

Preface

The British Psychoanalytical Society has been home to many émigrés, one of the most flamboyant, creative and controversial being the subject of the present book Mohammed Masud Raza Khan. Raised in the Punjab during the days of British rule, Khan's life and times were lived under the shadow of colonial and post-colonial dialectics between ruler and subject. Seeking refuge from this and his own particular conflicts in the world of myth and the symbolic, literature and ideas, Khan could appear a 'collagist' to some, rapidly assimilating their ideas, at least within his texts if not within his self.¹ Others saw him as 'unctuous...towards the powers that be;...a flatterer...[and] a Uriah Heep... [whose] citations...[to] Winnicott are obtrusive'.² Cross-culturally however, these patterns arguably reflect the importance of having a senior benefactor or patron within the context of what Alan Roland terms the Indian familial or 'we' self.³ Whether due to cultural misunderstandings or his own idiosyncratic character, Khan's scandalising behaviour should not obscure the fact that he was one of the most significant psychoanalysts of his generation.

Chiefly an essayist, Khan published at least sixty-two papers, many of which are collected into his four books, plus some fifty-four briefer pieces including book reviews, introductions and forewords to the works of colleagues. Like other psychoanalytic writings, these 'like the hysteric, suffer from reminiscences [as] there is no possibility of a psychoanalytic theory that is not created by the desire of the theoretician'.⁴ Khan's works bear the decipherable marks of his biography. This essentially human context equally permeates readers who, having once widely praised Khan's contributions, today often shun both him and his rich and varied works in equal measure. It is easy to see him as being 'mad, bad and dangerous to know', just as Byron was regarded by Lady Caroline Lamb on their first meeting. Indeed, it has been argued that the history of psychoanalysis has been pervaded for ill by just such *ad hominem* strategies. Years ago Eric Fromm, for example, highlighted the widespread tendency within psychoanalysis to use expulsion and more recently Marina Leitner has discussed the use of psychiatric diagnostic labels and suggestions of psychopathology as means of suppressing dissent and conflicts.⁵ Clearly such a stance is indefensible, intellectually and psychoanalytically. Khan's life and work first and foremost needs and deserves understanding, not as a caricature but in terms of its lived complexity. This is the basic aim of the present book.

The distillation of biographical fact and fiction is often complicated and is particularly so in the case of Masud Khan who eschewed historical truth in favour of metaphor and multiple narratives. Frequently regarded as exaggerating stories or as being a liar, he chose to celebrate this capacity as a 'rationale for [my] lifestyle. Everyone is always jibing at me for never sticking to the facts and so much of modern theatre has lost the verve of imaginative truth through escaping into tape-recorder-clinical-realism'.⁶ Masud Khan would invent his

own myth, a phenomenon more generally illustrated elsewhere by Ernest Kris.⁷ These constructions were often shared with others, whose curiously uncritical stance perpetuated and exacerbated them rather like Chinese whispers. Sadly, over the course of Khan's life his inadequately grounded creative illusions would slip into delusion.⁸ Using multiple sources, including official documents, printed accounts that are within the public domain, private correspondence, and personal interview material, the present book seeks to move beyond the *preferred* myths to trace, via a psychoanalytic textual archaeology, the sometimes tellingly banal, but often more complex and intriguing realities of Khan's biography and intellectual history. It documents a dwindling oral history and sometimes precariously preserved archives, helps anchor the multiple stories that surround Khan within narrative and historical truth, and provides those interested in the contemporary history of psychoanalysis with a more reliable and realistic understanding of Masud Khan and his key contemporaries.

Future scholars will hopefully be able to correct and augment the accounts within this book as new material becomes available, particularly through the International Psychoanalytical Association who serendipitously obtained Khan's papers: access, however, will depend on the relaxation of the indefinite embargo the IPA have placed on their study.

Finally, a word on the question of patient confidentiality. The identities of a number of Khan's patients are widely known, Christopher Bollas and Wynne Godley being the most familiar; the names of others are recorded in publicly accessible archives, while others are less available or acknowledged. Apart from those that are already widely known within the public domain, the names of patients have been omitted from the present work.