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How the Couch Came to Calcutta

A Global History of Early Psychoanalysis

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## INTRODUCTION

In spring 1921 an intriguing parcel arrived for Sigmund Freud in Vienna. The world of psychoanalysis was expanding and Freud, who received correspondence daily and spent many hours each week writing letters, found himself holding a parcel from Calcutta. It was sent by a certain Girindrasekhar Bose and contained the book *Concept of Repression*, for which Bose had been awarded a doctorate in psychology by the University of Calcutta.<sup>1</sup> He had enclosed a letter with the remarkable lines: “Along with my friends and relations, I have been a warm admirer of your theories and science; and it might interest you to learn that your name has been a household word in our family for the past decade.”<sup>2</sup> Freud: a household name in a Bengali family? A circle of admirers of psychoanalysis in Calcutta? With obvious astonishment, Freud wrote back: “My surprise was great that Psychoanalysis should have met with so much interest and recognition in your far country.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Girindrasekhar Bose, *The Concept of Repression*, Calcutta 1921.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Beginnings of Psychoanalysis in India. Bose-Freud Correspondence*, edited by the Indian Psychoanalytic Society, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Calcutta 1999 [1964], p. 1. The original of this first letter has apparently not survived; for a transcript, see Sigmund Freud Papers, Sigmund Freud Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C. (hereafter abbreviated to SFP-DC), box 18, folder 16.

<sup>3</sup> See the letter from Freud to Bose of May 29, 1921 (*ibid.*).

In the following weeks and months, Freud and Bose exchanged many more letters. Bose suggested founding a psychoanalytic association, to which Freud immediately agreed. And in his second letter to Freud, Bose asked for a photograph of the Viennese psychiatrist, writing: “Myself, my relations and friends and a wide circle of admirers have long been eager for it.”<sup>4</sup> At first, Freud did not respond to the request. But then he for his part received a picture from Calcutta; a portrait of himself! A Bengali artist and friend of Bose, Jatindrakumar Sen, had completed “a pencil sketch which he thinks ‘you ought to look like’ [...]. Needless to say he has not the slightest information about your features.”<sup>5</sup> Sen had become familiarized with Freud and his theories of psychoanalysis in Bose’s house, where an academic elite of Bengali-speaking Hindus – typical members of the *bhadralok*, the Bengali equivalent of a bourgeois middle class<sup>6</sup> – liked to meet for a casual discussion; an *adda*, as they called it then and still do now in Calcutta.<sup>7</sup> Sen had become an admirer of Freud’s through these meetings, although he – like all the other scholars and thinkers – had no personal contact with him whatsoever.

It is unclear whether his shot-in-the-dark drawing resembled the real Freud at all. I have not been able to find it, despite a search covering three continents. But Freud responded by writing: “The imaginative portrait you sent me is very nice indeed, far too nice for the subject.” He found, moreover, that the artist had not taken “certain racial characteristics” into consideration.<sup>8</sup> Later, Freud told the psychoanalyst Lou Andreas-Salomé about his correspondence with Bose in Calcutta,

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<sup>4</sup> See the undated letter from Bose to Freud (ibid).

<sup>5</sup> See the letter from Bose to Freud of January 26, 1922 (ibid). This episode is briefly mentioned in: Christiane Hartnack, *Psychoanalysis in Colonial India*, Oxford 2001, p. 4; and in Shruti Kapila, “The ‘Godless’ Freud and his Indian Friends: An Indian Agenda for Psychoanalysis”, in: Sloan Mahone/Megan Vaughan (eds.), *Psychiatry and Empire*, Basingstoke 2007, p. 124-152, 128.

<sup>6</sup> The *bhadralok* emerged in Bengal, chiefly in Calcutta, as a class of intermediaries between the British colonial government and the local population. Members of the *bhadralok* had received a western education and became some of the key supporters of Bengali nationalism. Because they were Hindus, contemporaries came to closely associate high culture with Hinduism. Moreover, the *bhadralok* consisted chiefly of members of higher castes such as Brahmins, or as in Bose’s case, the group of scribes known as *kayastha*. On the history of the *bhadralok* in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, see: Joya Chatterji, “The decline, revival and fall of Bhadrakol Influence in the 1940s: A historiographic review”, in: Sekhar Bandyopadhyay (ed.), *Bengal: Rethinking History. Essays in Historiography*, New Delhi 2001, p. 297-315; Amit Kumar Gupta, *Crises and Creativities. Middle-Class Bhadrakol in Bengal 1939-1952*, Hyderabad 2009; and for a general overview, Indra Sengupta, “Kolonialstadt und bürgerliche Kulture: Die Bhadrakol von Kolkata”, in: Ravi Ahuja/Christiane Brosius (eds.), *Mumbai – Delhi – Kolkata. Annäherungen an die Megastädte Indiens*, Heidelberg 2006, p. 269-282).

<sup>7</sup> On the *adda*, see Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Post-colonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton 2000, p. 181-183.

<sup>8</sup> See the letter from Freud to Bose of March 1, 1922, SFP-DC, box 18, folder 16. Freud was probably alluding to what he considered to be his Jewish appearance.

adding: “From the same parts I also received an ‘imaginative portrait’, i.e. a picture of how someone, apparently a famous Indian painter, supposed me to look, despite never having seen a likeness. Of course, according to him I look typically English.”<sup>9</sup>

To facilitate a comparison, Freud then sent a photo of himself to Calcutta (fig. 1). Again, Sen could not resist taking up his pencils and drawing another portrait of Freud, this time after the original (fig. 2).

At first glance this story about an Indian portrait of Freud seems to be just an amusing anecdote. But the history of psychoanalysis is dotted with so many peculiar anecdotes that they demand consideration. What does it tell us about a historical topic if we find evidence of it in minor incidents? Several such episodes are woven into this history of psychoanalysis and presented in keyhole texts, placed in between the main chapters of the book. They break up the global-history narrative from the macro-perspective with accounts from a micro-perspective. Zooming in to gain a local, detailed view like this has uses beyond merely enlivening the history.<sup>10</sup>

Freud’s Bengali admirers were by no means the only ones who literally tried to gain a personal impression of him. Visitors from all over the world asked for signed photographs of the Viennese scholar, including the Japanese psychoanalyst Yaekichi Yabe.<sup>11</sup> Rudolf Kriser, a patient of Freud’s, was eager to draw him.<sup>12</sup> Freud’s leading students Karl Abraham and Ernest Jones had photos of him on their desks and Hanns Sachs even had a bust of him next to his couch.<sup>13</sup> Books later published in Bengali also contained drawings of Freud.<sup>14</sup> What generated this demand for Freud’s physical presence? Of course, publics have eagerly received images of many other figures and intellectual leaders, whose likenesses have adorned journals and books. There is an apparent need to gain a sense of the person’s aura, which is why a photograph is even more valuable when signed by the subject.

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<sup>9</sup> See Sigmund Freud – Lou Andreas-Salomé: Briefwechsel, edited by Ernst Pfeiffer, 2nd edition, Frankfurt am Main 1980, p. 125.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Jacques Revel (ed.), *Jeux d’échelles. La micro-analyse à l’expérience*, Paris 1996.

<sup>11</sup> See Yabe’s recollection of his meeting with Freud, SFP-DC, box 114, folder 62, p. 10/11.

<sup>12</sup> See Freud’s letter to Abraham of May 29, 1918, in: *Sigmund Freud – Karl Abraham, Briefwechsel*, edited by Ernst Falzeder and Ludger M. Hermanns, vol. 2: 1915-1925, Vienna 2009 (hereafter abbreviated to Letters SF-KA), p. 592.

<sup>13</sup> See Abraham’s letter to Freud of November 10, 1909, in: *The Complete Correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Ernest Jones, 1908-1939*, edited by Andrew Paskauskas, vol. 1, Cambridge MA/London 1993 (hereafter abbreviated to Letters SF-EJ), p. 241; also Fritz Moellenhoff, “Hanns Sachs 1881-1947. The Creative Unconscious”, in: Franz Alexander/Samuel Eisenstein/Martin Grotjahn (eds.), *Psychoanalytic Pioneers*, New York/London, 1966, p. 180-199, p. 188.

<sup>14</sup> Sunīlcandra Biśī/Asit Kumār Rāy, *Phreÿd o Manaḥsamīkṣaṇ* (Freud and Psychoanalysis), Kalikātā 1353 (1946).

Fig. 1 Photograph of Sigmund Freud.<sup>15</sup>

But there is good reason to think there is more to it than that. As a body of ideas, psychoanalysis was inextricably linked with the person of Sigmund Freud. After the first meeting in Vienna between Freud and Zurich-based psychiatrist and occasional psychoanalyst C.G. Jung, the latter wrote to Freud:

[I]t seems to me one could never fully understand your science without knowing your person. Where so much is still in the dark to us remoter parties, only belief can help; the best and most effective belief, however, seems to be knowledge of your personality. My visit in Vienna was therefore an actual confirmation.<sup>16</sup>

Fig. 2 Portrait of Freud by Jatindrakumar Sen, c. 1922.

Jung, then, felt that one could only acquire full membership of the movement by having close contact with its hallowed leader, as in a religious initiation rite. This could be attributed to Jung's personal piety. But it is undeniable that there was – and often still is today – an unusually close, emotional bond between the practitioners of psychoanalysis and its founder. This special relationship was multiplied, moreover, whenever another analyst was trained, and a similar bond forged between the student and the teaching analyst. Freud embodied psychoanalysis. His presence, if only in a photograph on a desk, guaranteed that his students and their students – including the initially rare female students – were accepted among the ranks of analysts.

Although we cannot know what the first imagined portrait in Calcutta looked like, it was no doubt distinctly different from Sen's drawing based on the photograph. It shows considerable self-assurance on the part of the Bengali *bhadralok* to simply imagine "how [Freud] should look". Presumably this added to Freud's bewilderment at the "too nice" portrait. His comment that it looked "typically English" contained a barb of which he himself was probably not aware: It implied that his Bengali colleagues were so deeply influenced by British colonialism that all Europeans looked English to them. In metaphorical terms, this book is about the difference between those two pictures. The first drawing by Sen proved that, unbeknown to him, Freud already had followers in

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<sup>15</sup> The photo in question was the one that Freud regularly sent in response to such requests.

<sup>16</sup> See the letter from Jung to Freud of April 11, 1907, in: *Sigmund Freud - C.G. Jung: Briefwechsel*, edited by William McGuire and Wolfgang Sauerländer, Zurich 1976 (hereafter abbreviated to Letters SF-CGJ), p. 32.

Calcutta. One of the main questions I ask in this book is: What conception of psychoanalysis did people in Bengal have when they still knew little about it and its founder? Analogous to searching for the first drawing, it is not easy to access and explore these beginnings; nevertheless, there remains plenty to say, which is presented on the following pages.

Receiving a “real” likeness of Freud did not cause the Bengali intellectuals to feel embarrassed about their imagined likeness. On the contrary, it was displayed in Bose’s consulting room, as the sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld noted, having visited Bose in Calcutta in 1931.<sup>17</sup> At a celebration held by the Indian Psychoanalytic Society to mark Freud’s 75<sup>th</sup> birthday on May 6, 1931, Bose projected Sen’s first drawing on to the wall, along with Freud’s written response to it.<sup>18</sup> The drawing clearly symbolized their own, local version of psychoanalysis. Nonetheless, Sen had felt it necessary to complete another drawing of Freud and draw him “correctly” this time. Bose decided to use this second drawing as the frontispiece for his first Bengali-language book about psychoanalysis. In Calcutta, then, they not only aimed – with remarkable self-confidence – to create a local variant of this technique from the West, different from the “original”, but also fully intended to compare it with the “real thing”.

It is not my intent to treat the two pictures as an original and a forgery. Which would be the original and which the forgery? Rather, I emphasize the simultaneity and historical coequality of the local “Calcutta version” and the global “Freud version” of psychoanalysis. It would be fallacious to believe that only one of the drawings illustrated “reality”. Both were subjective representations, and even the “original” Freud photograph was consciously staged for the photographer. Note how Freud is posing, with his obligatory cigar, the trappings of the sophisticated gentleman (pocket watch, suit, waistcoat, tie) and his piercing gaze. This book, then, explores the charged relationship between the local and global applications of psychoanalysis.

#### I. On this history of psychoanalysis

I have aimed to write a global history of psychoanalysis, tracing its development in Berlin, London and Calcutta from 1910 to 1940. The theories and methods of psychoanalysis gradually broke through in all these cities in these early years. The combination of the three cities also illustrates the considerable cultural and linguistic barriers that needed to be overcome for the technique to be disseminated. Indeed, psychoanalysis always was a cross-border phenomenon, quickly reaching

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<sup>17</sup> See Magnus Hirschfeld, *Die Weltreise eines Sexualforschers*, Brugg 1933, p. 213.

<sup>18</sup> See the minutes of the meeting of May 6, 1931, Library of the Indian Psychoanalytic Society in Calcutta.

beyond its region of origin.<sup>19</sup> It was confined neither to the Austro-Hungarian Empire nor to the German-speaking lands of central Europe. It evolved into a global system as far back as the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when it quickly grew to encompass many continents and regions. Psychoanalytic knowledge was disseminated in a wide range of languages, from German, English and – in a qualified sense – Bengali, to Spanish, French and even Arabic, Chinese and Japanese. In terms of content, too, psychoanalysis asserted a universal claim to offer therapeutic means that could be applied to anyone, anywhere in the world. In short, psychoanalysis can be regarded as a kind of “traveling culture”.<sup>20</sup>

Essentially, I will deal with four sets of questions, each one of which is assigned a chapter in the book. The first part, *Institutions*, describes the basic structures and developments in the world of psychoanalysis: What was global psychoanalysis? How did psychoanalysis reach Berlin, London and Calcutta? Who and what promoted its transnational dissemination? Here, I aim to equally elucidate local and global developments, allowing my inquiry to be steered by the inherent logic of psychoanalysis. Although I do not claim to understand psychoanalysis on an essentialist level, as will be evident below, I nevertheless propose treating this traveling culture as a transnational “thing” that migrated across continents and oceans and made a notable impact in different places.

Throughout, I will consider how psychoanalysis was incorporated into the respective local culture. The second chapter, *Treatments*, describes the practice of psychoanalytic therapy. It explores how psychoanalytic knowledge was applied in the various locations. Who was treated in each of the three cities? Which diagnoses were made? What form did therapy take? This section also considers older forms of therapy such as mesmerism, hypnosis and suggestion, which were practiced before psychoanalysis emerged and similarly widespread. The comparison points to the greater importance of psychotherapeutic practice and provides in-depth insights into how the new psychoanalytic knowledge became established in the three cities. Here, the – initially absurd-seeming – question is raised of the role that Freud played in inventing “his” system of psychoanalysis.

The third chapter, *Emotions*, deals with the effects of psychoanalysis. What consequences did global psychoanalysis have? What did both analysts and patients learn from therapy? Why can psychoanalysis be regarded as healing with love? What role did emotions play in the theory, the history of the movement and the public perception of psychoanalysis? In this section, it emerges

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<sup>19</sup> Freud’s writings were internationally received from the start. Cf. Norman Kiehl (ed.), *Freud without Hindsight: Reviews of his Work, 1893-1939*, Madison, 1988.

<sup>20</sup> In his key essay “Traveling cultures”, the historian and ethnologist James Clifford criticized ethnology’s fixation on concrete places and drew attention to phenomena of traveling and migration, focusing on migrant persons (such as the “informant”, the translator, the traveler) and transitional places (hotels etc.). James Clifford, “Traveling Cultures”, in: Lawrence Grossberg/Cary Nelson/Paula A. Treichler (eds.), *Cultural Studies*, London 1992, p. 96-116.

that emotions formed the unifying link between the local psychotherapeutic practices explored in the previous chapter. Psychoanalysis was the first form of therapy to seek to use emotions in a conscious and regulated manner. By so doing, it gave rise to a new category of emotions – therapeutic emotions. This section also broadens the narrative perspective to consider the history of the movement and criticisms and receptions of psychoanalysis in the three urban cultures. In all these developments, I attest to a high degree of emotionalization, which suggests that the world of psychoanalysis is best considered in terms of the history of emotions.

The fourth chapter, *Politics*, considers the role global psychoanalysis played in society. Was psychoanalysis political and if so, in what sense? How did it fit into the respective political cultures of the three cities? Which political projects embraced it and what kind of political criticisms did it spark? This last section of the book addresses several political aspects of global psychoanalysis and analyses the political dynamics behind them. The very tangible politicization of society in the interwar period was a short-term phenomenon that is of secondary importance here.

Psychoanalysis, on the other hand, has proven to be an enduringly influential technology, confronting the self with the possibility of self-optimization. This development started back in the founding phase and is integral to the global phenomenon of psychoanalysis.

As psychoanalysis went on to span the globe, writing a global history of it would seem plausible.<sup>21</sup> But can I claim to deliver a global history at all, especially if I limit my inquiry to three cities? Indeed, this book does not aim to tell a “total history” of psychoanalysis; that is, I will not give a chronological and exhaustive account of all the events in the world of psychoanalysis. In view of psychoanalysis’ worldwide dissemination, the abundance of noteworthy details and the linguistic skills required to analyze them, such a venture would be extremely ambitious, if not to say impossible. One solution would be to concentrate on the supposedly major developments in Europe and North America – a compromise which previous authors of comprehensive histories have taken.<sup>22</sup> The difference with this book is that it tells a global history of the fundamental structures and developments that shaped the world of psychoanalysis, and the processes by which psychoanalytic

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<sup>21</sup> In view of the boom in global history-writing in the last years, the historian Frederick Cooper warns writers not to unreflectively name any phenomena of transnational entanglement “global”. Global history should be based on the premise that the subject of inquiry spanned the entire globe. (See Frederick Cooper, “How global do we want our intellectual history to be?”, in: Samuel Moyn/Andrew Sartori (eds.), *Global Intellectual History*, New York/Chichester 2003, p. 283-294.) I consider psychoanalysis an apt subject for a global history.

<sup>22</sup> Some notable examples are: Edith Kurzweil, *Freud und die Freudianer. Geschichte und Gegenwart der Psychoanalyse in Deutschland, Frankreich, England, Österreich und den USA*, Stuttgart 1993; George Makari, *Revolution der Seele. Die Geburt der Psychoanalyse*, translated from the English (*Revolution in Mind. The Creation of Psychoanalysis*) by Antje Becker, Gießen 2011. A third comprehensive history gives at least brief consideration to developments beyond the West: Eli Zaretsky, *Freuds Jahrhundert. Die Geschichte der Psychoanalyse*, translated from the English by Klaus Binder and Bernd Leineweber, Vienna 2006, p. 270-274.

knowledge took root, in three sample cities and beyond. But the question remains of the fundamental concept upon which such a global history should be based. I have resisted going with the obvious answer, which seems to automatically suggest itself. George Makari, a historian of psychoanalysis, put it in a nutshell:

Who was Freud? Who are the Freudians, Freudian psychoanalysts, and psychoanalysts? And who are we, those of us in the West who have found the terms and concepts of psychoanalysis permeating our everyday language, changing on the most intimate levels the way we think about ourselves [...]?<sup>23</sup>

It is tempting to associate psychoanalysis primarily with a western understanding of the self, as it made especially substantial waves in many countries of the West.<sup>24</sup> However, in recent years, a growing body of evidence has emerged that psychoanalysis also made, and to some extent still makes, a significant impact in non-western regions and countries of the world.<sup>25</sup> Scholars have now begun to explore this fact in comparative publications.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> See Makari, *Revolution in Mind*, prologue.

<sup>24</sup> Much research has been published in this respect on individual countries of the West. Examples include (on the United States) Nathan G. Hale, *Freud and the Americans. The Beginnings of Psychoanalysis in the United States 1876-1917*, New York/Oxford 1971; Nathan G. Hale, *Rise and Crisis of Psychoanalysis in the United States: Freud and the Americans 1917-1985*, New York/Oxford 1995; on the United Kingdom, Graham Richards, "Britain on the couch. The popularization of psychoanalysis in Great Britain 1918-1940", in: *Science in Context* 13/2 (2000), p. 183-230; on France, Elisabeth Roudinesco, *Wien – Paris. Die Geschichte der Psychoanalyse in Frankreich*, 2 vols., translated from the French by Brigitte Restorff, Weinheim/Berlin 1994; on Germany, Anthony D. Kauders, *Der Freud-Komplex. Eine Geschichte der Psychoanalyse in Deutschland*, Berlin 2014; on Austria, Marina Tichy/Sylvia Zwettler-Otte, *Freud in der Presse. Rezeption Sigmund Freuds und der Psychoanalyse in Österreich 1895-1938*, Vienna 1999; on Hungary, Ágnes Berger et al. (eds.), *Der psychoanalytische Aufbruch Budapest – Berlin 1918-1920*, Frankfurt am Main 2011; on Russia and the former Soviet Union, Alexander Etkind, *Eros des Unmöglichen, Die Geschichte der Psychoanalyse in Rußland*, translated from the Russian by Andreas Tretner, Leipzig 1996; Martin A. Miller, *Freud and the Bolsheviks: Psychoanalysis in Russia and the Soviet Union*, New Haven 1998.

<sup>25</sup> Again, here are a few selected examples: Jingyuan Zhang, *Psychoanalysis in China. Literary Transformations 1919-1949*, Ithaca, NY, 1992; Mariano Ben Plotkin, *Freud in the Pampas: The Emergence and Development of a Psycho-analytic Culture in Argentina*, Stanford 2001; Joy Damousi, *Freud in the Antipodes. A Cultural History of Psychoanalysis in Australia*, Sydney 2005; Rubén Gallo, *Freud's Mexico: Into the Wilds of Psychoanalysis*, Cambridge MA/London 2010; Eran Rolnik, *Freud auf Hebräisch. Geschichte der Psychoanalyse im jüdischen Palästina*, translated from the Hebrew by David Achjenrand, Göttingen 2013; Omnia El Shakry, *The Arabic Freud: Psychoanalysis and Islam in Modern Egypt*, Princeton/Oxford 2017.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Joy Danousi/Mariano Ben Plotkin (eds.), *The Transnational Unconscious: Essays in the History of Psychoanalysis and Transnationalism*, London 2009; Warwick Anderson/Deborah Jenson/Richard C. Keller (eds.), *Unconscious Dominions. Psychoanalysis, Colonial Trauma, and Global Sovereignties*, Durham NC, 2011; also, for an independent comparative project, see Christopher Harding, "Sigmund's Asian fan-club? The Freud franchise and independence of mind in India and Japan," in: Robert Clarke (ed.), *Celebrity Colonialism: Fame, Power and Representation in Colonial and Post-colonial Culture*, Newcastle upon Tyne, p. 73-90.

However, jettisoning the “western understanding” of psychoanalysis challenges a very fundamental concept of how its history unfolded. Historiography on psychoanalysis essentially takes a central perspective on questions of reception, dissemination and popularization. Presuming that Freud was the author of ground-breaking ideas about the psyche which other scholars and thinkers embraced and absorbed, approaching developments from this viewpoint would appear to be the obvious solution. Being not only revolutionary but also cleverly communicated, Freud’s ideas garnered widespread interest and were received by an ever-broader public. They were translated into other languages and adapted to other cultures, enabling them to transcend national and cultural boundaries. A genuine aspect of this narrative is the view that psychoanalytic ideas became modified and diluted as they became more broadly accepted. Although always mindful of how his ideas were spreading, it was clear to Freud from the start that “every theory forfeits so much in value when it gains popularity.”<sup>27</sup>

Taking a central perspective implies adhering to various basic principles when writing a history of psychoanalysis:

- Inquiry must concentrate on Freud as his ideas largely defined the history of psychoanalysis.<sup>28</sup>
- Psychoanalysis contains an identifiable core of ideas which, in case of doubt, can be attributed to Freud. Thus, what Freud said, wrote and thought serves as a benchmark for the system’s later historical evolution.
- The legitimacy of deviations, in the form of new ideas developed by subsequent psychoanalysts, must therefore not only be judged by the psychoanalytic movement but also by historical science.<sup>29</sup>
- Inquiry can justifiably concentrate on Europe and the West because that is where the key ideas evolved. Related developments in other societies are little more than curious asides to the European original.

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<sup>27</sup> See the letter from Freud to Abraham of November 20, 1908, Letters SF-KA, p. 153.

<sup>28</sup> Hence, most biographies of Freud are also histories of psychoanalysis. The template was provided by: Ernest Jones, *Das Leben und Werk von Sigmund Freud*, 3 vols., Bern/Stuttgart, 1960-1962.

<sup>29</sup> The logic of norm and deviation runs through many works on psychoanalysis to this day. See e.g. Marina Leitner, *Ein gut gehütetes Geheimnis. Die Geschichte der psychoanalytischen Behandlungs-Technik von den Anfängen in Wien bis zur Gründung der Berliner Poliklinik im Jahr 1920*, Gießen 2001.

Interestingly, most critics of Freud and psychoanalysis, whose number grew substantially in the wake of the “Freud wars” in the United States, adhered to this perspective.<sup>30</sup> Some critics believed they could discredit the entire system of psychoanalysis with one supposedly titillating detail from Freud’s life. This partly explains the remarkable focus on his person.<sup>31</sup> It is probably also the reason why leading psychoanalysts pursued a rigid policy of institutionalization within the movement – to try and protect the core of psychoanalysis and highlight discrepancies.<sup>32</sup> But it is not a helpful viewpoint, in my opinion, from which to approach the worldwide dissemination of psychoanalysis. The present book conceives of psychoanalysis as a system of multiple, reciprocal and trans-local entanglements. It therefore challenges some common notions about psychoanalysis, including the premise of the central-perspective model outlined above. But why doubt this perspective? It is, after all, a hardly questionable fact that Freud developed the discipline of psychoanalysis in Vienna, from where knowledge of it spread abroad. In view of this fact, inquiry must almost inevitably make the distinction between an intellectual center and an initially less important periphery – between Europe and the rest of the world. However, one of the central concerns of this book is precisely what can be considered central and what is peripheral in terms of the global dissemination of psychoanalysis. Of course, the world of psychoanalysis was imbalanced, which should not be overlooked. It was doubtless a sphere shaped by asymmetries and an unequal distribution of resources and power. A historical analysis cannot ignore the fact that psychoanalysis was distinctly aimed at a middle-class public. Although its popularity was such that it also garnered interest among other social groups, it remained basically a disproportionately middle-class phenomenon wherever it emerged in the world. It is equally unquestionable that a hierarchy existed within the movement: The power politics of the psychoanalytic movement operated with a center – composed of Freud and his leading students – and various peripheries. Nevertheless, I propose that historical research should not simply accept this hierarchy as a natural characteristic of psychoanalysis but should analyze how it functioned.

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<sup>30</sup> On the first salvo in the United States, see Frederick Crews, “The Unknown Freud”, in: *The New York Review of Books* 40 (1993), p. 55-66; The dispute is brilliantly analyzed in John Forrester, *Dispatches from the Freud Wars: Psychoanalysis and its Passions*, Cambridge, MA/London 1997; see also Uffa Jensen, “Neuere Forschung zur Geschichte der Psychoanalyse”, in: *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 52 (2012), p. 765-800, esp. p. 769-771.

<sup>31</sup> This is particularly evident in the works of Peter Swales, e.g. idem., “Freud, Minna Bernays and the Conquest of Rome: New light on the origins of psychoanalysis”, in: *The New American Review* I (1982), p. 1-23. But other works also show a clear bias toward biographism: Catherine Meyer/Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen (eds.), *Le livre noir de la psychanalyse: Vivre, penser et aller mieux sans Freud*, Paris 2005, esp. Part I.

<sup>32</sup> Sarah Winter, *Freud and the Institution of Psychoanalytic Knowledge*, Stanford 1999.

In recent decades, the common understanding of psychoanalysis has gradually begun to change, as this book also considers. Alongside the scholars exploring the history of psychoanalysis in non-western countries and regions, various authors have sought to decentralize the history of psychoanalysis; that is, to relativize the focus on the figure of Sigmund Freud. In 1970, Henri F. Ellenberger published his ground-breaking study *The Discovery of the Unconscious*, which relegates Freud to a place of almost negligible significance within a far longer history of psychology.<sup>33</sup> In Ellenberger's view, psychoanalysis owes its success more to a rhetorical suggestion, nourished parasitically by the many preceding works on which it is based. Historians Lydia Marinelli and Andreas Mayer have contributed similar decentralizing impetus to the discussion of psychoanalysis.<sup>34</sup> They have drawn a picture of Freud as less the self-assured and glorious discoverer of a ground-breaking theory than a tentative, fumbling explorer who struggled to accommodate various therapeutic cultures, socioeconomic necessities and practical logics, and who only gradually managed to free himself from his reliance on conventional hypnosis techniques.<sup>35</sup> Marinelli, especially, has substantially broadened our understanding of how Freud's ideas were generated and of the history of psychoanalysis in its early phase.<sup>36</sup>

Research such as this has indeed created an alternative image of psychoanalysis, contrasting with the uncritical, glorifying – or indeed demonizing – tendencies to canonize Freud as an unassailable author.<sup>37</sup> But even in these works Freud remains the pivotal figure and central point from which the history of psychoanalysis is viewed. Anti-biographical efforts to disempower him have inadvertently confirmed his outstanding position in the psychoanalytic system. His towering figure prevents us from gaining a clear view of the history. In this book, then, I reconsider Freud's role in psychoanalysis

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<sup>33</sup> Still highly readable, the German translation of this study is referred to in several places in the present book. Henri F. Ellenberger, *Die Entdeckung des Unbewussten. Geschichte und Entwicklung der dynamischen Psychiatrie von den Anfängen: bis zu Janet, Freud, Adler und Jung*, translated from the English by Gudrun Theusner-Stampa, 2nd edition, Zurich 2005 [1973].

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Lydia Marinelli/Andreas Mayer, "Forgetting Freud? For a new history of psychoanalysis", in: *Science in Context* 19 (2006), p. 1-13.

<sup>35</sup> This is especially vividly portrayed in: Andreas Mayer, *Mikroskopie der Psyche. Die Anfänge der Psychoanalyse in Hypnose-Labor*, Göttingen 2002.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Lydia Marinelli, *Psyches Kanon. Zur Publikationsgeschichte rund um den Internationalen Psychoanalytischen Verlag*; idem., *Tricks der Evidenz. Zur Geschichte psychoanalytischer Medien*, both in: *Lydia Marinelli – Schriften zur Geschichte der Psychoanalyse*, published by Andreas Mayer, Vienna 2009.

<sup>37</sup> After Michel Foucault, Freud can be regarded as the type of author who is a founder of discursivity (cf. Michel Foucault, "Was ist ein Autor?" [1969] translated from the French by Hermann Kocyba, in: idem., *Schriften zur Literatur*, published by Daniel Defert and François Ewald with the cooperation of Jacques Lagrange, Frankfurt am Main 2003, p. 234-270).

by juxtaposing him against global developments in Berlin, London and Calcutta and taking a new approach to the discipline's beginnings.

## 2. The essence of psychoanalysis: Emotions

Alongside the history of how psychoanalysis spread across the globe, another central concern of this book is what made up its essence. After the educationalist and psychoanalyst Siegfried Bernfeld was forced to leave Berlin in 1934 due to the Nazis' takeover of power, and went into exile in France, he increasingly turned his attentions to the scientific and epistemological principles of psychoanalysis.<sup>38</sup> For a projected textbook, he wrote an article on "the credibility of psychoanalysis", aiming to test the truthfulness of its theories and methods.<sup>39</sup> Here, he described emotions as their, often hidden, core.

Bernfeld's text opens by considering psychoanalysis' relationships to science and the public. It goes on to emphasize the everyday power of the affective: "This calibrates our experiences; it determines the credibility of authorities and the extent of our obedience." Knowledge and cognitive faculties are also dependent on it. But "feelings" also possess a logic that can be studied, albeit with particular difficulty: "This emotional, naïve, stark knowledge, for which there is no customary, convenient term, is innate; it remains closely linked to basic human needs, but it is also subjective, contradictory, vague, uncertain." Bernfeld contrasts this emotional, practical knowledge with scientific knowledge, which is intersubjective, independent and valid. The two forms of knowledge, according to him, are related in a special way:

Innate, so to speak natural knowledge, on the other hand, is consigned the role of confronting pressing problems, supplying resources; and it occasionally required concerted efforts to make

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<sup>38</sup> He wrote several essays in this field, some of them together with his third wife, Suzanne, which are still cited today: Siegfried Bernfeld, "Freud's earliest theories and the school of Helmholtz", in: *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 3 (1944), p. 341-362; Siegfried Bernfeld and Suzanne Cassirer-Bernfeld, "Freud's early childhood", in: *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic* 8 (1944), p. 107-115; Siegfried Bernfeld, "Freud's scientific beginnings", in: *American Imago* 6 (1949), p. 163-196; Siegfried Bernfeld and Suzanne Cassirer-Bernfeld, "Freud's first year in practice, 1886-1887", in: *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic* 16 (1952), p. 37-49.

<sup>39</sup> The manuscript fragment, held in Bernfeld's estate in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., is undated and marked only with his name, but was written in Menton – Bernfeld's home in exile in France 1934-37. On the planned textbook, see Bernfeld's notes in: Johannes Reichmayr/Karl Fallend, "Wanderschaft und Emigration: Menton, London, San Francisco", in: idem. (eds.), *Siegfried Bernfeld oder Die Grenzen der Psychoanalyse. Materialien zu Leben und Werk*, Basel/Frankfurt am Main 1992, p. 264-287, p. 277 f.

scientists accept this material that seemed so interesting and pressing to people outside the study, and to deal with it methodically according to their criteria.

Bernfeld positioned psychoanalysis precisely at the interface between these two forms of knowledge. It objectifies the affectively charged sphere of everyday life and thus renders it scientifically treatable:

Psychoanalysis deals with the most affective, stimulating, interesting materials [sic!], but it deals with them within the strictly limited boundaries of a research procedure, which may not be as alien to and remote from daily life and immediate understanding as the events in the experimental laboratory but is nonetheless artificial as it is a method.<sup>40</sup>

Bernfeld saw psychoanalysis, then, as a practical yet methodical procedure by which everyday and affective “knowledge” could be translated into scientific knowledge. His article describes the special position of psychoanalysis between these spheres. It addresses the issue of Freud’s unique language, informed very much by real life, and asks why psychoanalytic knowledge exerted such a fascination on the public but was dismissed by so many scholars. A theoretician and practitioner of psychoanalysis, Bernfeld’s concern can also be formulated thus: The difficulties that psychoanalysis experienced becoming established as a science were largely due to its claim to objectivize and rationalize emotions.<sup>41</sup>

Bernfeld was right, as I aim to show with this book: Emotions played a hidden but crucial role in the entire early history of psychoanalysis. Perhaps this would have become more widely acknowledged if Bernfeld’s textbook had been published. Emotions were not only a key object of scrutiny within psychoanalytic therapy, where they were, in Bernfeld’s terms, “deliverers from affective complaints”.<sup>42</sup> Psychoanalytic treatment also generates new, therapeutic emotions, by means of which it aims to relieve patients of “affective complaints”. Thus, I define psychoanalysis not in the conventional sense as an amalgamation of certain ideas about the unconscious, sexuality, repression etc., although these certainly existed and are integral factors. Rather, I see its (hidden) unity in a specific emotional practice.

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<sup>40</sup> Siegfried Bernfeld, “Die Glaubwürdigkeit der Psychoanalyse“, Siegfried Bernfeld Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C., box 10, 1st part, p. 1., p. 2 f. & p. 7 (hereafter abbreviated to SBP-DC).

<sup>41</sup> On this general trend and similar inquiries in the humanities and social sciences, see Uffa Jensen/Daniel Morat (eds.), *Rationalisierungen des Gefühls. Zum Verhältnis von Wissenschaft und Emotionen 1880-1930*, Munich 2008.

<sup>42</sup> Bernfeld, „Die Glaubwürdigkeit der Psychoanalyse“, SBP-DC, 1st part, p. 8.

Attributing emotions such importance, the present book embarks on an exploration of challenging terrain, where many difficult questions are raised: How can we conceive of emotional learning, such as therapy aims to facilitate? What are emotions, and can new emotions – such as the therapeutic kind mentioned above – be created? How is the human psyche – and even body – capable of relearning emotions?<sup>43</sup> As a historian, it is not necessarily my task to provide answers to such far-reaching and complex questions. But I am surely obliged to clarify the psychological and physiological concepts on which my comments are based and the scientific and humanistic findings to which I refer.

The psyche can be understood as a complex system in which social and cultural influences interact with biological and physical structures. Any attempt to distinguish the biological from the cultural processes in brain activity would therefore be futile. Like seeing mental illness merely as a neurological malfunction, equating the psyche with biological structures of the brain is not useful.<sup>44</sup> A critical branch of neuroscience has recently emerged that rejects the exclusive focus on physiological, biological and neurological models, and stresses the social and cultural aspects of the psyche.<sup>45</sup> Recent research in the field has focused on the mutability of the brain, even in adults. It has found evidence in the human brain not only of processes of learning and remembering; that is, capabilities that have long been observed in adults, but also of the continuous development and transformation of cerebral structures. This includes the generation of new neurons in adults, which was considered impossible until very recently, and the almost boundless “rewiring” between different areas of the brain, creating new synaptic connections between the neurons, far beyond what was previously considered feasible. The concept of neuroplasticity paints a new picture of the brain as a dynamic organ which is molded all a person’s life by both internal and external influences.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Ute Frevert has found that some emotions were lost in the modern age while others were newly “invented”: Uwe Frevert, *Vergängliche Gefühle*, Göttingen 2013.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Thomas Fuchs, “Are mental illnesses diseases of the brain?” in: Suparna Choudhury/Jan Slaby (eds.), *Critical Neuroscience. A Handbook of the Social and Cultural Contexts of Neuroscience*, Malden, MA/Oxford 2012, p. 331-344.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Suparna Choudhury/Jan Slaby (eds.), *Critical Neuroscience. A Handbook of the Social and Cultural Contexts of Neuroscience*, Malden, MA/Oxford 2012. On efforts to overcome the dichotomy between biology and culture and between the life sciences and the humanities, see Jan Plamper, *Geschichte und Gefühl. Grundlagen der Emotionsgeschichte*, Munich 2012.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. e.g. Jill L. Kays/Robert A. Hurley/Katherine H. Taber, “The dynamic brain: Neuroplasticity and mental health”, in: *Journal of Neuropsychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience* 24 (2012), p. 118-124.

Research into mental illnesses has yielded important insights.<sup>47</sup> In recent years, several studies in the fields of human genetics, neurobiology and psychopathology have not only highlighted the biological and often hereditary causes of mental illness but also the significance of family, social and cultural factors.<sup>48</sup> Transcultural psychiatry has supported these findings with its own comparative research into various cultural contexts, bringing to light substantial differences between various cultural groups.<sup>49</sup> Consequently, there has been a return to the older view that social and cultural factors play a part even in severe psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia.<sup>50</sup>

The science historian Ian Hacking has drawn on the history of diagnosing schizophrenia, among other things, to elucidate his understanding of psychological regeneration: As the psyche of schizophrenic patients is capable of perception, the diagnoses they are given might in turn be able to change their psyche. Hacking even considers biological regeneration to be conceivable in this context; that is, physical changes caused by external, social influences on the psyche.<sup>51</sup> Recent neuroscientific meta-analyses have argued in a similar vein, proposing that psychotherapeutic interventions can have a positive impact on the neurobiological level of brain structure and that they could be just as effective – depending on the illness – as pharmaceutical treatments.<sup>52</sup>

In the light of all this, a model of psychological processes emerges in which biological and cultural factors interact, implying that cultural influences might even impact on the physiological structure of the brain. This view is supported by findings in the growing field of emotion research. While neuroscientists, among others, are increasingly questioning the separation of cognition from emotion, critique in the field of emotion psychology has advanced to contrast unambiguously

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<sup>47</sup> Cf. Suparna Choudhury/Laurence J. Kirmayer, "Cultural neuroscience and psychopathology: Prospects for cultural psychiatry", in: Juan Y. Chiao (ed.), *Cultural Neuroscience. Cultural Influences on Brain Function*, New York 2009, p. 263-279.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Kenneth S. Kendler, "Explanatory models for psychiatric illness", in: *American Journal of Psychiatry* 165 (2008), p. 695-702.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Laurence J. Kirmayer, "Beyond the 'new cross-cultural psychiatry': Cultural biology, discursive psychology and the ironies of globalization", in: *Transcultural Psychiatry* 43 (2006), p. 126-144. There is a danger, however, of reducing the differences between groups thus identified to cultural stereotypes.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Craig Moran/Kwame MacKenzie/Paul Fearon, *Society and Psychosis*, Cambridge 2008. This debate on the biological and cultural causes of schizophrenia goes back many years and was even conducted during the period under investigation. The psychiatrist Eugen Bleuler, who was interested in psychoanalysis and coined the term "schizophrenia" in opposition to Emil Kraepelin's term "dementia praecox", stressed the possibility of influencing this illness.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Ian Hacking, *Was heißt „soziale Konstruktion“? Zur Konjunktur einer Kampfvokabel in den Wissenschaften*, translated from the English by Joachim Schulte, Frankfurt am Main 1999.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Alessio Barsaglini et al., "The effects of psychotherapy on brain function: A systematic and critical review", in: *Progress in Neurobiology* 114 (2014), p. 1-14.

identifiable basic emotions with culturally variable complex emotions.<sup>53</sup> The premise behind this inquiry is that emotions never represent unambiguously identifiable states and are therefore harder to calibrate than often presumed.<sup>54</sup> I therefore adhere to the principle of a “noise floor” of emotion, or core affect, the variations in which we interpret as distinct emotions by means of our embodied knowledge and experience.<sup>55</sup> This would suggest that the very feeling of emotion is subject to cultural influences, and that emotional experience can therefore be interpreted as the complex interaction of a biological-material occurrence with social and cultural interpretations. On a neurological level, too, recent insights into neuroplasticity and functional integration in the brain point to the fact that emotions are formed in this way. These inquiries in different branches of cognitive and psychological research, to which recent epigenetic research should be added, provide a combined view of the psyche, body and emotions, stressing their respective mutability and dynamism. Taking the material transformation of the psyche, body and emotions as a point of departure, then, historical inquiry can be ventured from a new perspective.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, a consensus has been reached in recent years that emotions, too, have a history.<sup>57</sup> Emotions can be regarded as a practice; as something that people do rather than just have.<sup>58</sup> Even apparently fundamental distinctions between cognition and emotion and the interior and exterior of the body are therefore based on a significant degree of prior cultural knowledge. Hence, the categories that are drawn in

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<sup>53</sup> On the former, see Luiz Pessoa, “Emergent processes in cognitive-emotional interactions”, in: *Dialogues in Clinical Neuroscience* 12 (2010), p. 271-286; on the older view, see Paul Ekman, “Basic emotions”, in: Tim Dalgleish/Michael J. Power (eds.), *Handbook of Cognition and Emotion*, New York 1999, p. 45-60; for a historical appraisal of the developments, see Ruth Leys, *The Ascent of Affect: Genealogy and Critique*, Chicago, London 2017.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Lisa Feldman Barrett/James A. Russell (eds.), *The Psychological Construction of Emotion*, New York 2015.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. James A Russell, “Core affect and the psychological construction of emotion”, in: *Psychological Review* 110 (2003), p. 145-172.

<sup>56</sup> Logically, concepts of self also have a history. The concept of self which I refer to in this book presumes that the psyche and body consist of mutable material and physical structures.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Bettina Hitzer, „Emotionsgeschichte – Ein Anfang mit Folgen“, in: *H-Soz-u-Kult* 2011, accessible online at: {<http://hsoz-kult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/forum/2011-11-001>} (accessed September 2018).

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Monique Scheer, “Are emotions a kind of practice (and is that what makes them have a history)? A Bourdieuan approach to understanding emotion”, in: *History and Theory* 51 (2012), p. 193-220.

many western societies do not work in the same way in other cultures.<sup>59</sup> Accordingly, emotion history can conceivably be portrayed as a physical history.<sup>60</sup>

But this understanding of emotions calls the credibility of a global history of psychoanalysis into question. If emotions – along with the psyche and the human body in general – are culturally formed and therefore (to some extent) divergently built, according to the cultural and temporal context, how can an emotion technique such as psychoanalysis work in the same way in different places? Considering developments through the lens of emotion history, can I feasibly maintain the concept of a global history, in which they were to play an important role? Perhaps I should resort to the universalistic model of a biologist conception of the human body? Then the transcultural commonalities which characterize global psychoanalysis could be explained by “human nature”. I do not think that is necessary. Considering ideas of entangled cultures, translation and mimesis will be more fruitful.<sup>61</sup> Cultures are not completed systems which came into mutual contact at a certain point in the process of globalization. Rather, cultures have long been reciprocal and complexly interrelated. Emotions are translatable as cultural knowledge; that is why they too “migrated” between cultures. The very experience and practice of emotions can be and is imitated and appropriated by means of mimetic processes.<sup>62</sup> In this respect, emotions can and could travel from place to place in the form of knowledge and practice. As I try and show in this book, global psychoanalysis was an emotion technique built upon knowledge and practices that had already been exchanged between cultures prior to its emergence.

Subsequently, psychoanalysis itself became a medium of interweaving, causing further developments in the history of emotions. As a global system of knowledge, it circulated new knowledge about emotions that people in different places could appropriate. An emotion technique that spanned the globe, it enabled people to train emotions and even assimilate new, therapeutic emotions. In ideal terms, the transference relationship between analyst and patient which is built up during therapy facilitates the mimetic learning of emotions.

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<sup>59</sup> The emerging field of emotion ethnology has found many indications of this since the 1970s (cf. e.g. Jean L. Briggs, *Never in Anger: Portrait of an Eskimo Family*, Cambridge, MA, 1970).

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Pascal Eitler/Monique Scheer, “Emotionsgeschichte als Körpergeschichte. Eine heuristische Perspektive auf religiöse Konversionen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert“, in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 35 (2009), p. 282-313.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Margrit Pernau, “Epilogue. Translating books, translating emotions“, in: Ute Frevert et al. (eds.), *Learning How to Feel. Children’s Literature and the History of Emotional Socialization, 1879-1970*, Oxford 2014, p. 245-258.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. on the concept of mimesis and emotional learning, see Pascal Eitler/Stephanie Olsen/Uffa Jensen, “Introduction“, in: Frevert et al. (eds.), *Learning How to Feel*, loc. cit., p. 1-20, esp. p. 7-9.

