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THE URGE FOR A TOTAL REDISCOVERY

THE IRRESISTIBLE UNDERTONE IN CURRENT REFLECTIONS

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(Manoj Das, resident of Sri Aurobindo Ashram and professor at Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, is a name on the lips of all who are acquainted with Oriya literature, the winner of an Academy award. He is coming into prominence also as a writer of sensitive short stories in English, one of which was published in the Mother India of last month. We welcome his brief but thought-provoking piece, with its pointers to a depth behind modern moods.)

“MODERN philosophy once and for all seems to assert that the human being and his world are inseparable,” says Herbert Kohl in his excellent treatise on 20th century philosophy, *The Age of Complexity*.¹

Naturally, this assertion has a background of separation between man and his world. Man’s feeling of being alienated from his world has culminated in many cases (according to evidences in our literature and philosophy) in a strange mistrust of one’s own self, the self itself appearing a nightmarish existence ! Though the culmination is a recent post-War development, the feeling of alienation has become distinct only through a prolonged process. Reviewers of social developments have pointed out that it was with the Renaissance that man had felt gradually alienated from “all that makes up his life”. Copernicus destroyed our private cosmos. The long-established intimacy with the planets, the congenial faith that they existed only for our little ills and cures were all shattered (reminds a line from Wallace Stevens : *The human who has no cousin in the moon*), and with Einstein heralding the mystery of the expanding universe, the process was complete.

But, according to Martin Heidegger whose name is indispensably associated with *existential* themes, the seed of separation was sown with Plato. It was Plato who clearly questioned the validity of the conception of *being* that was conventional in the pre-Platonic age—a grand total of all that existed. However, today that comprehensive natural attitude to our being is lost and, to quote Carl Gustav Jung, “The decisive question for man is : Is he related to something infinite or not ? Only if we know that the thing which truly matters is the infinite can we avoid fixing our interest upon futilities and upon all kinds of goals which are not of real importance.”

But does not yet another problem remain? Supposing we had nothing to do with infinity, could we happily fix our interest upon futilities and trifles ? The very relevant

¹ A Mentor Book, published by The New American Library of World Literature Inc., New York. 1965.

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At the summit of the land, in Himalayas, Shiva and Parvati dwell together. But at the bottom of the land, Kanyakumari, an incarnation of Parvati continues alone in her meditation, while Shiva, her consort is still afar, lost in his eternal trance. Perhaps, in the spiritualisation of the universal consciousness, what is already an achieved fact at the summit, is not yet a fact at the bottom. The land of India of course has always been a symbol, spiritually speaking. "Mother India is not a piece of earth; she is a Power, a Godhead". Thus said Sri Aurobindo. And

I remembered in a flash The Mother once saying how Shiva expressed his will to come upon the earth only when there was a Supra-mental world.

In the meanwhile it is the burden of the lone Mother, for

"Amid the work of darker Powers She
is here
To heal the evils and mistakes of Space
And change the tragedy of the ignorant
world

Into a Divine comedy of joy"

(Sri Aurobindo)