

TRANSLOCATIONS OF PSYCHOANALYSIS (Review article)

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INITIAL RESPONSES TO THE BOOK.

In the introduction to his book, **Japan in analysis** (2008), Ian Parker relates an experience he had at a barbershop at informing the barber that he will be writing a book on Japan and psychoanalysis. For the barber, the idea that anyone would want to write about Japan and psychoanalysis is so inconceivable that he is thrown into uncontrollable laughter at hearing this. In what is likely to have been a derisive attempt to picture what the book might be about, he in fact, manages to capture the essence of its structure, as Parker says. This would be the one level at which the barber's astonishment that someone could be planning to write a book about Japan could be read. A different and somewhat deeper meaning emerges when one links this inquiry with the one appearing later on in the book, of a participant asking, "*why are you asking these questions*". Part of what this book seems to raise is a question as to what it is about Japan that warrants writing a book on psychoanalysis. I would suggest that an even more complex question is engendered in these enquiries, about power relations resident in positions of object and subject.

The question of power forms part of the discussion below, suffice to indicate here that it was with a feeling similar to that of the barber, and the curiosity of the participant referred to above that I countenanced the object of my review. My imagination of Japan is as one of those places that are very far, a place which Parker intimates became absorbed into conceptualizations of the Orient, possibly by virtue of its perceived distance from the West. I would suggest it was its perceived difference from what the West conceptualizes as familiar and normal, that it became attractive as the other, who is also exotic. It is this other who serves the function of strengthening imaginary boundaries marking where the known and "safe" ends and where the anxiety provoking (and anxiety containing – through projection) begins. At first encounter, the book looked small and overly colourful, and it did not exactly spring out as attractive and inviting. Perhaps stereotypically, my immediate association was that its cover attempts evoking a *feel* of Japan, an association with otherness that in another context is similar to the notion of beads in relation to the African continent. Other than the author, whose work I have encountered previously, I could not find any attraction to the book on Japan, and the association between the concept of Japan and psychoanalysis is not an immediate one for me [it is easier recalling Kohut and the US, and Wulf Sachs and Sadie Gillespie and South Africa, in my case]. With a lot of resistance, I finally took up the book, and was pleasantly surprised by its reflective and eloquently presented introduction, locating the book in the very mainstream of psychoanalytic writing that I have come to associate Parker with.

In addition to this, it was the somewhat explorative tone that one encounters in the introduction that added to the, by then, gradually growing allure of the book, the fact that Parker suggests that the book represents a product of research rather than that which seeks to be evaluative of psychoanalysis in Japan, or Japan in analysis as the title suggests. Those with interest in psychoanalysis, or psychoanalytically oriented psychotherapy, will appreciate my attraction to a more explorative position of a western psychoanalyst in viewing the practice and engagements with psychoanalysis in the elsewhere of the West (see, below, my discussion of the 1998 Cape Town conference organized by the South African Psychoanalytic Trust).

There are a number of fundamental issues which Parker takes up in the book, amongst which he tackles the relation between the practice of psychoanalysis in a context of the specific type of Buddhism found in Japan, cyberspace (or spiritual space) and sexuality, and the implications of these for the notion of femininity and gender in Japan. It is particularly the intrigue of the Japan-Korea history, and the meaning hereof to things authentically Japanese that threaten disentangling the image of an authentic Japanese identity, which is the subject of the *nihonjiron* (what it means to be Japanese). However, although reference will be made to these issues in the ensuing discussion, it is the following three main subjects I would like to focus on below: the “insecurities” of psychoanalysis, the ownership, and hosting of psychoanalysis. These areas of discussion are related, to the extent that those anxieties which are associated with the need for security tend to lead to a response that is akin to shoring up the structure of the self in the face of a fragmentation-eliciting experience.

A DEFENSIVE “SCIENTIFICATION” OF PSYCHOANALYSIS.

The discourse of “scientifying” psychoanalysis is as old as psychoanalysis itself. However, it would seem it is a subject that gains a new life from time to time, as represented in this case by the strong influence that psychiatry seems to have imposed on the practice of psychoanalysis in Japan. The fact that some of the leaders of the Japanese Psychoanalytic Society (JPS) had to have a clinical training (psychiatrists and clinical psychologists) in conformity with the requirements of the International Psychoanalytic Association (IPA) attests to the fact that even though this is an age-old discussion, it lives on today, enlivening the tensions amongst practitioners and users of psychoanalysis, as well as competing disciplines and practices.

The **American Journal of Psychiatry** published a special article written by Eric Kandel (1999), in response to letters he received following an article he wrote before that. The special article is dedicated to arguing in favour of the relevance of biology to psychoanalysis. The title of the article, *Biology and the future of psychoanalysis: A new intellectual framework for psychiatry revisited* is instructive in that it identifies this article as a sequel to an article which was written within the discipline of psychiatry. There is a sense that psychoanalysis is elided by psychiatry, or that in discussions of a framework for psychiatry, psychoanalysis would be so heavily implicated, that an article devoted to nothing less than the future of psychoanalysis is necessitated. Just what relationship exists between psychiatry and psychoanalysis?

Those with an interest in psychoanalysis should draw solace in the fact that even Freud seems to have preoccupied himself with the need to shore up psychoanalysis given the structuralist shifting sands’ context, where if it cannot be seen, it does not exist. Kandel

(1999) utilizes two of Freud's quotes, drawn from the seminal papers of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and *On Narcissism* respectively. I will quote these in full here, to illuminate the discussion I would like to pursue below:

"We must recollect that all of our provisional ideas in psychology will presumably one day be based on an organic substructure." (*On Narcissism*, in Kandel, 2003: 505).

"The deficiencies in our description would probably vanish if we were already in a position to replace the psychological terms with physiological or chemical ones ... we may expect [physiology and chemistry] to give the most surprising information and we cannot guess what answers it will return in a few dozen years of questions we have put to it. They may be of a kind that will blow away the whole of our artificial structure of hypothesis." (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, in Kandel, 2003: 505).

It is clear from these quotes at least, that Freud believed that there would be an evolution of psychoanalysis towards a biological basis, revealing the vulnerable status of psychoanalysis at the time, as a new discipline which had to contend with the more established medically related disciplines, of which Freud was only too familiar. It is possible to imagine that this preoccupation with things medical [read scientific *proper*] might have infused the rigour in the methods with which Freud developed psychoanalysis on the one hand, but on the other, it may be argued as it has, by those who ended up pursuing other variations of psychoanalysis (e.g. Kohut in the US, Klein in the UK, and Lacan in France), that Freud's true genius was attenuated by the same pursuit of the scientification of psychoanalysis. Could Freud have taken psychoanalysis much further had he not caved in to the demands of his time that the respectability of a discipline had to be measured by the extent to which it could live up to the status of being scientific in the way that scientists at the time, especially medical scientists, could recognize?

It seems the development of psychoanalysis in Japan carries this dilemma, in the policing of who could become a member of the JPS with its close association with the IPA and other western authorities. In some sense, and deducing from Kandel's (1999) article, it may be argued that a psychoanalysis that is too close to medicine, or psychiatry for that matter, is a psychiatry that obscures the stature of psychoanalysis, and impedes the justifiable preoccupation with things properly psychoanalytic. This point is elucidated when one views the history of the DSM and psychoanalysis, a manual of high importance in the practice of psychiatry, at least in the United States (US). The departure of psychiatry from the psychosocial model, which was grounded in psychoanalysis, to a bio-medical model was hailed as a turning point for psychiatry (see Wilson, 1993), suggesting that too close an association between these two disciplines is to the detriment of the development of psychiatry. If the founder of psychoanalysis harboured such ambitions as those which anticipated a complete change in how we understand human life (according to the theory he founded), and how we conceptualize human well-being, does it then not follow that there would be some misgivings regarding psychoanalysis, and that it would be regarded as an "honest but dangerous piece of work", as intimated by Fanon's view of a psychoanalytic critique of the black problem (Macey, in Clarke, 2003)? Indeed, Ivey (1998) cites Fakhry Davids who suggests that psychoanalysis does not travel well, and the dilemmas of its travels are represented no better than in Japan where it competes with local spiritually based practices as well as other strands and varieties of treatment modalities against which it

has to defend itself as it carves its own place. It is to discourses of the ownership of psychoanalysis that I turn presently, which I follow-up with a brief juxtaposition between Africa and Japan as “hosts” of psychoanalysis.

CUSTODIANS OF PSYCHOANALYSIS: WHO OWNS PSYCHOANALYSIS?

The history of psychoanalysis is fraught with conflict, the most common of which Parker refers to in the book being reviewed here. He alludes to what led to Jung’s break away from the Freudian group, and touches on the conflict between the ideas of Melanie Klein and those of Anna Freud, as well as to the resolution hereof. Subsequent to this, there have been newer developments, all of which purport to be one form of psychoanalysis or another. Most notably in recent times, are Kohut’s ideas regarding a metaphorical structure called the self, and its dependence on self object experiences, as well as the more post-modern development of intersubjectivity, represented by people like Donna Orange, Bacal, Hinshelwood and others. These are some of the developments which were founded on what Freud himself anticipated, but failed to pursue due to his pursuit of a “scientific psychoanalysis” amongst others. What is central to all these developments is what they share with Freud’s original theory: the concept of the unconscious. In **Japan in analysis**, Parker is on point in intimating that survival in the modern world, at least as conceptualized by clinical psychoanalysis, is engendered in

“The search for authenticity and identity – an apparent solution to the political-economic conditions of insecurity and meaninglessness – [was] directed inward, deep inward to be equated with sexuality in something Freud discovered a name for, the unconscious.” (p114).

Indeed, it is an important point that centres of authentication for psychoanalysis reside in the west. True to the notion that psychoanalysis does not travel well, it seems psychoanalysis *proper* requires the authorization of the IPA in Japan. However, this is not a harmonious relationship characterized by equality between the local body and the authority in the West. Instead, it is a relationship in which American psychoanalytic writers seem invested in delineating the practice of psychoanalysis in Japan as not original – and even impossible (see the attack by Moloney under the discussion of *Groupism*: pp12-16) on the one hand. On the other hand, there is enormous effort expended on receiving training in the west, registering with authority bodies in Britain and the US, obtaining rights to translate original works by master psychoanalysts, and publishing work that is modelled after western publications of psychoanalysis. All of these suggest that psychoanalysis is that which is practiced in the west, and where psychoanalysis has translocated to the elsewhere of the west, it ceases to be authentic, and requires being propped up - or even more precise, being inspected and supervised – by its western authorities. In some of these attempts to seek the approval of western authority bodies, translocated psychoanalysis burns its fingers, *a la* the reported condescension found in Freud’s brief foreword to Wulf Sachs’ **Psychoanalysis: Its meaning and application**. Indeed, in relation to this, Saul Dubow (1996: 4) remarks that Freud himself contributed a commendatory foreword “not without a marked degree of condescension”. Similarly, Japanese scholars looked to the United Kingdom (UK) and to Northern America for training and authentication. It seems it was even better for the credibility of the institutions they sought to establish, if during their training they could meet (or had met) master figures such as Freud himself (which was the case with Sachs as well, prior to returning to South Africa as a training analyst).

The drama of what I have characterized here with the question as to who owned psychoanalysis played itself in the most significant way during the 1998 conference organized by the South African Psychoanalytic Trust (SAPT), curiously entitled "Change: Psychoanalytic Perspectives". Ivey (1998) writes eloquently on what transpired during this conference, but the most significant characterization is that which splits the conference delegation along the lines of the locals on the one side, and the international delegates and the *émigrés* on the other. The point that Saul Dubow makes, which is referred to above, about Freud's condescension towards those who seek to implant psychoanalysis in the elsewhere of the west, finds emphasis in Ivey's (1998: 55) description of Fakhry Davids' presentation, which he says "devoted a good portion of time to a pedestrian explanation of the terms conscious, preconscious, transference, and countertransference". In response to this, Ivey (1998: 55) continues, "local delegates, many having spent years in psychoanalytic reading groups and supervision, grew visibly agitated". The effect of this reported condescension is dramatized in the response by one of the local delegates, who retorted: "*Why offer us a bottle when we are ready for solids?*" (cited by Ivey, 1998: 55). Were it the case that the relationship between the western luminaries and the local practitioners could be illustrated using the mother-infant relationship, then at best, the west seems to be a mal-attuned mother, with very little appreciation of the needs of the child in the case of psychoanalysis that has travelled away from the west. The conference seems to evince misrecognition that translocating psychoanalysis to South Africa, as in Japan, engenders possibilities of disciplinary growth impossible to attain were psychoanalysis purely a western-based practice and discipline. Parker makes this point in the final section of the book, where he refers to globalization – indicating that conditions which have favoured the growth of psychoanalysis in the west are no longer limited to western countries. The growth of capitalism and its effects and conditions have become a worldwide phenomenon, so too have the accompanying experiences of disconnection, rootlessness and alienation: a fertile ground for the relevance and specified growth for psychoanalysis.

HOSTING PSYCHOANALYSIS.

The idea that psychoanalysis may be hosted in any specific culture may seem contradictory to the point made above, relating to the custodianship of psychoanalysis. Indeed, the greatness of a theory is closely related to the extent to which its application is not limited by geographic and cultural boundaries. However, post-modernism has taught us that universalizations such as those we find in discussions relating to the Oedipus complex in particular, are dangerous, and miss the point of knowing the subject. The universal fit of psychoanalysis across culture, class and race has been articulated each time that psychoanalysis becomes a subject of discussion outside the confines of the west. Examples of this may be found particularly vividly in critiques of **Black Hamlet** (or **Black anger**), where Dubow and Jacqueline Rose suggest that the book represent an attempt to work psychoanalytically across divisions of race. Rose (1996: 41) in particular, cites the work of Marie-Cecile Ortigues and Edmond Ortigues to emphasize the ubiquity of the Oedipus complex in Senegal, stating that "the Oedipus Complex is, if anything, more rather than less present in Senegal than in the West". Interestingly, as Parker informs us, the fit between the Oedipus complex concept and the Japanese analysis of child development and entrance into the symbolic is contested. Instead, there are representations of this development, which are more germane to the specific situation of Japanese culture, its myths and belief systems,

which are suggested as having a better explanatory power in Japan, than would be the case were the Oedipus complex the concept (or legend) of choice.

A discussion of Japan and South Africa as hosts of psychoanalysis is encouraged by the caution that Parker sounds in saying that an overplay of cultural peculiarities would miss what is significant about Japanese psychoanalysis, and what psychoanalysts around the world can learn from it (p111). Interestingly, Parker makes a convincing point about the universal nature of psychoanalysis, stating that the fact that psychoanalysis grows on different national soil does not mean that it has to be different. He adds: "It is the very universal nature of psychoanalysis that permits difference to be articulated, but for each subject, against assumptions in their culture rather than through being reduced to it." (p115).

The qualifier urging the recognition of cultural difference and idiosyncrasies is particularly important as it dislodges Western culture as the core of what Freud (1919: 168) calls "strict and untendentious psychoanalysis". Parker provides an important emphasis in this regard, in concluding that all psychoanalysis is "cultural". This negates the foregone conclusion that the west is necessarily the bosom of psychoanalysis as a discipline. It draws attention to sociopolitics and the socioeconomics which are intricately woven into dynamics of who holds power even as psychoanalysis is being shown as unlimited to a geographic space.

The unique histories of Japan and South Africa are linked to the well documented experiences of occupation and colonization respectively. In particular, politics of colonization suggest that the west did not recognize the existence of a country and its people, until the moment of "discovery". Following this logic, the knowledge about a colonized country fell within the limits of what the colonizer could know and the colonizer's ability to comprehend. Anything beyond that was insignificant. The irony attaching to this where psychoanalysis is concerned may be seen in what Parker describes as the geographical areas of the IPA's world. He provides this description to illustrate the non-recognition of Japan as a country where the discipline of "authentic" psychoanalysis has taken root. This non-recognition, ironically, happens despite the ongoing interaction between Japanese practitioners and the western authorities of psychoanalysis, including Freud (e.g. Kosawa's visit to Bergasse 19 – Freud's home in Vienna). According to Parker, the problem of the exclusion of Japan from the world of the IPA has been rectified, albeit in what he calls a strange demarcation of parts of the world. South Africans will have to await their turn in this inclusion, seeing that Africa as a continent is not recognized as forming part of the IPA world. Given the protestations of local practitioners of psychoanalysis during the 1998 conference referred to above, it does not look like western authorities of psychoanalysis have gone anywhere beyond seeing South African psychoanalysis as having been conceived, never mind a progression towards infancy where even bottle-feeding will be acceptable.

The colonial legacy cannot but be implicated in how psychoanalysis is received and hosted in South Africa, as is the case with the occupation of Japan by American forces. In the case of South Africa, and other countries where socioeconomic inequalities are huge, there is a suggestion that psychoanalysis is not an appropriate mode to enhance human freedom, even from psychic pain. The most recent encounter I had with this contention was at a launch of a book excavating the memories of slavery, and the meanings hereof in the present. In the question that I wanted to ask, I had intimated, as

Chabani Manganyi did too at the 1998 conference (Ivey, 1998), at the ideal of putting the nation on a couch, and dealing with the excesses of the violent experiences this country has gone through. The response that this reference elicited left no doubt in me that in certain public spaces of this country, especially those which are seen as politically progressive, the mention of psychoanalysis as a vehicle to theorizing the history of this country and its impact on the present is seen as a luxury and a pastime better left for occasions in posh offices of Johannesburg suburbia. I believe that at best, such intolerances of psychoanalysis are unnecessary, and I would go more with Leslie Swartz's (in Ivey, 1998) characterization of what psychoanalysis could do for the specific South African conditions. Faced with the reality of disadvantage which global capitalism entrenches, Freud (1919) seems to have anticipated similar challenges, without offering much more than cold sympathy which dared not detract the course of psychoanalysis as a science, even in the face of this suffering:

"We shall probably discover that the poor are even less ready to part with their neuroses than the rich, because the hard life that awaits them if they recover offers them no attraction, and illness gives them one more claim to social help. Often, perhaps, we may only be able to achieve anything by combining mental assistance with some material support ... it is very probable too, that the large-scale application of our therapy will compel us to alloy the pure gold of analysis freely with the copper of direct suggestion ... But, whatever the elements out of which it is compounded, its most effective and most important ingredients will assuredly remain those borrowed from strict and untendentious psychoanalysis." (in Ivey, 1998: 57).

The call for psychoanalysis to establish a closer relation to biology, as made by Kandel (1999) seems to challenge the contention that the couch "remain our laboratory" as suggested by Trevor Lubbe (in Ivey, 1998). Instead, it seems the newer terrain that Freudian psychoanalysis encounters carries the hope for a more relevant psychoanalysis. In the case of Kendall, he directs psychoanalysis to neuroscience and biology to contribute to psychoanalysis evolving into a science. The experience of Japan, recounted by Parker suggests that more local cultural knowledges and experiences bear potential to lead psychoanalysis to more interesting avenues, and have indeed, shown already what psychoanalysis can be once it has shaken off the hegemony of the west. In the example that I referred to above, regarding the question at a book launch, what was suggested as equally, if not more relevant, were methods including the burning of *impepho* (special dried leaves burnt as part of a performance of ritual or meditation), as a way to facilitate a realignment of the present with the past. Burning *impepho* is a popular practice in the ceremonies and other important events in Africa and its diaspora. A psychoanalysis which seeks to remain in the laboratory of the couch, with no interaction with the poor or Other, will only retard the development of psychoanalysis towards a truly universal practice.

Parker writes about how Japanese analysts seemed to avoid discussing the trauma of Japanese occupation by the US, while they took great delight in ridiculing Naikan therapy and Morita therapy. He explains that these therapies claim an essential affinity with traditional culture, and this is what appears to attract ridicule from those whose attention seems to be focused on approximating the western authorities of psychoanalysis, fixing perceptions of psychoanalysis as a practice alien to local traditions. Preoccupation with the perceived authentic psychoanalysis of the west raises questions about the relationship between the occupier and the occupied on one

level, and questions about the colonizer and the colonized on a broader level. In the introduction to a 1986 English translation of Glissant's (1958) novel, **The ripening**, Michael Dash quotes Fanon who states that following Césaire's return to Martinique Island, and his appointment to a post in Modern Languages: "For the first time a lycée teacher – a man therefore, who was apparently worthy of respect – was seen to announce quite simply to West Indian society 'that it was fine and good to be a Negro'" (Dash, 1986: 2).

Fanon goes on to add that the announcement by Césaire, as he saw it, created a scandal. The context to this is the idea that following its emancipation, Martinique remained in a powerful stranglehold by France, both politically and culturally. It is to a similar stranglehold that Vergés (2001) refers in her book on Reunion Islands, a stranglehold that romanticizes the colonizer even after decolonization. This is an important observation about Japanese psychoanalysis (*a la* JPS), and its apparent insistence on the purity of psychoanalysis as viewed through the lenses of the west. This insistence however, has not stopped the refractory process, where the practice of psychoanalysis in Japan has contributed the concept of the *Ajase* complex, initially, in an attempt to link psychoanalysis to local legends, and the subsequent "*don't look*" prohibition that better explain the child's entry into the symbolic without relying on mediation by the father. Similarly, the concept of *Amae*, which throws a new light into the notion of dependency that pertains to the kinship (a special, deeper relationship between the mother and child), and forms part of the contributions from Japan, which have challenged western psychoanalysis to expand and reflect on what constitutes psychoanalysis. It would seem then, that hosting psychoanalysis does not fix the position of "host" practitioners to that of subservience. Neither does it hold up the denigration of local traditional practices as a prerequisite. Psychoanalysis, like many other similar disciplines and practices, is caught up in the whirlwind of globalization, which transforms psychoanalysis to both universal and glocal forces.

CONCLUSION.

In writing a review, there are a number of options that the reviewer may pursue. Amongst these, it is possible to focus on the content of a book, and to provide a summary of sorts, delineating the book as having achieved what it set out to achieve. Secondly, it is also possible to use a master guide, focusing on the form and content of the book, and assessing the extent to which the book conforms to similar other ways of writing. The third option, which is the one I opted for, is to allow the book to evoke responses that will send one to different directions, compelling a conversation between the book under review and its content, and material evoked by the reading of the book. The true measure of the success of a book is engendered in the diversity of the scholarship it illuminates, and the number of disciplinary, cultural, sociopolitical and socioeconomic material it evokes in the reader through its content. Parker's book, **Japan in analysis: Cultures of the unconscious** appeals both to an ardent follower of Japanese cultures, as well as to those interested in what happens to psychoanalysis in the glocalization process - the simultaneity, the co-presence of both universalizing and particularizing tendencies. Glocalization, a term popularized by sociologist Roland Robertson is an apt descriptor for the processes at play in the translocations of psychoanalysis, given that its origins as a concept, are credited to Japanese economists in the **Harvard Business Review** (Robertson, 1992).

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