Angie Danyluk
Alberta, Canada

SCIENTIFIC ATTITUDES TOWARDS AN EASTERN MYSTIC

Sri Ramakrishna, a nineteenth century Hindu mystic, long a subject of considerable interest for Western theorists, may be categorized as a "crazy saint" (Feuerstein 1990), along with many other figures, such as Joan of Arc, St. Francis of Assisi, Mahaprabhur and Sri Caitanya, to name only a few. Mystics such as these, and their unusual behaviour, have been known to be surrounded by substantial controversy in every cultural, political, social, and religious context throughout the world.

It is of considerable interest then, to analyze and evaluate the influence of Hindu mysticism, through the person of such a well-known figure as Ramakrishna, and its relationship to Western theories, such as those put forth by psychoanalysis. Also, I will make note of the dialectical relationship of the categorizations of the East as Magical and Traditional and the Western notions of Science and Rationality, and how the discursive and highly subjective nature of these categorizations impact upon cross-cultural studies. To facilitate this position, and provide a basis for my comparison, I will discuss the theories of Kakar (1985), Kurtz (1992), Olsen (1990), Sil (1991), Nikhilananda (1942), McDaniel (1989), and Feuerstein (1990), among others.

Also, I will discuss the implications of the term "crazy saint" (Feuerstein 1990), and how such a categorization is relevant to the discussion of cultural relativity in the context of the above mentioned constructs of the "magical" East, and the "rational" West. Therefore, although such "holy madness" (McDaniel 1989) is by no means a phenomena limited exclusively to the East, the theoretical categorizations used to define and study these intriguing figures are primarily Western in orientation.

Additionally, the categorization "crazy saint" itself deserves greater scrutiny, and as a parallel concern, I will also explore the multiple meanings and associations assigned to the word "crazy" in the

Hindu religion, and how these meanings create confusion and conflict in the context of Western psychoanalytic theory.

Contemporary Theories

Culturally relevant theories in psychoanalysis represent an ever-increasing awareness of cultural, religious, and societal differences, as well as a developing awareness of the Western bias inherent in the theory itself. This awareness can be seen to become progressively more imperative in the application of psychoanalysis across cultures, and this recognition of cultural relativism, and indeed its influence, will be the topic discussed in the following sections.

Psychoanalysis in the 1980's and 90's has become more aware of the importance of cultural relativity, and more critical of analysis that is not in accordance with this theme. One of the most vocal proponents of cultural sensitivity has been Sudhir Kakar. He states that many of the so-called scientific explanations of psychoanalysis are actually "fused" with cultural assumptions and attitudes (Kakar 1985: 442). According to Kakar, inherent cultural attitudes and assumptions have often been ignored or gone undetected in many areas of research, as well as theories themselves.

Kakar has also traced the development of cultural relativity coupled with psychoanalytic theories as applied to non-Western cultures. While he does note that the idea of a culturally relative psychoanalysis was indeed germinating in the 1950's, he also is critical of the common manner in which cultural relativity was made manifest. In the course of its development, psychoanalysis became one of the foremost proponents of the "psychic unity" position, the underlying notion that all manner of peoples were linked psychologically. In addition to this, one of the primary concerns during its development was in "... protecting and gathering evidence in support of its key concepts..." (Kakar 1985:441). Non-Western cultures were often simply another "area" in which to validate psychoanalysis.

The idea that non-Western cultures, through their differences - including their world-views, family and social structures – could enrich and benefit psychoanalytic concepts and models was not

considered. There is no evidence of a cross-cultural dialectic during that period. The works of Fromm (1950) and Boss (1965) clearly exhibit indifference to non-Western models; in the case of Boss, it is clear he was indeed striving to validate the effectiveness of his analytic concepts and models, such as the "similar psychological nature of all humankind" (Boss 1965:49) and the cross-cultural effectiveness of psychoanalysis, giving only a little regard to the philosophical and educational models present within the Indian culture.

With Boss and Fromm, it was apparent that middle-class members of Western societies were the "standard" by which all other societies and cultures were compared. Kakar states that this was the "yardstick" to evaluate "....the neurotic deviations of people growing up in non-Western cultures" (Kakar 1985:442). As well, when non-Western cultures were compared to the West, the distinction between the "healthy" and the "neurotic" predictably classed the former on "....the neurotic end of the spectrum while their soul-doctors, the shamans, were evaluated as frankly psychotic" (Kakar 1985:441). Such conclusions were the result of theories and methods of analysis that were grounded within Western society and culture.

> In spite of his wide-ranging cultural interests, Freud was generally indifferent to all that lay outside the Western and intellectual and artistic tradition (Kakar 1985:441 see also Kurtz 1992:180, 182).

With the very roots of the psychoanalytic tradition solidly grounded in the West, it is hardly surprising that there have been difficulties in cross-cultural research of any kind. No matter how aware of societal and cultural differences an analyst in this field was, or aspired to be, his or her hands were inevitably tied due to constraints within the theory itself. The next section of this essay will continue to discuss the growing recognition and importance accorded to cultural differences in psychoanalysis in the 1980's and 90's, as well as illustrate how this growing body of thought reflects upon the figure of Ramakrishna.

Anthropologists, long proponents of the notion of cultural relativity, have argued that psychoanalysis, as a Western theory, is based on particular norms and values"... in a particular moment of

European and American theory" (Kurtz 1992: 246). Since the non-Western cultures do not measure up to Kakar's "yardstick" of the West, they are soon relegated conceptually to positions of cultures somehow inferior to the West.

Thus, the idea of culture has been less than influential in the development of psychoanalysis until recent times. In classic psychoanalytic theory, "culture" is considered to be a type of "surface" or "superficial" phenomenon; that is, it"... enters the psyche at a relatively late stage of development..." (Kakar 1985 : 444), and is not regarded by many psychoanalytic theories to be a fundamental and influential aspect of the psychic life of the individual.

Presupposing that psychoanalytic theory contains unspoken cultural assumptions (Kurtz 1992: 182) from the West, the analysts themselves are therefore culturally biased from the actual utilization of these theories,"... which directs the analyst's perceptions and actions in the analytic situation...". As a result such theories"... cannot be held to be universally valid in all cultures..." (Kakar 1985: 445). While cultural bias is indeed implicit in most cases and circumstances, it is not neutral. If formulations, such as sense of self, identity, and society - "the cultural backdrop", so to speak, are not commonly held between both patient and analyst, they begin to be"... an active intruder into the analytical process" (Kakar 1985: 445). Subsequent interpretations made by the analysts in such situations can be more damaging than beneficial.

At present, it is a common, although by no means unanimous, viewpoint that when early psychoanalytic theory was applied cross-culturally, the implicit cultural assumptions that constituted social reality were ignored. These ideas should, in Kurtz's words, be allowed to surface, as"... the alternative is, and has been, an inappropriate and distorting imposition of cultural assumptions" (Kurtz 1992 : 180). If psychoanalysis is to be re-worked to become better suited to non-Western cultures, then these assumptions need to be addressed, for they create "social reality", and in turn govern an individual's socialization. Kurtz astutely recognizes that any psychological conflicts experienced by an individual are shaped and patterned according to these underlying assumptions and patterns of belief. Culturally constructed notions of self and reality are highly

relevant in the reformulation of psychoanalysis to explain and understand non-Western cultures more accurately. Indeed, such views have the potential to alter drastically the light in which certain Indian figures, such as Ramakrishna, are evaluated and interpreted by psychoanalysis.

In his study of Ramakrishna, Olsen (1990) is sensitive to and incorporates many of the foregoing considerations. Even though much of Olsen's study of Ramakrishna is purely analytic and evaluatory, he does state clearly however, that there is still the possibility (and the danger) of categorical diagnostic reductionism, and that analysts should take care to remember that there is a long history of "holy madness" in Hinduism. Essentially, figures such as Ramakrishna, even in the process of analysis should be regarded and taken" ... very seriously as a religious figure of consequence" (Olsen 1990 : 50). By doing so, the analyst would not dismiss the underlying assumptions of Indian culture.

> Even if one assumes on the bases of numerous examples given that Ramakrishna was insane, his madness must still be placed within a Hindu religious context in order for it to make any sense (Olsen 1990 : 49).

Thus, by studying Ramakrishna as a Hindu religious figure, Olsen also effectively re-positions the "yardstick", from Western culture to that of the East. Olsen's comments mark a radical departure from many of the analytic conclusions in the past, even the case examples by Boss and Fromm presented earlier. While Ramakrishna may be categorized by Western rational-scientific theories as psychotic or pathological, it cannot be ignored that his behaviours and thoughts also *" ... had a cultural meaning because they were expressed in an accepted religious idiom and common cultural symbol"* (italics mine) (Olsen 1990 : 119). Evaluations, subsequently, should not attempt to remove him from his original context for the purposes of psychoanalytic inquiry (Olsen 1990 : 87). Rather, analysts should seek and attempt to reformulate their methods and theories in order to better serve this purpose.[1]

1. Kurtz also brings to the fore one of the Possibilities that a psychoanalytic technique adapted to a non-Western culture may accomplish. By reshaping analytic models in favour of the indigenous society,
...it is possible to acknowledge and interpret indigenous notions of the normal and the pathological, for example, the Hindu distinction between ordinary madness and divine madness (Kurtz 1992: 186).

Kakar has stated that in the course of its development and its exposure to non-Western societies, psychoanalysis did not wish to partake of" ... mutual learning and a collaborative inquiry into human existence" (Kakar 1985 : 441) with other cultures. The application of a cultural dimension into the psychoanalytic process cannot but be beneficial and educational to both patient and analysts alike. This view however, is not held or adhered to all-inclusively.

Cross-cultural research and methods remain variable. Narasingha Sil, in recent (1991) analysis of Ramakrishna, retains a perspective that is not at all similar to many of his contemporaries, especially the analysts discussed above. Sil begins his analysis of the Bengali saint by stating he is a "holy fool"-namely, that Ramakrishna occupied a position somewhere between the categories of sainthood and insanity. The intent of his work, while it does not differ greatly from Olsen's own analysis and psychoanalytic interpretations of the actions and motivations of Ramakrishna, does, however, differ in the over-all perception of the Bengali saint.

Sil's own opinion of Eastern mystics becomes apparent, when he states that he finds the fascination and mystery frequently associated with them as" ... frankly obscene" (Sil 1991 : 5). Further, Sil also acknowledges mystic experiences, at least to an extent, even though he labels the nature of such experiences as somewhat "primitive" (Sil 1991 : 20). As well, mystical experiences carry the individual to a new and

> ... undifferentiated state of consciousness, to the most archaic levels of religious feeling. A mystic thus defies the mythic and ritualistic frames of reference of organized and formal religion (Sil 1991 : 21).

Clearly then, it is apparent that Sil's perception of mysticism is at best tolerant and skeptical. As a result, while one would expect Sil's interpretation of Ramakrishna to be aligned with the likes of Kakar and Olsen, it has more in common with the work of Oman, written over 80 years previously.

One of the major points Sil expounds is the manner in which Ramakrishna "manipulated" his followers. The Bengali saint, according to Sil's research, consciously indoctrinated admirers to believe that

he was indeed an incarnation of God by making" . . . his speeches dramatic, esoteric, even obscure, and yet at the same time appear naive but sincere" (Sil 1991 : 68). Even Ramakrishna's belief in God as"... a tangible being which could be seen, touched, and talked to" (Sil 1991 : 68) fit very well with the idea he was trying to convince his followers of – that he was a living incarnation of God.

Many of Ramakrishna's disciples had beeen known to compare him to the likes of another famous Bengali saint of the fifteenth century, Caitanya. Sil states that such parallels were"... so because Ramakrishna consciously imitated the reported behaviours of his illustrious predecessor" (Sil 1991 : 84). According to Sil, the divine madness said to have been experienced by Ramakrishna had a source from none other than Ramakrishna himself.

The above examples of Sil's interpretation of Ramakrishna, albeit brief, illustrate his less than positive opinion. It is also apparent from his work that, unlike Olsen's analysis, little or no attention was paid to Ramakrishna's culture. Sil analyzes Ramakrishna with a method that is purely Western in orientation, a method that has not been accommodating of non-Western cultures and belief systems. In the decades of the 1980's and 90's, with its great emphasis on cultural awareness, Sil appears to be somewhat of a "throwback" to earlier generations of psychoanalytic theory.

Kakar is perhaps the most vocal and explicit of analysts discussed in this essay on the importance of relativising psychoanalytic concepts.

> Psychoanalysis... cannot overthrow the fundamental cultural propositions about the nature of man, human experience and the fulfilled human life (Kakar 1985 : 447).

Similar to Olsen and Kakar, Kurtz also considered the idea that standards of "measurement" other than the Western middle-class "yardstick", may yield beneficial explanations and interpretations of the pathological and the normal in non-Western cultures (Kurtz 1992 : 186). This is especially relevant to the study and interpretation of Ramakrishna, and the many forms of madness found in the Hindu tradition.

In the Hindu religion, divine madness, that is, a madness, that is *derived from* the devotion and love one feels for a deity, is not an uncommon occurrence. This form of devotion and behaviour is not regarded as hostile or antisocial in orientation. Instead it has been known to function in the life of the divine madman

> ...as a magnet to bring others closer to him and the locus of holiness that he represented. Thus his madness had an interrelational and unifying quality (Olsen 1990: 64).

Such is the case with Ramakrishna. His madness was a symbol of holiness and indicative of an individual who had attained liberation, the realization of the ultimate reality (Kurtz 1992 : 66). While individuals such as Ramakrishna can be regarded as"...social and mental misfits..." (Kurtz 1992 : 66) by categorical and reductionist analysis, it can also be true that they come to be regarded as "holy" by their disciples precisely because they cannot be categorized according to conventional social and religious norms.

Throughout much of Ramakrishna's lifetime, many people within his own culture and religion questioned his sanity (Nikhilananda 1942 : 15, 299, 301, 305, McDaniel 1989 : 259). This was due to his ambiguous identity and role, which conformed in some measure with culturally accepted forms of religious practice, but which, in other ways, fit cultural conceptions of madness. This form of madness, viewed as acceptable in Hinduism, is quite different from Western attitudes, which would likely regard any such behaviour, as exhibited by Ramakrishna (Nikhilananda 1942 : 14, 16, 25, 182, 224) to be primarily antisocial, and even harmful in some cases to the individual and the larger society.

Olsen states that Ramakrishna, and others like him, used their ambiguous positions in the religious and social structures for the benefit of those around them. They used unexpected behaviours, such as sudden humor, anger, and sadness to alter or interrupt the normal patterns of everyday life. Although their behaviours may not have been consciously motivated, figures such as Ramakrishna "jarred" their followers out of their conventions. They were operating on the assumption that

> ....an odd event, an unusual saying or viewing something very strange can provide a disruption in our daily pattern

> that can lead to a response, for instance, on our part of anxiety, wonder or laughter (Olsen 1990:72).

In light of the above quotation, Olsen compares the behaviour of Ramakrishna to that of the archetypal figures of the trickster, the clown, and the fool (Olsen 1990;79). All such figures played similar roles to Ramakrishna. They were sociologically and structurally ambiguous, questioned basic cultural and religious assumptions, and often perplexed and confounded people by their behaviour and thoughts. The comparison of Ramakrishna to these archetypal figures is an issue that will be discussed in the final section of this paper, but the following section will provide a brief summation of the views and perceptions of the contemporary field of psychoanalysis, and the issue of cultural relativity.

Kakar, Olsen, and Kurtz have called for increasing relativism in the psychoanalytic study of non-Western cultures. Kakar, while not discussing figures such as Ramakrishna exclusively, did propose a need for analysts to consider and even base their interpretations and conclusions of Indian peoples on the cultural assumptions that formed their own experience and reality. For example, Kakar notes the greater sensual stimulation in the rearing of Indian children compared to Western methods of up-bringing. He states that it is not uncommon for an Indian child to have a great deal of direct physical contact with his or her mother. This often includes a child sleeping in the parental bed until puberty (Kakar 1985:442). As a result, an Indian child will grow up with an experience that is markedly different from that of his or her Western counterparts. As such, it would not be useful or logical to summarily base one's conclusions about Indian children on the much different experience of Western children.

When applied to Ramakrishna, this notion of cultural relativity may radically change views concerning his relationship with the Divine Mother. Coupled with the Hindu notions and forms of *bhakti,* a new interpretation including both factors may not rigidly categorize Ramakrishna as being at the mercy of the Electra Complex, with its sexual fixation upon the mother figure. Regardless of the exact interpretation that would result, it is possible that Ramakrishna may not be regarded in the cultural terms of Western psychoanalysis as sexually deviant, but instead, as fulfilling the accepted social and religious norms of his own culture.

As the above example demonstrates, it is necessary that the cultural and experiential "yardstick" used to measure and evaluate the Indian experience be derived from that culture. If not, then it is highly likely that psychoanalytic conclusions will be somewhat skewed, and may paint a picture of psychological development that is highly inaccurate.

The works of Kurtz, Kakar, and Olsen, and their emphasis on cultural relativity, exhibit great promise in the development of a mutually beneficial dialectic between Western and non-Western cultures. There is however, an important question raised by Kurtz (1992:179), who asks" what exactly *does* a culturally relative psychoanalytic process and theory look like?" In terms of a general cross-cultural evaluative process, this question is difficult enough to answer, as there are aspects of psychoanalytic theory which are intrinsically Western in origin and in orientation.

In more specific terms and applications, such as cases that concern the unique figures of the crazy saints, the question becomes even more complicated. As Kurtz and Olsen have demonstrated, it is possible to evaluate such figures according to a psychoanalytic framework, but such a framework is indisguisably Western, and the terms and methods applied to such a study are also Western in scope. They do, however, acknowledge the possibility that broader and deeper understanding of figures such as Ramakrishna may result only from an analysis that takes place within the culture of origin and according to that culture's conceptions of the "normal" or the accepted, the pathological, and the religious. As such, the next section will discuss a method that may shed new light on the figure of the crazy saints.

Kurtz and Olsen discussed the possibility that in order to understand an ambiguous character of the likes of Ramakrishna, it was necessary to consider the Indian notions of madness, especially those that are an accepted form of worship. Sil raised a valid point in his discussion of the Bengali saint, namely that the behaviours of such figures who purport to be in the throws of "divinely inspired madness" many times do not coincide with the religious precepts as outlined by the formal religious tenets (Sil 1991 : 16, 21 Nikhilananda 1942 : 14, 19). These points recognize the undefined, or liminal, position occupied by the crazy saints.

It is this ambiguous or liminal nature of the crazy saints that makes it difficult to accept them, for they do not "fit" into conventional social, cultural, and religious norms. While this is so, "... it is equally hard to dismiss them out of hand" (Feuerstein 1990 : xvi). The nature of such people is indeed perplexing. On the one hand, they appear to be human, and for the most part, normal (in the broadest, most general sense of the term), yet on the other, they are quite dissimilar in many respects to the great majority of people. Feuerstein agrees with the notion that crazy saints, are indeed liminal. He attributes much of this to the often bizarre and unexpected behaviour that such individuals demonstrate (Feuerstein 1990 : 6, 7). McDaniel, in her work specifically concerning the phenomena of saintly madness (1989), also attributes the confusion and astonishment surrounding such people to their behaviour as well. Such a figure

> ... does whatever he wishes, acting according to whim and his own inclination ; he does not follow his social and religious obligations (McDaniel 1989 : 16).

Earlier in this essay, I explained how Ramakrishna's behaviour are classic examples of McDaniels and Feuersteins observations (see Nikhilananda 1942).

As a result, Western psychology has had a penchant for decreeing that these "... behaviour patterns... border on the psychotic... " (Feuerstein 1990 : 28). However, it has not been only the Western viewpoint that has questioned his sanity. "Before Ramakrishna... was proclaimed by the brahmin theologians of his day as a living incarnation (*avatara*) of the Divine, many people thought him mad" (Feuerstein 1990 : 27). After the proclamation, the perception of Ramakrishna changed from a *simple*madman to a *saintly*madman, although his behaviour did not change. It is also said that "Ramakrishna himself was relieved that he did not suffer from a disease" (McDaniel 1989 : 96), or from a form of insanity.

Madness has many connotations in the Indian culture and religion, from the pathological insanity of delirium and seizures to "... the madness of the saint who is subject to intense emotional states and visions of God... " (McDaniel 1989 : 1). As such, the only definitive statement that can be made concerning "madness" in the Indian experience is that it is indicative of the unexpected.

To the observer however, such religious madness may not be easily distinguishable from the ordinary garden variety. The madness of saints, or their "ecstasy" is at times not dissimilar from other forms of madness, as the individual in question

> ...may demonstrate eccentric behaviour, violation of social or moral codes, visual and auditory hallucinations, catatonic stillness... (and)... jumbled and chaotic speech or coded speech" (McDaniel 1989 : 8).

The many forms of madness can be differentiated from one another by the source from which such behaviour is said to derive, which is a task, incidentally, that is most difficult to undertake under the best of circumstances. Both forms of madness however, are accounted for in the Hindu religious tradition (McDaniel 1989 : 8).

It has been stated by Narasingha Sil that Ramakrishna violated many of the precepts of organized and formal Hinduism by the very nature of his mystical experience. McDaniel, on the other hand, expounds that within the richness and variety of the Hindu tradition, this was not the case. Hinduism, according to her, is composed of both proper canon and mythical accounts. Even had Ramakrishna violated the formal tenets, he could scarcely have violated the mythical charter of Hinduism (McDaniel 1989 : 248). Indeed, he was even compared to the famous saint of the fifteenth century, Caitanya.

McDaniel also acknowledges that human devotional practices rarely fit a predetermined format, a problem that has plagued scholars in trying to formulate precise and universal definitions of religion and ritual. She also puts forth the idea that in many cases, the patterns of formalized religion will be molded by both scholars and religious traditions to better suit the crazy saints, as they do not often naturally fit such frameworks.

It becomes clear then, that cultural and religious conception of what constitutes "ordinary" madness and what constitutes acceptable religious or spiritual madness varies from culture to culture. As such, in order to benefit from the study of crazy saints such as Ramakrishna, contemporary psychoanalytic practice must be willing to adapt to such culturally defined assumptions.

Concluding Analysis

This essay has traced the theories of psychoanalysis as they have been applied to a non-Western culture, India, and the Hindu religion as a part of that culture. Also explored was the idea of cultural relativity, and its increasing influence on psychoanalytic practice. The developmental years of psychoanalysis, based on the experience of Viennese society, revealed a perception that reflected a period (pre-World War I Europe), that regarded the achievements of Western society as the pinnacle in the development and evolution of the human race. Furthermore, this perception held that the new science of psychoanalysis revealed previously unexplored territory in the human experience, territory that was the sole property of psychoanalysis.

The second period of psychoanalytic thought was the middle decades of the twentieth century. The works of Boss (1965), Jung (1958), and Fromm (1950), reveal an ever-increasing awareness that, when engaged in cross-cultural analysis, in particular, with non-Western religions, basic psychoanalysis needed to focus more upon unique cultural and societal patterns. Such considerations were vital if it wished to be effective to both the analyst and the patient in general. These decades reveal a time in the throws of "theoretical confusion". Some works from this period expounded the "universal nature of all human beings" regardless of cultural background, and the power of psychoanalysis to uncover this "fact". Yet, many other works of this period also showed a profound confusion or uncertainty about the effectiveness of psychoanalysis *vis a vis* to non-Western cultures. These decades then, then, mark the beginning of a large-scale recognition of the need for a culturally relevant psychoanalysis.

Contemporary works illustrated a full-fledged call for the incorporation of relativism into a theory of psychoanalysis. Yet although many strong arguments and examples were presented for the case, as the works of Kakar (1985), Olsen (1990), and Kurtz (1992), demonstrated, the idea is not accepted all-inclusively. Narasingha Sil, for instance, conducted an analysis of Ramakrishna using psychoanalytic theory and conclusions that seemed to belong to an earlier era (for a similar view to that of Sil, see Masson 1976).

Kurtz raised an excellent point in regards to a culturally relevant psychoanalysis. What does it look like? This question is extremely important to the future of psychoanalytic study both Western and non-Western cultures alike. Each specific cultural group possesses certain unique elements, and it will prove necessary not only to recognize these intrinsic differences, but understand them as well.[2] Culturally relevant theories of psychoanalysis have the enormous potential to reveal richly diverse conceptions of the normal and the pathological, knowledge which will not only benefit psychoanalytic theory, but enhance cross-cultural learning and information sharing.

The last point also brings to the fore the viability of applying a culturally-relative theory of psychoanalysis to figures such as Ramakrishna. I maintain that while relativism in psychoanalysis may indeed further the study and treatment of the pathological, as well as facilitate over-all improved mental health in a culture that is non-Western, there is also an intrinsic problem when the same approach is applied to the likes of Ramakrishna.

The above notions are based on the sociological structure of the society in question - that is, the basic equation of the normal versus the pathological. An individual belongs to one or the other, to greater or lesser degrees. Each member of the Indian culture can be classified as such. Essentially, psychoanalytic theory is based upon this structural division. A figure such as Ramakrishna simply does not "fit" into this basic structure.

As has been demonstrated, Ramakrishna is classified under the title of a "crazy saint". There has been much speculation, in psychoanalysis as well as in other approaches, whether or not he is indeed pathologically disturbed or an actual saint. Ramakrishna, and figures like him, do not occupy either the sociological or psychological positions of "normal" or "pathological". Ramakrishna, in terms of Indian culture *and* Hindu religion, is an individual who occupies a liminal role, as he constitutes many aspects of both the normal and the pathological. He is not in a definite position in the structure of Indian culture and society, or Hindu religion.

2. This also raises the complex question of what exactly constitues a culture, and by extension, a unique cultural group, This question however, is obviously too broad and complicated to be discussed in this essay.

In this sense, he is figure who is *doubly* liminal. Indeed, many of his own disciples themselves speculated on his "orientation", let alone foreign theorists.

In essence then, while a relativistic psychoanalysis has the potential to be successfully applied to Indian culture, it has not and does not yet make provisions for individuals such as Ramakrishna, who do not "fit the mold" in either society or religion. A theory which is based on structural positions cannot be applied to one who has no definitive position. The psychoanalytic study of Ramakrishna is a classic example of the "'Proscrustes' bed" in Greek mythology.

> This giant (Procrustes) had an iron bedstead on which he used to tie all travelers who fell into his hands. If they were shorter than the bed, he stretched them till they fitted it; if they were longer than the bed, he lopped of their limbs (Gayley 1911:251).

This is also the case with Ramakrishna and psychoanalysis. He, who transcends ordinary sociological and psychological positions in his indigenous society and religion, has been summarily forced into a structural framework, much like the unfortunate travelers who encountered the giant.

One of my intentions in this essay was to evaluate the methods by which Ramakrishna was analyzed and the conclusions that resulted. I have discovered, and, I hope, demonstrated that while the interpretations of Ramakrishna have become more "positive", and perhaps more accurate, as the result of the introduction and application of cultural relativism in psychoanalysis, it has also become evident that the basic form of psychoanalysis, even with relativism, is insufficient. Such a theory, based as it is on the division between pathological and normal, is, in actuality, not suited for such an analysis. One wonders what exactly has been "stretched" or "hacked off" in the effort to apply such a theory to the Bengali saint.

Feuerstein has stated (1990) that perhaps it is necessary to create a new method of analysis for these crazy saints, a method that would allow for the movement between social and religious roles that such figures have demonstrated. One possibility is the

creation of a new paradigm. One that is concerned solely with the "in-between" or liminal places in a social or religious structure. Turner's conception of a liminoid figure is certainly applicable to the case of Ramakrishna and others similar in nature (Turner 1974, 1982).

It is important to consider another aspect as well. It may also prove more useful and enlightening to analyze these crazy saints from a different point of view. Such a different perspective could conceivably study the types of people who are attracted to, or inversely, repulsed by such individuals. This perspective would stress the *effects* of these saints, and what impacts they have on the lives of people around them, if any, rather than trying to define *who* and *what* they are. A perspective that considers strongly the views and interpretations of average persons - whose beliefs and patterns of worship are often those most strongly affected by the crazy saints, may offer insight into these unique individuals. In the case of Ramakrishna, who did not have great textual or literary knowledge, this is especially important, as many of his followers were also largely illiterate as well. It would be interesting and rewarding to consider the effects of such a person upon people who have little or no use for scholarly analysis, or formal religious doctrines. Indeed, it is highly likely that many of the people Ramakrishna effected and influenced would never see such texts.

Of course, this approach is not without flaws. For one, Ramakrishna lived and died approximately one hundred years ago - there is little possibility that any of his original followers are left to question. Additionally, throughout human history the common peoples rarely leave behind clearly articulated textual testimony of their experiences. As such, even if this method were considered, it would be useless for any historical studies, such as an evaluation of Ramakrishna himself. It is, however, a point that needs to be considered for contemporary studies and future analysis.

When one notes that like Ramakrishna, many of the crazy saints in the Hindu tradition have appeared during times of cultural, social, and economic upheaval, as well as at times of religious stagnation and corruption, it may be especially useful to examine closely the views of those these saints affect the most strongly: the common people.

REFERENCES CITED

Boss, Medard. *A Psychiatrist Discovers India*. transl. Henry A. Frey. London: Oswald Wolff, 1965.

Farquhar, J.N. *Modern Religious Movements in India*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.: 1914.

Feuerstein, Georg. *Holy Madness: The Shock Tactics and Radical Techings of Crazy-Wise Adepts, Holy Fools, and Rascal Gurus*. New York: Arkana, 1990.

Freud, Sigmund. "Obsessive Acts and Religious Practices" ed. Ernest Jones. transl. Joan Riviere. The International Psychoanalytic Library No. 8. *Sigmund Freud: Collected Papers vol 2*. New York: Basic Books Inc., 1907.

Freud, Sigmund. *The Future of An Illusion*. transl./ed. James Strachey. New York: Norton and Company, Inc., 1928.

Fromm, Erich. *Psychoanalysis and Religion*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950.

Gayley, Charles Mills. *The Classic Myths: In English Literature and In Art*. 2d ed. New York: Blaisdell Publishing Company, 1911.

Grimes, John. *A Concise Dictionary of Indian Philosophy*. Madras: Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy, 1988.

Hariharananda. *Yoga Philosophy of Patanjali*. transl. P.N. Mukerji. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983.

Jung. C. G. *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*. ed. Sir Herbert Read, Michael Fordham, Gerhard Adler, William McGuire. transl. R. F. C. Hull. Princeton University Press, 1958.

Kakar, Sudhir. "Psychoanalysis and Non-Western Cultures". *International Review of Psychoanalysis* 12 (1985): 441-448.

Kucklick, Henrika. *Tribal Exemplars: Images of Political Authority in British Social Anthropology, 1885-1945*. ed. G.W. Stocking. vol. 2. *History of Anthropology: Functionalism Historiczed*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984.

Kurtz, Stanley N. *All The Mothers Are One: Hindu India and the Cultural Reshaping of Psychoanalysis.* New York: Columbia University, 1992.

Masson, J. Moussaieff. "The Psychology of the Ascetic". *Journal of Asian Studies* 4 (Aug. 1976), pp. 611-625.

Mc Daniel, June. *The Madness of the Saints: Ecstatic Religion in Bengal.* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989.

Nikhilananda. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna.* transl. Nikhilananda. New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1942.

Olsen, Carl. *The Mysterious Play of Kali: an interpretative study of Ramakrishna.* Studies in Religion. Atlanta, Georgia: Scholar's Press, 1990.

Oman, John Campbell. *The Mystics, Ascetics and Saints of India: A Study of Sadhuism, with accounts of the Yogis, Sanyasis, Bairagis, and other Strange Hindu Sectarians.* New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 1903.

Sil, Narasingha P. *Ramakrishna Paramahamsa: A Psychological Profile,* (ed.) Johannes Bronkhorst. Brill' s Indological Library, Vol. 4. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991.

Turner, Victor. *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play.* New York City: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982.

Turner, Victor. *Dramas, Fields And Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society.* Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1974.