her doll and Ashu was actively involved in the play. Sibnath Babu was an accidental witness of the play. The new identity of Ashu as 'Ginni' along with the overt expression of bullying by his friends shattered Ashu. Tagore expressed in the last line of the short story that Ashu perceived playing with her younger sister as the most shameful mistake of his life which was irreparable.

I could remember one of my relative's cautions about crying! She always warned me when I cried!

'Don't cry my dear! You are born as a girl! You have to endure so many things in life!' Now I realise that the warnings meant that the act of crying has come to a girl by default and at the same time power of endurance should be there in a girl by default too!

Roles are defined; societal norms try to make you destined to behave in a particular fashion! I found a tendency growing within me to question any stereotypical norm or practice. In the time I am talking about it was not a common practice for the girls to work outside. Most of our mothers were house makers. I was a naturally talkative girl and used to argue frequently with elders on such issues. Questions always flooded into my mind before accepting a norm which had a discriminating connotation involving gender, race, colour or religion. My journey from school to college and college to university were full of such questions and arguments. Gradually I came to understand what patriarchy is and how people are engraved with patriarchal

values. I was a bit too privileged. I enjoyed freedom more than many of my friends. It was overwhelming to go to a different city on account of taking education! It was thrilling to travel and discover the outer world alone! My parents never stopped me to do anything I liked! But there were many agents of patriarchy who raised their eyebrows! The argumentative self of mine declared a war silently against the warrior of patriarchy who disapproved freedom of girls to conquer their own fate!

নারীকে আপন ভাগ্য জয় করিবার
 কেন নাই দিবে অধিকার হে বিধাতা?
 নত করি মাথা পথ প্রান্তে কেন রব জাগি
 ক্লান্ত ধৈর্য প্রত্যাশার পূরণের লাগি দৈবাগত দিনে।

NAREEKE AAPAN BHAGHYA JOY KARIBAR
 KENO NAHI DIBE ADHIKARI
 HE BIDHATA?
 NATO KARI MAITHA
 PATHAPRANTE PNEO RABO GAJI
 KGLANTA DHYRAJA PRATYASHAR WPURANER LAGI
 DAIBAGATO DINE

[‘Ohh God! Why haven’t you provided women the right to exercise her agency to conquer her own fortune? Why do I have to awake with my exhausted and tired soul for something which only can happen by miraculous intervention of God?’ “SABALA” by Rabindranath Tagore (free translation)]

But I was enjoying my freedom! I can remember we friends were experiencing happy trips in mountains and forests! There were resistances from many others! “Are you travelling alone?” This ‘alone’ means without male escorts!

‘Oh! What a joke! How four persons become alone?’ – We were in bubbling laughter!

আরে তুমি কি মালিক না রাজা?
কে দেয় সাজা মুক্ত স্বাধীন সত্য কেরে?
হা হা হা পায় যে হাসি !

[‘Are you my master or a king?’
‘Who can punish a liberated and free sole?’
‘Ha haha! It is ridiculous’
-Najrul Islam (free translation)]

I found a change in myself from an angry annoyed argumentative one to a confident freedom loving entity. I identified freedom as my utmost priority. I felt that I love celebration of life. It comes from the feeling of being connected with others; with friends; co travelers; with people and creatures of the world; with nature & the bigger universe. It’s like the happiness of a bird learning to fly for the first time! I could remember the books like ‘Jonathan Livingston Seagull’ and ‘why I am in an atheist’ by Bhagat Sing.

But ‘She is defined and differentiated in relation to man, while he is not in relation to her; she is the inessential in front of the essential. He is the subject; he is the absolute — she is the other’ (Simon De Beauvoir: 1948: 26).

There were representatives and agents of those unacceptable discriminating norms. I also find them hidden in words, languages, proverbs even games children play in our day to day life. Those connotations are apparently benign but I find them help to strengthen the structure of this system. These tools are not only used by people who try to control others but these are often found in the vocabulary of people who are being controlled. They use them knowingly and unknowingly both and become agents of the discrediting system. They held the system and help it to exist.

An example of such a common popular game can illustrate it more clearly. Many of us have participated in the game specially girls.

It is a poem we used to play it in a group. we gather in a group and used to say in melody...

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এলাটিং বেলাটিং সইল
 কিসের খবর আইলো
 রাজামশাই একটি বালিকা চাইল
 কোন বালিকা চাইল
 এই বালিকা চাইল

Elating belastingsai lo
 Kisherkhaborailo
 Raja mahashayeektibalikachailo
 Kon balikachailo
 Eibalikachailo.

[It talks about the arrival of an announcement. It goes like this-

‘Hello lady maids’

‘Listen!’

‘What is it about?’

‘The king has asked for a girl.’

‘Who is the girl in demand?’

‘She is the girl in demand.’

[News arrives. King wants a girl. The girl in demand gets the garland. The girl is a passive agent. She doesn’t have any power to select; to exercise her agency; she will only be obliged to get the garland.]

‘লজ্জা যে নারীর ভূষণ।’

Another saying goes that ‘shyness is the glory of a woman.’

In every society introduction of discourse is at once controlled changed organised and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures whose role is to avert its powers and its dangers, to cope with chance events, to evade its ponderous, awesome materiality (Foucault 1972: 216).

Tagore's *Chitrangada* may be a strong depiction of a woman's self-respect. In the last song of the dance drama she is saying that she is neither a goddess nor an ordinary woman. She cannot accept her to be ignored and at the same time to be worshipped. She proposes Arjun that if he keeps her by his side at the time of both prosperity and critical situation as well, he will be able to know her.

But what I felt from my experience that the position of the second-class citizen has been prefixed on the basis of gender.

Gradually I was observing the conventional market of marriage; how it values a girl. Yes! I found it as a market. It was in the early eighty's when we were in college. The bride's party comes to choose a bride; asks questions. Questions were like — what are her abilities and disabilities; what extra qualifications she has; how good she is in music etc. There is sometimes open discussion about dowry; sometimes it is put in such a manner as if they are usual; a part of rules. I could remember that one of my elder warned me that if you do not bring enough wealth from your father it is shameful for you.

In this context I remember a story. It was about the marriage of a girl of my hostel. She was from a well-established family. The list of articles in the dowry couldn't make any problem in the negotiation. The only problem she had was her would be in-laws wouldn't allow her to be dressed in night gown. Dressing in a night gown was the only symbol of freedom to her. It was making me angry. I asked her 'how do you accept the very practice; the way of negotiation; the dowry?'

I realised that she could not understand my question. Parents are the guardians; they do what they think is best for us! I was getting annoyed!

'But you see they are demanding so many things for the marriage! The list involves certain amount of gold, fashionable couch, chest of drawers, dressing table, fridge, washing machines and many more!'

'Let elders handle it. My parents will gift me all those things unconditionally.'
An answer came back.

I was confused. Who is speaking? Is it the pride of wealth?

I am going to quote Sartre.

The one who practices bad faith is hiding a displeasing truth or presenting as truth a pleasing untruth. Bad faith then has in appearance the structure of falsehood. Only what changes

everything is the fact that in bad faith it is from myself that I am
hiding the truth. (J e a n
Paul Sartre 1966: 49)

Is she in 'bad faith'? Is she finding it too anxiety provoking to exercise her agency by making a protest? At the same time, I cannot place 'bad faith' and 'good faith' in polar opposites.

Can it be a case of ignorance? May be, she never thought about the complex dynamics embedded in those norms! I perceive it as a joint leadership of discrimination and power!

Mystification is one of the forms of oppression; ignorance is a situation in which man may be enclosed as narrowly as in a prison.(Simon De Beauvoir 1948: 98)

She has been brought up as per the definition of a 'gentle' girl. It has been a pre-defined category made by patriarchy. She is obedient and adjusted herself to fit in that definition. She did not learn to argue with the elders. She did not learn to say 'No'! She did not even learn to express herself or maybe she never thought of what she liked! Girls are born to please other; sacrifice for others. She has learnt to recognise the voice of patriarchy as her own voice.

'when women feel excluded from direct participation in society, they see themselves as subject in a consensus or judgement made and enforced by the men on whose protection and support, they depend and by whose names they are known.' (Gilligan 1982: 67).

'পরের খুশি দিয়ে সে যে
তৈরি হল ঘাষে মেজে,
আপনাকে তাই খুঁজে বেড়ায় নিত্য আপন-হারা।'

'Parerkhushidiye she je
Tairihologhashemeje
Aapnare tai khunjeberayenityaaapan-hara'
—*Beshur* by Tabindranath Tagore

[She has only learnt to please others

She has made herself ready to align with the practice
And so she continuously misses her own sole'
(Free translation)]

The psychologists can conclude that she has internalised the norms; has conformed to the societal expectation. Conformity can come to express the mentality to go align with the dominant group; it can also indicate a desire to be socially acceptable; to 'fit in' the norms to avoid confrontation; it can simply know it to be correct in the social context.

In my lived experience I have found such many examples. There are examples of people who have accepted this role happily. I have observed that sometimes people do it unknowingly. People are also found in dilemma of happiness and unhappiness; may be in a split!

People are also victimised! We know how Kadambini of Rabindranath Tagore in 'Jibito O mrito' had to give her life to prove that she was not dead! Sharadashankar was a zamindar. Kadambini was a neglected widow in Sharadashankar's family. She was very much fond of Sharadashankar's youngest son whom she brought up and nurtured with her maternal love as the biological mother of the child was sick after giving birth of the child. She was a marginalised person in the family and people were mostly indifferent when her sudden and supposed death took place in an evening. To avoid any trouble from the police four Brahmin employees of the zamindar quickly carried off the body to the burning ghat. She was not dead anyway. Her heartbeat stopped due to some unknown reason. It was a rainy day. The four Brahmins were playing cards. They suddenly realised that there was no dead body. When she regained consciousness, she left the place but imagined herself to be dead. The irony lied there; when she realised and convinced that she was alive the Sharadashankar's family thought her to be a ghost. She committed suicide and the last line of the story goes like this...' Kadambini had to die to prove that she was alive.' The story may be a satire directed at the blind superstitions and notions of ritual purity nurtured by the orthodox Hindus. But I remember the story in today's context when I find the society's dominant view of rape and how it points the finger towards the victim and make her the 'Other'. I could remember the movie 'Adalat O ektimeye' by Tapan Sinha. We have seen 'Me too' movement very recently. There are many examples of 'Jibito O mrito' girls whom the society prefers to be dead and continuously throw subtle and overt feelings of discrimination towards them!

When I was in college, I was not accustomed in theoretical interpretations of such concepts. I had no idea of the concept 'Other'. Now I observe myself as a person who was an 'OTHER' to patriarchy. Even today if I find an agent of patriarchy my antenna immediately steepens. Interestingly my relationship with the 'OTHER' (as if, considering them to be 'OTHER' of mine) has also been changing. In my childhood I had a tendency to identify the person as 'the agent' and getting annoyed with that very person strongly. Gradually in my life journey I have realised that the feeling towards such people has also been changing. I have learnt to resolve my anger with humour; singing a song often became my solace; placing my frustration in falling leaves of autumn; the mountain, the river, the vermilion red of flowers helped me to hold my pain! I have learnt about how people protest collectively; I have seen people are getting involved in various movements discovering the beauty of individuality! I got drenched in the feeling of solidarity. My journey involved a process of continuous construction and deconstruction of myself and others. I love to work in the field of mental health. Here I also felt there is no final or ultimate definition or core self! It is relational; keeps changing.

An agent of patriarchy in my counseling chamber?

I am going to include story of a person who came to my chamber asking counseling help. I also like to include how I perceived him as an 'agent' of Patriarchy and how I resolved the issue of dilemma within me as a counselor.

He was a middle-aged person who holds a high post in a corporate office. One day I got a phone call from Mr. P (let me call him Mr. P). He told me over phone that he had to see me because of a very ordinary cause; it was his anger. He said ' I do not have any serious problem except that I am getting angry! It seems that I have to go! So, I decide to go.'

After missing two dates he came to my chamber.

He said ' When I get angry, I absolutely become out of myself; I become a demon!'

In our conversation we were exploring the questions like 'how the demon looks like', 'how it behaves', 'the situations when the demon comes', 'how it influences the situations' 'what are the effects of its influence', 'how does it affect him and his relationship with closed ones' and many more.

As he narrated, we could observe that the demon visits his home as well as his office! He was talking about some incidences. Let me first narrate an

incidence which occurred in his home. There are four members in his family. He has his wife, one son and one daughter. His wife is a government employee. His father stays in a nearby flat. The flat being in the same locality Mr. P finds it easier to take care of his old father. In one Sunday, his father came to his house in a day out. It is a common practice of the house that Mr. P gives instruction about each and everything of the household activities; about the menu; how those are to be cooked; every tidbit. He also informed that other members of his family are afraid of him and his temper. The incident of that day was a little bit different! One of the menus was cooked in a little different way as he directed; he referred it as 'which hardly mattered' but he became furious about it. The demon came; overturned the dining table and crushed everything. After his violent reaction no one could take any food; he did not talk with anyone; he went to the office in the next day without taking any food.

In the office environment he cannot accept any mistake of his juniors. He informed that they did not know how to make a proper power point presentation. He told me that he knew himself as a perfectionist although he was also well versed of the fact that nothing is perfect in this world.

We were trying to explore the effects of the workmanship of the demon in his life; across his life line.

I find it very important to inform that I haven't taken any permission of the person to share his stories here. I was in a dilemma whether to ask him or not. Ultimately, I decided not to inform him as I thought it could hamper the therapeutic relationship. I haven't mentioned his name; changed other allied facts; the stories of his life I mentioned were not at all uncommon in a society like ours.

We were exploring the things that were coming up –

He was a proud man and which was continuously being published in his language.

He was also proud of the fact that he was a self-made man and his body language was speaking about his love for power.

He was talking about himself; how he was helpful to his juniors – a sense of disregard and slight was coming out about the persons whom he helped!

He considered himself as a generous person! He helped poor people with money but never want the money back!

In this context, he was talking about a poor old lady who ran a small shop in his locality. She had taken some money from him as a debt and informed Mr. P that she would like to give the money back! He made a taunting comment with a mocking smile ‘I know you are not going to return the money back! Why do you say?’

He was talking about his wife. He labelled her as an average woman. He said ‘although she is a working woman, she is mediocre’

He also added that he gave them time; he said ‘no one will be able to say that I do not give them time! They purchase whatever they needed.’

He considered himself to be a very cultured person and he was the only intellectual person in the family.

His expressions were full of arrogance and stories were full of proud haughty power revelation and manifestation of patriarchal values.

Suddenly I realized that I was labeling him as an ‘agent of patriarchy’! It was the fly on the wall who informed me.

‘Am I losing my friendly curiosity?’ – I thought.

‘Am I a split between ‘the counselor in me’ and ‘the person who raises her eyebrows to visit anyone who makes people marginalized and tries to control ‘OTHERS’?’

‘Am I observing an ‘OTHER’ in me too?’

All of a sudden, a peculiar feeling came in my mind! Being a controlling, power loving masculine and abusive Patriarch might be no less vulnerable & threatened than the person who is marginalized in the system! A person who has learnt to control ‘OTHERS’; tries to put a person in the margin who doesn’t align to the dominant norms or norms set by him; he is also helpless in the system. It is easier for a marginalized person to understand the oppression; her/his helplessness; the distress he/she receives from the system!

But a patriarch who is successful, proud of fame, money & power never understands that his distress too may come from the dominant definition of success! The dominant discourse which the person may have taken it as the final one can be self-devouring too! I remember a sentence ‘Capitalism is self-destructing’! Patriarchy is a very welcoming tool of capitalism then!

I got back my friendly curiosity towards the client.

We started exploring again! Interestingly we reached to some points.

He cannot take any criticism from anyone.

He is the master of his kingdom.

He loves to control everyone in his kingdom as he is the decision maker. It has been very natural to him.

He is successful; earned enough money and he thinks he has fulfilled the need of his family but never asked them what they want!

Although he knows that nothing is perfect, he expects others to perform in 100 percent perfection!

He suffers from a continuous performance anxiety whether he will be able to maintain his position!

The demon makes him to do things in such a way that he becomes a completely different person altogether! As he expressed 'as if I am not me'! The person gets bisected and doesn't understand why he was being split! The demon makes himself 'Other' to himself. He also observes a piece of 'Other' in him. It makes a devastating effect in his immediate environment; in the family as well as in his office. The persons with whom he misbehaves and becomes rude never accept him with spontaneity. It makes him disturbed as he fails to repair the relationship!

He feels alone in his kingdom. He has no friend. It was not his preferred identity too!

I found a sad lonely person came out of that proud, arrogant and controlling Mr. P.

He started talking about his love for power to control others. He compared this urge as addictive (he said 'it is like a 'ନେନା' (intoxicating drug)). He uttered ' I don't know how I should express! It's like a drug! It's very difficult to come out of its effect'.

if the oppressor were aware of the demands of his own freedom, he himself should have to denounce oppression. He is dishonest; in the name of the serious or of his passions,

of his will for power all of his appetites, he refuses to give up his privileges. (Simon De Beauvoir 1948: 96).

I understood that he was responding! There were many words which came up from our conversation. Among those the most important was 'King'. It was a very symbolic connotation. We started exploring what the king might have in his hand except a whip! A very popular song came up which was composed by Satyajit Ray in his film 'GupiGayenBaghaBayen' it was 'এক যে ছিল রাজা তার ভারি দুখ' Ek je chilo raja Tar bharidukh. It was a fantastic story of two villagers who were gifted by the king of ghosts to become singers. It was their dream and, in this film, they went to a country Shundi where their adventure began! The adventure included freeing a king; stopping a war; banishing aggression and reuniting two brothers.

The song goes like this: There was a king who had a lot of sadness. He cries; he is helpless! It is not only the absence of wealth which makes one sad! A person having lots of gold in his store house can be unhappy too! Actually, he is anxious of dacoits! By punishing others how will he get comfort? He is nothing but a prisoner in the palace! If he can abandon himself from the palace and can take fresh air in a meadow, probably he can get peace!

To will oneself free is also to will others free. This 'will' is not an abstract formula. It points out each person concrete action to be achieved. (Simon De Beauvoir 1948: 73)

I was thinking that many problems can be solved if a king can throw out his urge to power and control! If we cannot respect the freedom of others how can we really experience freedom?

Mr. P. told me that he was very fond of Tagore! The reference of Tagore was coming up again and again. He started talking about many small things which were close to his heart! He talked about a local train journey, watching sky full of stars. He talked about his mother, his childhood, persons of his liking, what he learnt from them, his hopes, his commitments, his dreams and he was moving towards his preferred identity!

Some questions are coming in my mind. Is the demon as an agent of aggression, anger, oppression and power hidden in the discriminatory patriarchal system represented and manifested itself by dominant discourse? Is it the very thing which gets spread in our family relationship; in our workplace; between you and me? Is it the reason of the violence we are experiencing currently? Is it the intoxicating effect of urge for power and to control others which is responsible for all these? Is it the same demon

that is interfering in the borders of two countries; between races; among genders; in skin colors; in religious practices? Is the contemporary politics is pampering the concept of 'OTHERS' to prevail the demon in our mind?

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