

Draft

America's connection to India: Freud, Jones & Bose.

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This is a rudimentary paper written to claim my connection that the American and the erstwhile Indian modes of psychoanalysis are more authentic modes vis-à-vis the French mode. Some of the claims I make in this paper have been already published in Prabuddha Bharata and some are forthcoming. For instance, I have written on Ritalin which is pertinent to this discussion yet I have avoided mentioning this since my contention regarding Ritalin is pending publication in Prabuddha Bharata.

Scholars have already documented America's connection to India through trade routes and the movement (production and consumption) of English novels. Ships left the ports of Kolkata (erstwhile Calcutta) bearing exotic Indian names, often derived from best-selling Bengali novels. Further, books published in England were pirated in Kolkata and the same went to US readers. This trajectory has been well documented by Sanjeev Chopra¹.

I want to add an area hitherto unnoticed by American Studies' and separately, Indian Studies' scholars:

Ernest Jones (1879-1958) who popularized Freud (1856-1939) in America was in touch with Girindrasekhar Bose (1887-1953). Bose was in touch with both Freud and Jones². Bose began the Indian chapter of the (classically Freudian) Psychoanalytic Association³. This last came about through the office of Jones.

¹ Chopra spoke on this at the Hyatt Regency, Kolkata on 4th July, 2017, evening. Chopra's detailed scholarship is beyond the scope of this draft. In private conversation with me he has elaborated on his research.

² "Girindra Sekhar Institute." Girindra Sekhar Institute of Psychological Education & Research, gsiper.org/page.php?page_alt_name. Accessed 23 July 2017.

³ Bose was the 1st President of the Indian Psychoanalytic Society.

Therefore, my contention is this: there are more similarities between the Indian praxes of psychoanalysis and American praxes of psychoanalysis than between Indian and French psychoanalytic praxes; at least, initially. It is only later that through a very Indian obsession with Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) mediated through Gayatri Spivak⁴ (1942-) and the *subaltern* group that we find Indian Psychoanalysis become a mimicry⁵ of French psychoanalysis. Amardeep Singh's understanding of mimicry is worth noting for its ontological bias towards French philosophy. Singh in an act of mimicry sees mimicry as good in some circumstances! Indian academics seem to be too indebted to the *Tel Quel* (1960-82) school which is the psychoanalytic equivalent of the hippie movement within serious clinical practice. Therefore, now Jacques Lacan (1901- 1981) has come to rule the roost in the *discourse of social sciences* in India⁶. If the dates are carefully considered, we in India are Johnny-come-latelies.

The main mode of Indian psychoanalysis then was/is American and classically Freudian. But now it is Lacanian (and not even the sort practised by Julia Kristeva⁷). Unfortunately, both Lacan and Kristeva are too abstract to be of any use to clinical therapists like Thomas Bien⁸. The movement away from American psychoanalysis within Indian psychoanalytic studies has

⁴ Spivak has done a brilliant job of translating Derrida but both Derrida and Spivak are indecipherable and speak a language which is obscure and in the long run, Derrida is a marginal philosopher who was confused about the *logos*.

⁵ "Mimicry, however, is not all bad. In his essay "Of Mimicry and Man," Bhabha described mimicry as sometimes unintentionally subversive. In Bhabha's way of thinking, which is derived from Jacques Derrida's deconstructive reading of J.L. Austin's idea of the "performative," mimicry is a kind of performance that exposes the artificiality of all symbolic expressions of power. In other words, if an Indian, desiring to mimic the English, becomes obsessed with some particular codes associated with Englishness, such as the British colonial obsession with the sola topee, his performance of those codes might show how hollow the codes really are."

See Singh, Amardeep. "Mimicry and Hybridity in Plain English." *Amardeep Singh*, May 8, 2009. Accessed July 23, 2017. <http://www.lehigh.edu/~amsp/2009/05/mimicry-and-hybridity-in-plain-english.html>.

⁶ I have mentioned about Lacan's obsession with the real etc. in many of my published reviews in *Prabuddha Bharata*.

⁷ I have one published review of Kristeva (1941-) and one is forthcoming in *Prabuddha Bharata*. This essay is being written on 23rd July, 2017.

⁸ I have reviewed Thomas Bien's excellent *Mindful Therapy: A Guide for Therapists and Helping Professionals* in *Prabuddha Bharata*.

been to the detriment of clinical praxes in India. Empiricism (as in neuroscience) had been removed by Lacan who along with R. D. Laing (1927-89) have rung the death-knell of clinical psychoanalysis globally. I am working on the works of a German psychoanalyst, Felix de Mendelssohn whose work on organizational psychoanalysis⁹ may be the exact thing which can help redeem both global psychoanalytic norms and also, Indian psychoanalysis. Here is Jacques Lacan on anxiety, notice the meaninglessness of his verbosity:

These remarks, as you can sense very well, are not digressional. [Notice how Lacan is hedging for attacks against precisely his “digressional” inanities.] Already, circumcision can no longer strike you as being some ritualistic whim, because it conforms to what I have been teaching you to consider in demand, namely the circumscription of the object and with it the function of the cut. What God demands [Lacan is now not only a teacher but also a theologian!] as an offering in this delimited zone isolates the object once it’s been circumcised... (See p 81 in Lacan, Jacques. "That Which Deceives Not." Translated by A. R. Price. Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller. In *Anxiety: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*, 69-82. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2015.)

Lacan invariably rambles in his work and has a superficial sense of *gravitas* when he tries to “teach” us. He has done irreparable damage to mental healthcare worldwide. Had Indian psychoanalysts heeded Bose, Jones and Freud, we’d be in good stead.

Freud had written that he would be redundant when medical neuroscience caught up with psychoanalysis. But while Bose, Jones and Freud are not redundant, we can

⁹ Mendelssohn’s work on group dreamwork(s) is fascinating. I am preparing a monograph on him and reading singers like Leonard Cohen through a matrix created from his analytic work.

safely ignore French psychoanalysts within the matrix of psychoanalytic praxes. The American connection needs to be re-discovered and nurtured.