

fragments of a lost civilisation

In any study of Indian thought and philosophy, some attention ought to be paid to what was in this country prior to the Aryan invasion. There is very little ~~known~~ of the pre-Aryan in extent but the absence of <sup>material for</sup> such a study about pre-Aryan ~~pre-<sup>and</sup> ~~reason~~ ~~and~~ ~~pre-~~ ~~civilisation~~~~ India is partly due to the fact that inquiry has not been directed thereto. Till Hakeny dero and Harappa were dug up ~~the~~ the existence of even archaeological pre-Aryan India was not suspected. Recently there have been more discoveries and more sites dug up, but the information these ~~com~~ remains communicate are mainly about the material aspects of the pre-Aryan civilisation. Indirectly we infer that the men of the Indus Valley Civilisation had domesticated the humped cattle and knew how to work copper and iron. That presupposes a certain amount of theoretical knowledge too.

The seals ~~dis~~ unearthed from those sites do tell us that the pre-Aryans had a system of writing but as the script has not yet been ~~prop~~ deciphered we know nothing about the thought of pre-Aryan India.

The reconstruction of the ~~thought~~ incipient thought and civilisation of pre-Aryan India, therefore, is a task in which for several years to come speculation will hold the field. That is my excuse for the incongruous insertion of this purely speculative essay in a collection which is so ably documented and reasoned.

We, so far, do not know who ~~the people~~ were the people responsible for the Indus Valley Civilisation. Speculatively they could be people closely related to the other pre-Aryan elements of the Indian population. To be specific we will start with the big assumption that the present aboriginal tribes of India are the remnants of elements which if not themselves directly responsible for the Indus valley civilisation were in contact with it and were influenced by it. The fact that the Indus valley scripts and the existing Dravidian scripts in the country have no resemblance does go against such an

assumption. Secondly the material civilisation that the Indus valley people had developed can be identified among the aboriginals as yet. The aboriginal population of India ~~is~~ proper (that is excluding peripheral areas like the Himalayas and Khasim) consists of three major groups: (1) small isolated tribes corresponding to the negritos, (2) Larger Indo-Austroic tribes, and (3) Dravidian tribes like the <sup>tribes</sup> Uraons which today are culturally separate from the bulk of the Dravidian population of the South.

The Dravidian population of the South at present is wholly Aryanised and Hinduised, ~~while the aboriginals and~~ has been so since at least 300 B.C., while the aboriginal tribes still maintain their boycott of Aryan institutions like Caste. This forces us to modify our speculation and assume that the Indus valley civilisation was the product of Dravidians (more akin to South Indians than the aboriginal Uraons) who like other Mediterranean people in Babylon and Egypt were capable of developing a high civilisation. That would mean that the pre-Aryan population of India was at three levels: (1) the civilised Dravidians, (2) the less civilised <sup>tribes</sup> Dravidians, and (3) Indo-Austroic and negrito remnants of a more primitive and ancient population.

The Uraons who at present occupy Chotanagpur came there from the Rohtas plateau and before Rohtas used to occupy the Narbadda Valley in which ~~much~~ several sites of towns with a fair degree of civilisation have ~~recently~~ been recently discovered. More work in that area may unravel the actual connection that the Uraons bore to the Indus valley civilisation. Till such evidence is forthcoming it will be better to presume that the Uraons constituted a primitive level of the Dravidian population.

Such an assumption is convenient to the present study which seeks to indicate the ~~sources~~ of the possible sources of the Indus valley civilisation. The primitive Uraons

and the more primitive Kolarians like the Kintdas, Santals, Hos and Kharias were the people among whom the ~~Indo~~ pre-Aryan civilisation of India arose. Closely associated with them are the Asurs who knew how to smelt iron and copper.

Both religion and science have their origin in magic and the rituals associated with it. Philosophy, too, therefore, comes out of magic. Yet even magic must represent a ~~stage~~ fairly high stage of human development. The study of primitive tribes is, therefore, of value to study of thought and philosophy.

The primitive mind is not rational; philosophy and thought are products of a rational mind. Therefore, magic represents pseudo-rationality, a vague groping after causality.

The earliest mode of human expression could not have been speech as we understand by that word. Mime probably was the earliest form of expression. Copying of the movements and attitudes of animals; and much symbolic communication between humans.

Among animals themselves there is much symbolic behaviour. Birds, for example, resort to elaborate threat and courtship displays and feigning of injury. There is symbolic feeding and presentation of food and nesting materials. The earliest humans ~~too were capable of this~~ too must have been capable of this. The symbolic behaviour of animals, however, concerned only the addresser and the addressee. There is as yet no evidence that any symbols are used to designate the third person, another bird of the same species, or ~~with~~ of another species, or an entirely different animal. When humans invented <sup>or name</sup> symbols for a third person, possibly ~~language~~ language originated.

From mime to symbolic and communicative dancing can be imagined as a logical but slow development. The discovery of rhythm and its joy must have been a revolutionary step forward, as great an advance as the subsequent development of speech.

The origins of magic are in this advance, the introduction of a qualitative change which was much more communicative

than the previous modes. <sup>-4-</sup> When through mime a ~~primitive~~ <sup>primitive</sup> has been able to convey a third person, or an animal he had achieved a magical result. Similar magical results were achieved when yells, snarls, snarls and barks turned into speech, the counting of objects led to elementary arithmetic and the blowing of notes on a reed to music.

The element of magic is ~~the~~ also the ~~creative principle of~~ way in which all art functions, primitive or modern. It resides in the means ~~to~~ <sup>gaining no clue as to</sup> ~~bringing in no way~~ of the result. Later on the ~~real~~ means and the results could be associated and a belief in causality arose. Magic lost its creative aspect and became a mere process of simulating nature to produce ~~by means of~~ like results by means of recapitulating like causes or seeming-causes.

Such a development of magic could not have occurred till the primitive began to understand ~~in a~~ time and distance in a rudimentary way. Such understanding is a comparatively late acquisition; the modern infant ~~takes time~~ is not born with it but learns it and grown-ups lose it and get disorientated in regard to time and space when mentally sick.

None of the ~~tribes~~ <sup>tribes</sup> aboriginal tribes <sup>of India</sup> are lacking in a sense of time and space. As they have lived virtually in a state of boycott for the last 5000 years in regard to better developed civilisations and people we can infer ~~at~~ that in the era immediately preceding the building of Mohenjodaro and Harappa a sense of relatedness of things in time (sequence) and space (contiguity) was generally existent. But this sense did not lead to any belief in causality.

Mime and dancing are the most primitive human means of communication. The Urasos, Mundas, Kharias, Hos and other tribes of Chotanagpur who have been studied a good deal do use rhythmical bodily movement primarily to express every emotion. No other art has developed among them to any considerable extent. There is little of sculpture, though masked

dances are held in Singhbhum, eastern Ranchi and  
Hansbhum. Houses are decorated with drawings and  
paintings but the drawings, like the masks, are not  
striking. I have seen no woodcarving.

~~This~~ This is not a discussion of aboriginal art  
and to those wanting information on it I would refer  
Verrier Elwin's excellent volume Tribal Art of India.  
This is an examination of tribal life for indications  
of primitive thought.

Tribal art in Chotanagpur hesitates between the  
realistic and the symbolic at least as far as designs  
drawn on houses and masks are concerned. That would  
indicate that tribal art in Chotanagpur has not evolved  
out of paleolithic realism to neolithic communication  
and symbolism.

Folk-songs and folk-tales may be considered as the  
more intellectual of the tribal arts and presently  
we shall examine these along with dances, of which  
they are and adjacent, to discover whatever ~~the~~  
rudimentary thought and philosophy there is. Roughly  
fair indication of pre-Aryan intellectual conditions.  
It may ~~not~~ be that the tribal populations we are considering  
now are in a period of decline from a period of tribal  
art developments and the symbols have ceased to have  
meaning.

After all these various provisos warning against  
the acceptance of any conclusions of this article as a  
proper scholarly findings, the value of the article is only in  
indicating a promising line of exploration.

We shall discuss here two tribes - the Mundas  
and the Oraons. The Mundas are Indo-Austrian

and closely related to the iron and copper-smelting  
 Asurs, who may take as one of those contributing to the  
 material civilisation of pre-Aryan India. The Mundas  
 themselves were probably residents of north-west India  
 and ~~here are~~ their name suggests that they at one  
 time used to be the sole residents of the country. The  
 Mundas at present call themselves Horonko, or the  
 men, and from this name their ~~sub-tribe~~ sub-tribe  
 in Sindhur gets its name Ho. Probably Munda also  
 meant man and one ~~the~~ Indo-Austroic tribe in  
 Assam, Mandwe, still the word in that sense.

If there were other elements in the population of  
 India the ascendant Mundas did not class them as  
 humans. They are not the most primitive of the  
 aboriginal tribes but the one which over a long  
 period were in contact with Aryans, always fighting  
 and in the process naturalising a number of Sanskrit  
 words in their vocabulary.

The Mundas and the Asurs were animists. As  
 Freud has stated every child at a certain stage of  
 development is animist in the sense that it assigns  
 a personality to everything, even inanimate objects.  
 At an early stage of human development that would  
 be the possible attitude. Animism is, therefore, the  
 philosophical counterpart of the mime as a means of  
 communication, though in the ~~form~~ <sup>in which</sup> it is available for  
 examination now represents a ~~fairly~~ mature stage  
 that followed invention of speech.  
 Yet it arose during the period of mime and  
 dancing. ~~The~~ Animals are more aware of things

that move; probably they are only aware of things that move. Movement distinguishes things in the primitive concept movement alone is universal in the sense that there are many things that move. ~~When~~ Mime and dancing are ritualised movements. ~~Animism in conferring personality~~ The extent to which movement attracts primitive attention is borne by Stone Age paintings; they capture movement to a remarkable extent. Animism in conferring personality on inanimate objects invest them with the capacity to move if they, so desired. Movement is the spirit behind things. Animism and spiritualism go together.

~~George~~ Geoffrey Gorer in his Africa Dances enunciated a great principle about primitive peoples when he said that "Primitive negroes know that the world is entirely spiritual; what we treat as the physical universe, whether animate or inanimate, bound by certain laws and producing certain predictable effects, is to them nothing but clots of matter entirely neutral in themselves and only taking on the qualities of the spirit, whether human or inhuman which inhabits them."

Later he adds: "The negro's madness does not end with his refusal to acknowledge a material and causal world. His idea of time is extremely peculiar; he certainly does not believe in a unidirectional and consistent time; the present, the past and the future are inextricably mingled. The reason for this is twofold; firstly, all events which we 'future' are determined by omens, which make them almost present; and secondly, dreams have for them just as much 'reality' as waking life. In dreams the soul is free and is able to commune

with the spirits and the dead who are invisible, thought not impalpable, by day; most dream experiences are believed in as implicitly as physical ones."

~~He also quotes Charles Fort's Wild Talents "that certain people have an ability~~

He also says that if a man is hurt by a falling log or drowned in a river, we speak of an accident; such a term is entirely meaningless to a negro; either a sorcerer has entered the word or the water, or else, which is graver still, the victim has angered the gods or the ancestor; since that may be the case the unfortunate must be shunned; though the "accident" may ~~be~~ not have killed him he is as good as dead."

Poison, tiger or snake is not evil at a very early stage of primitivism. It is the power of the person on which the effect of things varies. ~~The~~ The basis of ethics starting point of ethics is in the identification of certain things as evil. And in classifying such things, actions and forces as distinct from the persons responsible for them or against whom they are directed. No developed thought is possible without at least a rudimentary belief in causality, in the predictability of the results of actions. Results can never be predicted if things are not ~~logically~~ related in sequence and contiguity. This disorientation of the primitive in regard to time prevents any knowledge of causality.

A primitive mind, however, has some capacities. <sup>(of towns)</sup> Gorer quotes Charles Fort's Wild Talents as saying that certain people have an ability, mainly unconscious but sometimes conscious too, of affecting objects, whether their own or other people's bodies or inanimate substances, in a way which would normally

require physical means, but which in the cases cited can be shown to be absent. These manifestations occur in somebody with very strong feelings - usually fear or hate.

Below are more quotations from Gorer:

"At the head of every negro theological system I came across is a God who created all things visible and invisible... They are all agreed that this creator is too far removed from human beings to influence them or be influenced by them. This God created a number of forces which I have called FETISHES; these forces are part of God and are as it were the canalisation of a section of his power... Each fetish has some object, usually an animal, in the physical world which has the same characteristics as the force or fetish; these objects, whether animal, vegetable or inanimate, are therefore signs of the fetish and have the same name as it... A ~~priest~~ <sup>PRIEST</sup> (is) a person who claims and is granted special influence with one of these fetish forces, part of which has descended into him... The most general way of gaining the fetish's favour is by a ~~semi~~ SACRIFICE, usually an animal killed in some place impregnated with the fetish's strength... For everyday personal use it is necessary to have private charms or GRIGRIS, either as amulets to be worn about the person or as private magical objects to be used with a special ritual... Grigris are essentially symbolical. It is part of the underlying idea of all negro magic that a part of a thing is equal to the whole - a man's nail clippings or skull are the man - and a thing which is like a second thing is to all intents and purposes the second thing - a wax image is like the man, it is modelled after, therefore it is the man, and anything done to the image is done to the man....

The dead may be divided into two groups, the ANCESTORS, all the anonymous dead of the tribe, and the

Recently DEAD, who are still known by name, and whose individuality in the land of the dead is still distinct. These latter are very important and dangerous; for they represent the ~~the~~ SOUL of the dead man without the hampering of the body.

"The only natural death - and that not always - is one which follows an outlet of blood. For blood is life and therefore if a person dies without losing blood it is obviously the work of some hostile sorcerer....

"The spirits which animate the negro universe are of three sorts: the living, the dead and those that have never had any body. The living and the dead behave very similarly; they are both divisible, so that a man's soul can be in several places simultaneously; the only difference is that a man's soul when he is awake is usually attached to his body.

"In dreams, whether natural or induced, it wanders about; the very clever and the very wicked (which are not always the same) can send bits of their soul into other objects; the magician for the good of himself and others, the sorcerer for evil, and to eat a victim's soul.

"The discorporeal spirits - gods, fetiches, devils, forces, all equally misleading terms - are permanently present over the area where they are worshipped and felt, more especially in the places sanctified to them; by ritual or by getting into strange physical states these forces can temporarily be made to enter men's bodies or other inanimate objects; occasionally they will descend uninvited....

"The SOUL can be roughly defined as the animating principle of all life; in normal circumstances it is coexistent with the body; but in certain states parts of it, for it is indefinitely divisible, can be active elsewhere. The most important of these states are sleep, trance and death.

"Negroes can put themselves into very peculiar physical-mental states with extraordinary ease. They will go into trances, or throw fits at the slightest provocation. Even a negro beating a tortoise quickly becomes very strange; his pupils dilate and do not focus, he seems to become a rhythmic and unconscious automaton. For the primitive negro the whole universe is moved by spirit reacting on spirit, an idea in which they have such implicit faith that it can kill them, or make them impervious to pain. The relatively small number of distractions in tribal life permits of very great concentration."

Other observations by Gorer which have relevance to the present study are that the only mode of expression for the negro is dance for they have no literature and no drama. Ritual cannibalism plays a considerable part in the make-up of secret African societies which are growing very rapidly owing to the break-up of tribal life and the subsequent feeling of incompleteness which assails the individual negro. Religion is the whole existence of negroes. "It is my belief that negroes, without the inhibitions which our view of time and a causal universe impose on us, regularly dream the future as much as the past and as vividly, with the result that the ideas 'past', 'past' and 'future' have no meaning to them as they have to us." To the negro magic is just as much an ordinary part of life as eating.

The most important of Gorer's observation was that most books of anthropology which present the negro's outlook on life as an eccentric version of what we consider to be the general outlook were merely constructing a "logical" parody which had only slight connections with the original.

It is the contention of this essay that all anthropological studies of Indian aboriginal tribes have suffered from similar interpolation of the logical into aboriginal thought. Even the Vedic Aryan thought was almost as primitive

as that of the aborigines and ~~more~~ more rationality and purpose have been read into the Vedas, and even Brahmanas and the Upanishads than is actually there.

This essay will therefore try to show how similar is the mental condition of Mundas and Uraons to that of the negro.

(2) That the Vedic Aryan mind was different but not a great deal

(3) That the primitive mind is essentially a projection of the animal mind

(4) That ecstasy ~~and mysticism~~ the source of all spiritualism and mysticism is primitive

(5) That rationalism came late in our development.

Overthrow of Cheros - Sketched by Sararas about A.D. 500 -

25 x 61 = 1525 or 384 A.D.  
Sambat 121 or 64 A.D. according to Nagbansi legend

1909  
1685 = 50  
1909 - 61  
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1848  
11  
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11 | 224 | 20  
    22

689  
61  
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750 A.D.  
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1525  
384  
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1909

20 x 61 = 1220 or 384 - 5 = 379  
61 - 1909  
46 - 1616  
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15 15 | 293 | 19  
      15  
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      143  
      135

689 A.D.  
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61  
19  
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599  
61  
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1159

1220  
1159  
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61  
1161