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Winnicott's Protégé

Not long after Rickman's death, Khan sought a new patron and further analysis (which as he was now an Associate Member was of course not a formal requirement). He approached Donald Woods Winnicott, who agreed to take him on for further analysis probably from the autumn of 1951. Meeting initially at Winnicott's consulting rooms at 47 Queen Anne Street, W1, the analytic venue shifted early in 1952 when Winnicott moved to his new house at 87 Chester Square, SW1. This marked the commencement of the consolidation of Khan's best-known and most crucial professional relationship, to which we now turn.

WINNICOTT ASCENDING

In 1951 Winnicott, then aged fifty-five, held the offices of Honorary Training Secretary and Physician in Charge of the Children's Department in the British Psychoanalytical Society and was becoming a leading figure within the A Group. During this year his enumeration among the Kleinian wing largely ebbed away,[1] his ensuing independent minded stance within the Middle (A) Group allowing him great scope for less fettered (and potentially undisciplined or wild) development, including clinically where, as Dodi Goldman remarked, he 'was blasphemous…[in] that he did not see himself as serving any normalising function'.[2] An analysand of James Strachey, Joan Riviere and more briefly Clifford Scott, Winnicott came to psychoanalysis through paediatrics, being a Consultant in Children's Medicine at Paddington Green Children's Hospital, before qualifying as a Member of the British Society in 1935 and as a training analyst several years later. He was certainly familiar with troubled colleagues seeking his help. William Gillespie described him as 'an analyst's analyst, an analyst *of* analysts'.[3] Colleagues would turn to him when they were in difficulties, although such requests could be burdensome, as he intimated to Clifford Scott in December 1956 when he wrote: 'The trouble is I get analysts throwing themselves on me when they feel they will let the side down by breaking down.'[4] He already had a string of publications to his credit and had given a very successful series of radio broadcasts. He also had had a serious and well-known coronary in 1948, a second on 5 September 1950 and his health continued to be frail. He was at the time in considerable personal turmoil separating from his first wife, Alice, their divorce being made absolute on 11 December 1951. Just over two weeks later, on 28 December 1951, Winnicott remarried. His new wife was his wartime social work colleague Clare Britton, with whom he seems to have

been pursuing a clandestine extra-marital relationship for about eight years.[5] Such profound personal developmental changes may be correlated with (and arguably facilitated) Winnicott's best known paper, 'Transitional objects and transitional phenomena' which he delivered to a Scientific meeting of the British Psychoanalytical Society on 30 May 1951.[6] Masud Khan was in the audience and is recorded as being among the active discussants.[7]

PRE-ANALYTIC CONTACTS

Khan seems to have first come across Winnicott when he attended Winnicott's lecture on 'Paediatrics and society', which he delivered as Chairman of the British Psychological Society's Medical Section on 28 January 1948.[8] Later Winnicott, apparently following Rickman's request, allowed Khan to observe one of his child psychiatry consultation clinics at Paddington Green Children's Hospital in 1949.[9] Nearly forty years later Khan described the memory of that meeting as it survived in his mind, in which he saw Winnicott:

> …amidst five children, all drawing, or what he would call doodling, with him, plus their parents. Winnicott would move from child to child, then go to the parents of the particular child, talk to them and come back, and so on. I witnessed this for two hours. At the end of it he came over to me and said: 'You are Masud Khan?' I said 'Yes, sir.' He asked me: 'What are you doing here, you are too well dressed to be here?' I was only 25 years of age and a candidate at the British Institute of Psychoanalysis, but I wasn't going to be taunted by him, so I replied: 'One dresses to the manner born!' Winnicott smiled and said: 'You have some cheek'.[10]

Shortly after this, in 1949 Winnicott had referred and supervised Khan's first child analytic training case, as has been discussed earlier, an event which would have inevitably involved substantial contact between the two men.

Given this background, the integrity of the analytic frame for the purposes of Khan's analysis was compromised. Whilst this may have been redeemable and 'grist to the analytic mill' in other circumstances, with Winnicott and Khan it can be seen as a harbinger, setting the tone for their subsequent relationship.

THE ANALYTIC PERIOD

While Winnicott's analysis of Khan has become a highly controversial episode in psychoanalytic history, the known facts about it are extremely meagre, with no definitively identifiable case history available. Even the basics about the actual duration of the analysis are unclear. In the immediate wake of Winnicott's death Khan claimed in his *Work Books* (a private or semi-private space) that it had covered some *fifteen* years, from 1951 to 1966.[11] Fifteen years later, in 1986, two years *after* Clare Winnicott's death, he publicly wrote that it had lasted only *ten* years, although this time without giving dates.[12] Both claims are misleading. The first is demonstrably inflated and inaccurate, while the second claim, although it

may be closer to the actual total duration of the analysis, misleadingly suggests a sustained analysis. Assuming the analysis began during the autumn of 1951, the most reliable evidence suggests that it continued only for some *four* years, until 1955, when it was substantially interrupted if not terminated. This punctuation occurred during a crisis in Khan's relationship with Jane Shore, as will be discussed later. Whether the analysis recommenced subsequently is unclear. Apart from Khan's own previously mentioned claims, there is no independent documentary evidence available as corroboration. Speculatively, it is *possible* that the analysis was resumed for a period during the early to mid 1960s, the most likely time being from around 1960 to 1965 or 1966. If the latter were correct, and there are good reasons to doubt it is so, it would tally with Khan's 1986 claim that his analysis with Winnicott had lasted ten years.

Historical claims substantially depend on the quality of the informants and on the degree of corroboration between independent sources for their reliability and credibility. With Masud Khan multiple sources point to his tendency to not only inflate but also to invent himself through narrative, a tendency that began in childhood and increased markedly during the last twenty years of his life. He thus becomes an unreliable source, perhaps particularly so when the examined claims are substantial and inflate Khan's reputation and self.

In the case of his analysis with Winnicott, knowledge of the cessation of this analysis in 1955 is derived not from Khan but from Marion Milner, Judith Issroff and Jane Shore, the latter at that point in time beginning to consult Winnicott *in lieu of Khan, at Khan's own insistence*.[13] Her analysis with Winnicott continued up to 1960 as will be discussed later, during which time Khan began to increasingly and substantially assist Winnicott editorially, which, combined with other social contacts to be detailed, would have made concurrent analysis unlikely. After 1960 the cessation of Jane's analysis could have partially facilitated a resumption of Khan's analytic relationship with Winnicott, although there was a continuation of substantial editorial, professional and social contacts between the two men. The level of this was such that a viable analytic relationship would be highly unlikely, if not impossible during this time. This is not to say that an attempt at analysis did not occur during this time, and that such an attempt may have continued for an extended time. However, on the basis of the sources and supported by the tone and content of the available documentary evidence to be discussed, it seems that *no prima facie analytic relationship as such existed after 1955*.

It is clear that Winnicott was, initially at least, very impressed with Masud Khan. Thus, for example, roughly two years into the analysis, in October 1953, in a letter to the eminent American ego-psychologist David Rapaport, he wrote:

> I would like to feel that Masud Khan and yourself will give time for a discussion together. He is junior in the ordinary term as a psycho-analyst but I believe his knowledge of the literature and of the development of psycho-analytic thought is not equalled in our Society. If you and he are able to have a talk I shall personally benefit in an indirect way.[14]

Winnicott can here be seen as directly sponsoring Khan in an extra-analytic fashion. His expression of hope for 'personal…benefit in an indirect way' from a liaison between Khan and Rapaport is highly suggestive. Previously it had been Klein who Winnicott had sparred with as a catalyst for his own development. Now, having more definitively split from her, Khan seems to have fulfilled something of her dialectical function in Winnicott's psychic economy, albeit with more masculine or even homoerotic overtones. In his letter to Rapaport Khan is depicted as the man who, having been commissioned to explore the psychoanalytic world, will bring his discoveries back to enrich his patriarch Winnicott, a point Robert Rodman has also recently made.[15] Khan quickly and willingly acceded to this role and Winnicott would in due course comment that Khan was 'responsible for my gradually coming to see the relationship of my work to that of other analysts, past and present'.[16] Learning from the patient has always been a *sine qua non* for a fruitful psychoanalysis, for all parties concerned (patient, analyst and psychoanalysis). However, Winnicott's relationship with Khan was transacted on multiple levels and this extra-analytic involvement probably fatally compromised the analysis and thus deprived Khan of an opportunity for much needed help.

Publishing became a prime arena within which Khan and Winnicott's mutual relating would occur, texts perhaps serving as a playing space for them and as a means of triangulating their relationship. The bulk of Winnicott's writings were produced during his last twenty years, during which period Khan is progressively and prominently acknowledged as assisting with suggestions and editorial input, as will be later discussed. Whereas previously Winnicott had habitually felt he had struggled for recognition with Klein, now with new independence he eschewed subordination and, still wanting to be in a couple – the fount of creativity, he looked to Khan amongst others for supportive incremental mirroring; his others being assigned the relative role of second banana as it were. Performing a catalytic role in Winnicott's creative life, Khan would work in the background to facilitate his writing and its dissemination.

The prelude to the two men's involvement with each other textually emerged very early in the analysis itself, at a point in the late spring of 1952. Melanie Klein had asked Winnicott to review *Smooth and Rough*, a psychoanalytically informed book on art by *her* analysand Adrian Stokes, published the previous year. In response, Winnicott wrote that 'a review which satisfies the editor [of the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*] has already been received by [Willi] Hoffer; probably you know about this, and it is by Masud Khan'.[17] Despite this, Winnicott went on to suggest that 'if I find that I can write a review of some interest I will write one and offer it to Hoffer who I think will accept it as a second comment to be published alongside that of Masud Khan'.[18] Winnicott never wrote the review, having disliked the book's Kleinian frame and in October and November cited it (as one might use a brickbat) in his independence struggles with Klein.[19] Leaving that aside, knowing his analysand had already penned a review which had been accepted, Winnicott's apparent willingness to countenance writing another seems extraordinary. He thus seemed ready to potentially overshadow Khan, Winnicott's idea for side-by-

side reviews inevitably fostering comparison of the known senior white analyst with the then unknown junior Pakistani. Khan's soon to be evinced tendencies to overshadow his own patients cannot have been lessened by his analyst's attitude, indeed it would be easy to see such being reinforced. As regards the review of *Smooth and Rough* Khan's curiously was not ultimately published, a review instead appearing written by the psychoanalytically influenced art critic Anton Ehrenzweig.[20]

Although the *Smooth and Rough* affair did not result in Winnicott's review appearing 'alongside' Khan's, their foray the next year resulted in a far closer enmeshment of the two men. On this occasion the produce of their extra-analytic relationship was a lengthy 4,000 word controversial joint review in the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* of Ronald Fairbairn's landmark book *Psychoanalytic Studies of the Personality*.[21] The review began by praising Fairbairn's 'sincere and bold attempt to revise psycho-analytic metapsychology',[22] within which Winnicott and Khan suggest his most important clinical contribution is 'the idea that at the root of the schizoid personality is [a] failure on the part of the mother to be felt by the infant as loving him in his own right'.[23] Despite such faint praise, the whole tone of the review is clearly hostile, criticism centring on both a challenge Winnicott and Khan claim Fairbairn is making to 'supplant' Freud and Freudian theory, and (relatedly) on Fairbairn's independence of the existing psychoanalytic theoretical (and political) groups.

Harry Guntrip, who convincingly and thoroughly answered these criticisms, commented that the hostility was curious, particularly for what here may be called its *fidei defensor* type stance vis-à-vis Freud. Guntrip goes on to write: 'This emotional standing-ground of Winnicott and Kahn [sic] appears to impose on them a kind of duty to criticise the "new theory" with which, in fact, Winnicott at least has much in common.'[24] John Sutherland, concurring with Guntrip's commentary, goes on to suggest that for Winnicott the 'savage attack' may have been motivated by 'Winnicott's envy and hate of his father, feelings in a secret self which he projected into Fairbairn in his attack'.[25] Peter Rudnytsky agrees, although he focuses on Winnicott's psychoanalytic 'fathers', and quotes Greenberg and Mitchell's work in partial explanation. The combined argument runs thus: 'Winnicott exhibits a Bloomian "anxiety of influence" towards his precursors, most notably Freud and Klein, and that he "recounts the history of psychoanalytic ideas not so much as it developed, but as he would like it to have been".'[26] Propagandist methods were thus employed by *Winnicott and Khan* together to clothe themselves at that time in a classical Freudian mantle.

Later, Winnicott privately acknowledged, 'I do think our review of Fairbairn's book was not a good review',[27] subsequent to which in 1965 (in the wake of Fairbairn's death) both Winnicott and Khan individually stated the review was based on a misunderstanding of his work.[28] The reasons for this claimed misunderstanding are likely to be complex, perhaps involving *both* Winnicott and Khan's displaced envy and hatred towards their respective fathers being turned onto Fairbairn's challenging work, while they adopt a veil of establishment orthodoxy or filial piety towards the paternal image of Freud. As a joint activity between analyst and analysand the book review is likely to have

also served particular purposes for the analytic couple, most explicitly safely linking them together against a common foe (who was, as has been suggested above, something of a straw man anyway), an activity which would constitute an excursion, to use Edna O'Shaughnessy's term, from the analysis. O'Shaughnessy suggests that such a deterioration of the analytic situation moves *both analyst and patient* away from consideration of the most urgent psychic issues. Such a patient, she writes:

> …believes no manageable contact is possible with his object and the level of anxiety is horrendous. Contact must be evaded, a new situation constructed, which characteristically in its turn becomes untenable. These patients are hyper-active, their talk proliferates, as, typically, do their dream images.[29]

Winnicott perhaps shared this or a similar phantasy also, the excursion thus being akin to a *folie-à-deux*. Such a view both fits the known facts of Khan's analysis with Winnicott, which was characterised by repeated excursions from the work, and throws an added light of Khan's wider relationships. The two men's rivalrous and indeed hostile attitude toward Klein may be seen similarly, as may Khan's apparently frequently missing sessions with Winnicott due to oversleeping[30] and Winnicott's corresponding tendency to nod off during sessions.

Another example of an excursion appears the following year, when Winnicott wrote his paper 'Meta-psychological and clinical aspects of regression within the psychoanalytic set-up'; he completed and read this to the British Society in March 1954. In a postscript to the circulated paper, he wrote: 'Although this formulation of my ideas comes straight out of my clinical work I am conscious of indebtedness as I re-read and reconsider almost every phrase. Instead of trying myself to trace sources I have asked the Librarian, Masud Khan, to prepare a brief statement linking my ideas with those of my teachers and colleagues.'[31] This does not appear to have been a solitary occurrence, as Michael Balint would later testify. Writing to Winnicott, Balint, frustrated by Winnicott's occlusion of him and others, declared that:

> …this has happened several times during our friendship. You emphasised on more than one occasion that 'though – (I quote from memory) – Ferenczi and Dr Balint have said all these many years ago, here I am not concerned with what they said', or 'I have not had time to read that but I shall ask the Honorary Librarian [Khan] to fill this gap', etc. Of course in this way you always have the audience laughing and on your side – no one among us likes to read boring scientific literature and if somebody of your stature admits it in public, he can be certain of his success.[32]

By accepting such invitations to link his analyst's ideas to the wider intellectual firmament and tacitly preserve Winnicott's conceptual narcissistic solipsism, Khan acquires a degree of recognition and acknowledgment, his place however being akin to a rather unappealing, subordinate dogsbody. Furthermore,

Winnicott's aforementioned characterisations of Khan as 'the Librarian' offered a certain aura of legitimation to his repeated use of Khan, an aura of legitimation that would have been more difficult to sustain had alternative characterisations been employed, such as 'my analysand' or 'my patient'. Then, the excursion would have been clear.

In claiming that he was himself aware of the derivation of the terms and concepts he was employing, Winnicott may have rather overstated his insight: Winnicott is well known for his intuitive rather than his intellectual grasp of psychoanalysis. A well known instance will, perhaps, serve to illustrate this. During his first Presidency of the British Psychoanalytical Society he privately declared: 'I feel odd when in the President's chair because I don't know my Freud the way a President should do; yet I do find I have Freud in my bones.'[33] Further support may be gleaned from even a cursory examination of Winnicott's published papers, the dearth of references to the psychoanalytic literature they contain being conspicuous. Prior to Masud Khan's arrival in London, Winnicott had acknowledged in his 1945 paper 'Primitive emotional development' his own failure to link his ideas with other people's, to position that job 'last of all' and to look to others to facilitate the task. Thus, he said 'By listening to what I have to say, and criticizing, you may help me take my next step, which is the study of the sources of my ideas, both in clinical work and in the published writings of analysts.'[34] And again later, in a January 1967 address to the 1952 Club, similar sentiments were reiterated, along with an acknowledgement that 'I've realised more and more as time went on what a tremendous lot I've lost from not properly correlating my work with the work of others.'[35] It is clear from this that over several decades at the very least Winnicott explicitly looked for an other as a type of accomplice, particularly to function as an editor and a Boswell. It was Khan who, in the role of Winnicott's other, was significantly responsible for alerting Winnicott to his intellectual pedigree, even during the early 1950s, a suggestion supported by Winnicott's earlier mentioned letter to Rapaport from October 1953 as well as Winnicott's inclusion of Khan's 'brief statement' as an appendix to his March 1954 paper. This debt was later acknowledged by Winnicott some eleven years later when he explicitly wrote that 'Mr Masud Khan…is responsible for my gradually coming to see the relationship of my work to that of other analysts, past and present.'[36] Thus, in ways similar to Hegel's master-slave dialectic, the dogsbody may be seen as coming to exercise a paternal function, allowing Winnicott to begin to acknowledge his filial and fraternal position in psychoanalysis.

Winnicott's management of boundaries was a source of controversy within the British Society, with Melanie Klein, for example, sharply criticising his use of active techniques, which she regarded as malignant: the thin end of the wedge. Hanna Segal quotes Klein in this context as having 'often paraphrased Freud's letter to Ferenczi: "the first generation holds hands – the second generation takes patients to bed" (Jones, 1957, pp. 174–5)'.[37] Khan of course was 'the second generation', a figure Klein might have *now* pointed to as confirmation of her reservations about Winnicott's technique and its potentially pernicious influence on analysands' own subsequent practice. Such a conclusion would be risking

a logical fallacy of the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* kind, wherein a coincidental correlation is supposed to be a causal one. What the influence and outcome was of Winnicott's analysis of Khan remains a question still in need of examination, though on the face of it Winnicott's boundary laxity can hardly have assisted Khan in establishing a secure frame for his own patients.

One area of boundary negotiation that Winnicott, in a way strongly reminiscent of Khan, had apparent difficulties in from his earliest days in psychoanalysis was in his reluctance to settle fees he owed. Thus he failed to pay Ernest Jones his initial consultation fee in 1923, in one way or another delayed payments to James Strachey and apparently misled Joan Riviere into agreeing to accept a reduced fee.[38] Such delinquency seemed to later partly inform Winnicott's definition of transitional phenomena, which incorporates the intermediate area between 'primary unawareness of indebtedness and the acknowledgement of indebtedness ("Say: Ta")'.[39] There is no available information suggesting that Khan had a better record paying Winnicott than he had previously with the fees due to the Institute, Anna Freud, Klein or Scott. The *overlapping* nature of this and other difficulties may have contributed to a degree of narcissistic identification between the two men, conditions conducive to the enclaves and excursions previously noted. Both men may be seen to suffer in varying degrees from difficulties in separation and acknowledging their true indebtedness to their actual predecessors, preferring instead their own supposedly self-generated narratives – a theme Charles Rycroft would later elaborate as will be discussed in due course.[40] Problems in the settlement of fees from this vantage point may be seen to externally represent an ablation of indebtedness to real internal figures, their scotomisation or at least marked conflicts within one's object relations.

Adam Limentani suggested that Khan was dissatisfied and disillusioned with all his analyses, including that with Winnicott.[41] Malcolm Pines recalls Khan speaking disparagingly of Winnicott during the 1950s, saying he was 'a rotten analyst' during meetings, comments overtly ignored by Winnicott.[42] During the last ten years of his life, Khan would increasingly express disillusionment with analysis as a vehicle for profound personal change and instead laid increasing emphasis on external circumstance, action and interpersonal interaction as mediums for self-experience and self-actualisation. Thus, in 1980, when reflecting on both his own self-experience and his physical and psychological difficulties, he would privately declare:

> …one never really changes at the root; but one very drastically rearranges oneself, given will, motivation and *helpful circumstance* from the *outside* (as analysts we grossly and grievously neglect or cussedly disregard that!). I would go so far as to say, that to recover from an *ailment* like mine, *reality is destiny*.[43]

This sentiment was not a conclusion arrived at merely at the end of Khan's life when his psychological difficulties were at their most florid, but may be discerned, albeit in a more latent form, throughout Khan's life and work. With Sharpe and Rickman Khan intimated they showed him papers on which they

were working and gave him practical assistance and social introductions. In addition he demonstrably busied himself with posthumous editorial work on Rickman's literary estate. Now, with Winnicott Khan seems to have sought to similarly substitute editorial and intellectual lieutenancy for a true psychoanalytic relationship, a substitution that Winnicott not only tolerated but also professionally benefited from.