

FREUD AFTER WITTGENSTEIN: A RE-EVALUATION OF
FREUDIAN
PSYCHOANALYTIC CONCEPTS.

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

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I, Hild Margaret Werburgh Leslie, of The University of Edinburgh, declare that this thesis has been entirely composed by me.

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ABSTRACT

The remarks reported in Lectures and Conversations, make it clear that Wittgenstein thought both there to be “a way of thinking” in Freud’s work that needed combatting, and also there to be something valuable that needed preserving. This thesis explores what underlies these remarks. The negative part of the thesis examines exactly what are the “ways of thinking” that need combatting. I argue that these include the confusion of reasons with causes and the related confusion of the “grammar” of physiology with the “grammar” of psychology. The positive part of the thesis argues that Freudian psychoanalysis can be better understood by a proper understanding of the way patients are persuaded to see their behaviour as falling under new descriptions, descriptions which are secondary or metaphorical applications of the ordinary language.

In the course of my argument I examine and criticise the claims made by such writers and would-be defenders of Freud as Donald Davidson and Marcia Cavell. I further explore the work of David Pears and Jean-Paul Sartre on self-deception, and the bearing that their views have on an understanding of Freudian psychoanalysis. I also invoke contributions by Sabina Lovibond and Peter Winch to illuminate my thesis that psychoanalytic explanations can be true, even though parasitic on acceptance by the patient.

Others who have written on these matters have tended to focus on the direct, though elliptical, comments reported in Wittgenstein’s Lectures and Conversations. I contend, however, that some of the fundamental ideas of Wittgenstein’s later thinking, notably in the Philosophical Investigations and The Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology are also crucial to a proper understanding of Freudian psychoanalysis.

Keywords: Wittgenstein, Freud, Davidson, Pears, Sartre, Winch, reasons and causes, the homonculus fallacy, the unconscious, self-deception, secondary meaning, persuasion.

INTRODUCTION

My thesis is concerned not only with the remarks that Wittgenstein directly made about Freud in his Lectures and Conversations, but also with the way in which his later thoughts in the Investigations, and his late writings on philosophical psychology, can be used in examining some of the central assumptions of Freudian psychoanalysis.

We are given to believe by Rush Rhees, in his introduction to Wittgenstein's Lectures on Freud, that Wittgenstein thought there to be a 'way of thinking' in Freud that needed combatting. But we are also told that he thought there to be something valuable in Freud that needed preserving¹. There is thus a negative and a positive side to Wittgenstein's response. These two aspects of Wittgenstein's response are preserved in my dissertation.

The negative side of the thesis examines Wittgenstein's belief that there is something that needs "combatting" in Freud's thinking. In order to combat that "way of thinking" one must look at how it arises, and what Wittgenstein thought to be objectionable in it.

Wittgenstein thought that the way of thinking in question arose from philosophical confusions. Thus, we must examine Freud's philosophical confusions. Freud's confusions, I argue are as follows. First there is the confusion, which I discuss in Chapter One, of thinking that the practice of psychoanalysis is a scientific practice. Next, in Chapter Two, I examine the confusions that arise from thinking that psychoanalytic explanations are causal explanations rather than reason-giving explanations. Chapter Three concerns itself with Freud's confused thought that there is some real entity, the unconscious, that is akin to a bodily state. This I treat as a

¹L. Wittgenstein, Lectures and Conversations, ed. Cyril Barrett, (Berkeley and Los Angeles; University of California Press, 1966), p.41. Rhees writes: "He was trying to separate what is valuable in Freud from that 'way of thinking' that he wanted to combat."

version of what Kenny calls 'the homonculus fallacy', namely the attempt to apply psychological predicates to non-psychological things. Chapter Four deals with Freud's questionable assumption that there is a common essence to all dreams and explores the misconceptions about meaning upon which that assumption rests. Finally, Chapter Five deals with the temptation mistakenly to think that the truth of psychological explanations is established independently of criteria established by human agreement.

The positive outcome of an engagement with Freud in the light of Wittgenstein's philosophy is first, as I show in Chapter One, that one is made to re-evaluate what the distinctions are between disciplines, for example, the distinction between the scientific and non-scientific and, further, the distinction between the psychological and non-psychological, if, indeed, such distinctions can in fact be drawn. Second, I show in Chapter Two that such an engagement enables one to understand how patients engaged in psychoanalysis are persuaded by reasons to interpret their behaviour in particular ways. Chapter Three shows how one can best understand the unconscious, not as a system of causally efficacious mental states or processes, but as a complex concept with a variety of uses in both psychoanalytic and non psychoanalytic contexts. One can then examine these uses and come to understand their possible applications in the practice of psychoanalysis. In Chapter Four I show that dreams have no essential meanings which are prior to "dream interpretation". I argue, rather, that "dream interpretation" involves the employment both of what Wittgenstein called "secondary" uses of language and also the use of metaphors. These are deployed by the analyst in order to bring the patient to see something about his or her behaviour. Chapter Five argues for a better understanding of what justifies a psychoanalytic explanation. This is determined by constantly developing criteria, operative within the practice of psychoanalysis itself, and within the human activities of describing and evaluating action and behaviour upon which psychoanalysis is founded and from which it emerges.

In dealing with these matters, this thesis inevitably concerns itself with the claims of many contemporary philosophers. Thus it deals with thinkers such as Donald Davidson and Marcia Cavell, who, in ways I find unsatisfactory, defend a Freudian position. Cavell is dealt with in Chapter Two and Davidson in Chapters Two and Three. In Chapter Two I also examine some of the claims of Frank Cioffi, who, I argue isn't hard enough on some of Freud's conceptual inadequacies. In Chapter Three, I criticise philosophers such as Jean-Paul Sartre and David Pears, who attempt to move away from a notion of the unconscious mind and prefer to talk of self-deception in terms of rational agency, Sartre in terms of a rational consciousness, and Pears in terms of a main system and sub-systems of rationality. In Chapter Four, I use work by Saul Kripke, which I think is founded on a misconception, to dispel a suspicion. For it might be thought that Wittgenstein's belief that the patient's assent is central to adequate psychological explanation, might lead to the sceptical conclusion that whatever the patient says is right, is right. In the concluding chapter, I invoke work by Sabina Lovibond and Peter Winch to show the possible ways in which a psychoanalytic explanation might be justified by criteria established from within the practices of psychoanalysis.

CHAPTER ONE

WITTGENSTEIN, SCIENCE AND PSYCHOANALYSIS.

Freud is constantly claiming to be scientific. But what he gives is speculation - something prior even to the formation of an hypothesis (Wittgenstein)¹.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses Wittgenstein's doubt that Freud was doing science. I wish to show that Wittgenstein, although happy to say Freud was not doing science, does not, throughout his work, himself appear to have a consistent understanding of what science is. His later views about science, as found in On Certainty, would lead one to wonder if it is at all possible, for him to make any demarcation between science and psychoanalysis. However, some of his earlier views in the Lectures and Conversations and in Culture and Value base the demarcation on a conception of science in which physics is taken as the paradigm of science, where other disciplines such as biology, astronomy and psychoanalysis are understood as being "descriptive" and non-scientific.

As Wittgenstein himself was unspecific about exactly what he thought science to be, I shall draw on the work of a notable philosopher of science, J.C.C Smart, to clarify what Wittgenstein might, at least in his earlier writings, have taken to be the nature of science. I shall then argue that Wittgenstein's earlier conception of science does not accurately characterize scientific practice, a view that Wittgenstein himself, later came to accept. In fact I suspect that the error in Wittgenstein's earlier view is helpfully diagnosed in John Hyman's Investigating Psychology: Sciences of the Mind

¹L. Wittgenstein, Lectures and Conversations, p.44.

after Wittgenstein. There Hyman argues that the kind of distinction often made between science, on the one hand, and psychology, on the other, exemplifies a misguided conception of science, one that is generated by a misunderstanding of the role that scientific speculation has had in the history of science. For philosophers, including, I think, the early Wittgenstein, have tended to understand science as a purely empirical and progressive activity, where speculation is dispensed with as evidence takes its place. However, speculation, Hyman argues, continues even after evidence has been adduced. He writes

For example, the idea that seeing is a matter of finding out from images (whether ethereal images emitted from objects, as many Greek philosophers supposed, or retinal images, as contemporary visual theorists believe) what is present in the visual environment enabled Kepler to describe the geometry of the eye correctly, but it also led visual theorists to puzzle for hundreds of years over the fact that we see the world upright in spite of the inversion of the retinal image, and to regard the explanation of this anomaly as, in George Berkeley's words, 'the principal point of the whole optic theory'¹.

To demonstrate how Wittgenstein's earlier conception is inaccurate, I shall, later in this chapter, refer to the work of Michael Ruse, a philosopher of biology, who argues that the positivistic conception of physics as the paradigm of what a science is, is mistaken. Given that it is mistaken, it may then look as if disciplines like biology and theoretical psychoanalysis could be sciences.

However even granted that theoretical psychoanalysis is pursued as a scientific study of the operations of the mind and, as such, could provide generalizations and laws, it is not clear that such an activity is what is involved in psychoanalytic practice. The essential thing there is that a person, the patient, has to be brought to see for him- or herself that, for example, his or her behaviour can be explained and understood in terms of a certain history of relationships. Supplying the patient with a scientific

¹J. Hyman, Investigating Psychology : Sciences of the Mind after Wittgenstein (London: Routledge, 1991), p.2.

generalisation, for example, the generalisation that in numerous observed instances people acted in certain ways given a certain family history, would not be to bring the patient to see that he or she exemplified an instance of that generalisation. Patients, through psychoanalysis, need to be brought to see why in their case they are acting as they do, and that is a different activity from conducting experiments, from which predictions, inferences and generalizations can be made.

Freud mistakenly thought psychoanalytic practice to be scientific. But, as we shall see, although psychoanalytic theory may give rise generalizations and laws akin to those in science, to practice psychoanalysis is not to be doing science.

I

Wittgenstein's Science

When we seek to understand why Wittgenstein denied Freud's psychoanalytic explanations to be comparable to natural scientific explanations, it is disconcerting to discover that Wittgenstein's later view of science can seem sometimes at odds with the earlier distinction he made between psychoanalysis and science. He eventually came to assert, as can be seen from the quotation with which this chapter begins, that Freud's psychoanalytic claims are "mere speculations" and not the sorts of things for which empirical grounds can be given. In Culture and Value he makes the same point about the claims of biology and astronomy, when he says that "what a Copernicus or a Darwin achieved was not the discovery of a true theory but of a fertile point of view¹".

Wittgenstein regards the work of Copernicus as analogous to the work of Freud in having initiated a revolutionary change in which new norms of expression entered the language and replaced older ones. For Copernicus's "new notation" for

¹L. Wittgenstein, Culture and Value, trans. P. Winch (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1977), p.18.

describing the relation of the earth to the planets provided a new way of talking about the earth, in which the earth was no longer spoken of in terms of its centrality in the universe. In his Lectures, Cambridge 1932-1935, Wittgenstein says:

Something may play a predominant role in our language and be suddenly removed by science, e.g. the word "earth" lost its importance in the new Copernican notation. Where the old notation had given the earth a unique position, the new notation put lots of planets on the same level. Any obsession arising from the unique position of something in our language ceases as soon as another language appears which puts that thing on a level with other things¹.

Similarly, Wittgenstein thought, Freud had provided a new way of talking about desires by arguing that he had discovered the unconscious mechanisms that caused them. People then came not to think of their desires as something transparent to them, which could be authoritatively known by them, but rather as something unconscious and hidden that could only be known through psychoanalysis. Glock puts Wittgenstein's view thus:

The introduction of a new form of representation (e.g., the Copernican Revolution or Freud's idea of 'unconscious desires') may result from an empirical discovery, but it is not itself a discovery forced upon us by facts. Rather it is to adopt a new 'notation' for reasons of simplicity, explanatory power, etc.².

Wittgenstein also talks of Hertz's invisible masses as similar to Freud's unconscious processes. For both provide norms of expression, new ways of characterising phenomena, rather than new scientific theories. They were not scientific because neither thinker, he supposed, could provide empirical grounds for their postulations. Hence, in his Lectures, Cambridge 1932-1935, Wittgenstein says, therefore, that "hypotheses such as 'invisible masses', 'unconscious mental events'

¹A. Ambrose (ed.), Wittgenstein's Lectures, Cambridge 1932-1935: From the Notes of Alice Ambrose and Margaret MacDonald (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979), p.98.

²H-J. Glock, A Wittgenstein Dictionary (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp.343-344.

are norms of expression. They enter into the language to enable us to say there must be causes”¹.

These explanatory activities, Wittgenstein thinks, then, in not resting upon the activities of giving empirical grounds, can't qualify as sciences. However, later, in On Certainty, he seemed also to want to say that the empirical grounds for scientific explanations are not given independently of “points of view”. For what counts as an empirical ground, is understood and articulated from within the point of view of scientific language games. He writes:

I am taught that under such circumstances this happens. It has been discovered by making the experiment a few times. Not that that would prove anything to us, if it weren't that this experiment was surrounded by others which combine with it to form a system. Thus, people did not make experiments just about falling bodies but also about air resistance and all sorts of other things².

Because Wittgenstein thus appears to make psychology and physics “point of view dependent”, Jacques Bouveresse, in his book Wittgenstein Reads Freud, is rightly sceptical about whether Wittgenstein can maintain the distinction between psychoanalysis and science:

Wittgenstein's general treatment of the sciences tends to undermine rather than enhance the strict distinction he is trying to establish between the situation of psychoanalysis and that of a discipline like physics³.

Bouveresse rightly thinks that the distinction Wittgenstein initially sought between science and psychoanalysis can't be made given the later remarks that Wittgenstein makes about the similarity between science and psychoanalysis.

¹Wittgenstein's Cambridge Lectures, p.16.

² L. Wittgenstein, On Certainty, sec. 609.

³J. Bouveresse, Wittgenstein Reads Freud trans. C. Cosman (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), p.54.

However, I wish to suggest, that we cannot fully explain the unclarity in the distinction Wittgenstein makes unless we see that there are two views about science operating in Wittgenstein's thinking.

In order for Wittgenstein to claim that psychoanalysis is not a science, he would have to have a different understanding of science from that of which he was speaking when he talked of science as the expression of "fertile points of view". For on that account scientific explanations would not differ from psychoanalytic explanations. That he had such a different understanding is suggested by two things.

First, rightly or wrongly, Wittgenstein took physics to be the paradigm of what science should be in that it, unlike other sciences, such as Copernican astronomy and Darwinian biology, rested on and could be proven by quantified observations, and, furthermore, physicists made falsifiable predictions:

One of the most important things about an explanation (in Physics R,T) is that it should work, that it should enable us to predict something. (successfully -T). Physics is connected with engineering. The bridge must not fall down¹.

Second, however, the other, 'sciences', such as biology (specifically, Darwinism), and astronomy (specifically, Copernicus's theory) Wittgenstein thought of more as scientific attitudes or scientific points of view. Such attitudes are comparable to Freud's psychoanalytic explanations, so that if they are scientific, so is Freud's work.

In Culture and Value and Lectures and Conversations, then, Wittgenstein seems to have a notion of "science with a capital 'S'". Copernicus and Darwin were regarded as scientists who were not doing "science with a capital 'S'". To do science in that way one would have to be a physicist. Wittgenstein did, however, think Darwin

¹L. Wittgenstein, Lectures and Conversations, p.25. The capitalised initials refer to the variants in the notes taken by the various persons at the lectures and conversations, e.g., Rhees and Taylor).

and Copernicus to be scientists in the sense of investigators who were producing new ways of thinking or “fertile new points of view” about natural things and phenomena. But they were not scientists in the sense that physicists are scientists.

Was Wittgenstein right to say, consistently with the two views of science that seem to be present in his remarks, that Freudian psychoanalysis is not a science like physics, not a science, that is, which discovers provable or falsifiable laws by quantifiable observations. Is he right that it is, at best, a science like Darwinian biology which discovers new and fertile ways of thinking?

That is too hasty a conclusion. For to begin with it leaves us in the dark as to why Wittgenstein thought that physics differed from biology and astronomy. Why should Wittgenstein have wanted to see evolutionary theory as doing no more than expressing a “fertile point of view”, and yet say, for example, the theory of gravity cannot be understood as such, with the implied conclusion that physics is more of a science than biology. What, for Wittgenstein makes a scientific law not the expression of a point of view?

One thing that Wittgenstein seems to say that bears on this is that, given the weight of quantified observational evidence which supports the theories of physicists, it would be unreasonable to doubt these theories. Those, on the other hand, whose theories express fertile points of view, are not able to give the same kind of observational, experimental support to their theories, even though they might believe this to be what they are doing. There is clear evidence for this way of thinking when, in his conversations with Rush Rhees about Freud, Wittgenstein remarked:

The Darwin upheaval. One circle of admirers who said: “Of course”, and another circle (of enemies-Rhees) who said: “Of course not”. Why in the Hell should a man say “of course”? (The idea was that of monocellular organisms becoming more and more complicated until they became mammals, men, *etc.*). Did any one see this process happening? No. Has anyone seen it happening now? No. The evidence of breeding is just a drop in the bucket. But there are thousands of

books in which this was said to be the obvious solution. People were certain on grounds which were extremely thin. Couldn't there have been an attitude which said: "I don't know. It is an interesting hypothesis which may eventually be well confirmed?". This shows how you can be persuaded of a thing. In the end you must entirely forget the question of verification, you are just sure it must have been like that¹.

Wittgenstein was well aware that there are scientific theories in physics, which refer to hypothetical entities, entities for which there can be no direct observational evidence. Strikingly, and consistently with the account we have given, however, he characterises these as non-scientific explanations. If he had not done so, he would have had reason to think of Freudian theories as scientific. For scientific hypothetical entities, he thought, do not differ in character from the invisible processes postulated by Freud as the cause of certain forms of behaviour. Thus, in his lectures in 1930-33, Wittgenstein drew an analogy between Hertz's invisible masses and Freud's unconscious mental events. Neither can be observed but both are postulated as if they could be:

Hypotheses such as 'invisible masses', 'unconscious mental events', are norms of expression. They enter into language to enable us to say there must be causes proportional to the effect. If an explosion occurs when a ball is dropped, we say that some phenomenon must have occurred to make the cause proportional to the effect. On hunting for the phenomenon and not finding it, we say that it has merely not yet been found. We believe we are dealing with a natural law a priori, whereas we are dealing with a norm of expression that we ourselves have fixed².

Thus theories, such as Darwin's, are characterized by Wittgenstein as "ways of speaking" rather than as the scientific theories characteristic of "true" sciences, like physics, which rest on quantified observational evidence.

¹Ibid., p.26.

²Wittgenstein's Cambridge Lectures 1932-1935, p.16.

In support of the distinction that Wittgenstein seems to offer between explanatory sciences like physics, and explanatory activities such as biology and psychoanalysis, we might consider the fact that one is more persuaded by the kind of evidence that a physicist gives, for example, for claims of the type “objects fall when released”, than one is by the kind of evidence or lack of evidence that a psychoanalyst might give for claims of the type “traumatic events in childhood are the causes of certain kinds of mental illnesses”.

Our disinclination to doubt observationally based physical laws doesn't exclude the possibility of their being refuted in the light of new evidence, but rather illustrates the point that what is understood at a particular time may stand fast for us and make doubt unreasonable. In this sense, then, a belief, for example, in the force of gravity, is a belief we have been persuaded to accept, and to which we hold fast. In being something that we have been persuaded to accept, it is not different from belief in, say, the fertile points of view of Darwinian biology or Freudian psychology. However, for Wittgenstein, belief in a law of physics differs from a belief in a point of view because we also have good observational grounds for believing laws of physics. Lacking such grounds, believing in a point of view might be solely a matter of faith.

One might want to reply: “but there may be good grounds for a point of view”. Moreover, one might try to argue that psychological laws can be observationally demonstrated. For example, one could try experimentally to show that people in crowded conditions become aggressive. However, one wants to say that this wouldn't be as compelling as demonstrating the laws of gravity. The latter, though not the former, have a compelling generality of application. For there might be a person, or even a number of persons, who under crowded conditions were not even inclined to become aggressive, whereas one cannot, under normal conditions, think of an object being released that would not undergo a gravitational pull. Of course, we can think of

a situation in which a balloon filled with helium would go upwards. But we cannot think of any object that, on being released, would not undergo gravitational pull. In the case of gravitational laws, the scientist wants to show the observer that, under particular conditions, there is always a particular effect. However, the psychologist can't claim this. Under his or her particular condition, namely overcrowding, there is no one particular effect for all the persons involved. Thus we are less compelled to believe there to be a psychological law of the kind "in all instances of x,y occurs".

I want to suggest that Wittgenstein thought that particular physical processes can be seen to act in conformity with, and so support the postulates of, particular theories, whereas he supposed psychological phenomena may act contrary to the postulates of particular psychological theories. Moreover, psychological explanations may hypothesise things we can't see, and hence, although one may be persuaded to believe them, and believe also in the hypothesised entities, one would not have any compelling observational evidence for believing in them. Thus one would not be able to give observational support for the laws of the type Freud posits, for example, the law that all behaviour is caused by unconscious processes. That, for Wittgenstein would set it apart from the laws of physics. One's belief in the unconscious might be as unshakable as one's belief in gravity, yet, on scientific grounds, and those are the ones Freud claims to be working with, it would not be unreasonable to doubt the existence of the former given the lack of empirical evidence, as it would be unreasonable to doubt the existence of the latter, given the kind of empirical evidence which may support it.

Is Evolutionary Biology a “Science with a big ‘S’”

I shall now examine the question whether Wittgenstein’s claim that biology is not a science “with a big ‘s’” is a justified one, and, second, to what extent a further claim that Darwinian biology is such a science, affects the question whether psychoanalysis is a science also. It may well turn out to be the case, as we shall see, that Wittgenstein was wrong in his general conception about what it is for something to count as a science, or wrong about whether biology and psychoanalysis answered to that conception, and, therefore, wrong about the possibility of biology and psychoanalysis being sciences. As he himself admits in Lectures and Conversations, when talking about aesthetic and psychological experiments, it is possible for there to be a scientific treatment of such things as aesthetic objects and psychological behaviour¹. However, as this thesis will show, such treatments are inappropriate models for psychoanalytic and or aesthetic practice.

Wittgenstein appears to give no justification for his claim that Darwinism is not scientific. However, we can seek some illumination of what he was after by following up justifications for such claims that have been attempted, notably by J.C.C Smart in his book, Philosophy and Scientific Realism. He writes, for example, that “the writers who have tried to axiomatise biology and psychology have wrongly thought of

¹“Suppose it was found that all our judgements proceeded from our brain. We discovered particular kinds of mechanism in the brain, formulated general laws, etc. One could show that this sequence of notes produces this kind of reaction: makes a man smile and say, “Oh, how wonderful”. (Mechanism for English Language, etc.). Suppose this were done. It might enable us to predict what a particular person would like and dislike. We could calculate these things. The question is whether this sort of explanation we should like to have when we are puzzled about aesthetic impressions, e.g., there is a puzzle— “Why do these bars give me such a peculiar impression?” Obviously it isn’t this, i.e., a calculation, an account of reactions, etc., we want - apart from the obvious impossibility of the thing. L.Wittgenstein, Lectures and Conversations, p.20.

biology or psychology as a science of much the same logical character as physics, just as chemistry is¹".

Smart wants to claim, as does Wittgenstein, that evolutionary biology, to which, Wittgenstein, at least, would add psychology, cannot be lawlike. Smart is emphatic about this. He writes: "Not only do I deny the existence of emergent laws and properties, but I even deny that in biology and psychology there are laws in the strict sense at all²".

However other notable philosophers of biology, such as Michael Ruse, claim, on the contrary, that there are biological laws, and that these are as much scientific laws as the laws of physics. One example of such a law would be the Hardy-Weinberg Law, which states that if the ratio of genes in a population is p:q, then for all succeeding generations the ratio will remain p:q; and that, further, no matter how the genes were distributed in the first generation, in the second and all succeeding generations the genes will be distributed in a fixed ratio³.

First I shall look at some of the reasons why Smart thinks there can't be any such biological laws, and, second, some of the reasons why Ruse thinks that there can. Thirdly, I want to know, if Ruse's position is correct, how this might illuminate the apparently negative answer that Wittgenstein gave to the question whether psychoanalysis is a science.

Smart's position is this: scientific laws have to be constant throughout the universe and throughout space and time. They must not refer to individual things or

¹ J.C.C.Smart, Philosophy and Scientific Realism (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), p.52.

²Ibid., p.52.

³ M. Ruse, "Are There Laws in Biology?", Australasian Journal of Philosophy 48 (2), 1970, p.240.

places. Biology, he believes, transgresses these stipulations. For example, biological statements of the kind, “albinotic mice always breed true”, apply to particular things, namely mice. Someone defending the universality of such a law might, of course, argue that the mice referred to in the law are not treated as particular things but as instances of universals, all sharing the same properties of mouseness. Smart’s rejoinder to this, however, is to say that the common properties of mice can’t be known universally. We know of mice only from particular instances here on earth, and our laws, consequently, apply only to them, whereas the laws of physics, such as the laws of gravity, don’t just apply to such particular things on earth, such as, for example, apples on trees. Rather they apply throughout the universe. Even if we were able to say that all mice everywhere are animals with certain properties, we can’t know that all such animals will always breed true. For we could not, on Smart’s view, say that the statement, “albinotic mice always breed true”, can be known as a properly scientific universal law. For there may be albinotic mice on another planet which do not breed true. Biological statements are at best true for the planet earth. We have no right to claim them to be true of the whole universe. Smart writes:

No doubt we could find a set of properties such that, so far as terrestrial animals are concerned, all and only mice possessed them. The trouble is that now we have no reason to suppose our law to be true. The proposition that everything which possesses the properties A_1, A_2, \dots, A_n , and which is albinotic, also breeds true is very likely a false one. . . . On some planet belonging to a remote star there may well be a species of animals with the properties A_1, A_2, \dots, A_n , and of being albinotic, but without the property of breeding true¹.

The first main reason Smart gives for the lack of universality in the laws in biology is the sheer diversity of biological phenomena. In physics he argues, the

¹J.J.C. Smart, Philosophy and Scientific Realism, p.54.

phenomena are of a simpler kind and statements about them are thus more readily universalisable.

The physical properties of the atom are explained because the theory of the atom can be reduced to that of simpler particles, such as electrons, protons and neutrons. It is important that such small, simple constituents are believed to be ubiquitous in the universe. In this respect electrons and protons are not like albinotic mice, or even diploid cells or, for that matter, chromosomes¹.

Given the diversity of the phenomena, the philosopher of biology is apt to make generalizations more analogous to those found in engineering than to those found in physics. Smart gives an example to illustrate his point. If I turn the left hand knob of a radio and it makes a squeak, can I conclude from this that in all cases in which the left hand knob of a radio is turned there will be a squeak? In other words is this a scientific universal law about radios?. No, says Smart. It is a generalisation, and, moreover, the same kind of generalisation that we find in biology, where what may hold in one instance cannot be assumed to hold in all other instances. My radio may squeak when I turn the left hand knob, but that might be because I dropped it in the bath and not because all radios behave in this manner.

One might want to say, “well, can’t I posit a law, to the effect that all radios dropped in baths squeak when their left hand knob is turned?”. Smart would say not, on the grounds that there are other people whose radios don’t squeak when the left hand knob is turned, even though their radios have been dropped in the bath.

In order to show how biological generalisations are like this, Smart takes as his example Mendel’s Law of Segregation, which says that, for each sexual organism, each parent gives one gene only, at every gene location. These genes in the offspring have their source in the corresponding gene location in the parents. One parental gene has as much chance of being passed on to the offspring as the other gene that is at the

¹Ibid., p.55.

same parental location. Smart says that we can't assert, as a universal law, that offspring will thus inherit the genes of their parents, because we can't assume that individuals on other planets have the same genetic structure as our own. Thus, as we have said before, one can't generalize from planet Earth to the whole universe. Smart writes:

It would be altogether speculative to assert that things have always gone on in other planets as they have done here, and that, for example, the genetic codes are necessarily embodied in nucleic acid molecules as is the case here¹.

On Smart's account, then, there is no more hope in finding a law that says all organisms will inherit their parents genes than there is of finding a law that demonstrates how all radios will behave.

The second main reason Smart gives for thinking that biology does not operate with laws in the way that physics does is that, generally speaking, biology uses statistics, as Smart puts it "probabilistically", as opposed to physics, which, generally speaking, uses statistics "deterministically". Smart illustrates what he thinks to be the biologist's use of statistics using the example of cabbage-growing. The problem is this: suppose we have been growing cabbages for some time. However, before we plant our next lot we decide to put some new mineral in the soil. Our next harvest of cabbages are bigger than our previous lot. How do we decide whether the size of the cabbages are due to the mineral we put in the soil, or whether it is just a random event? For it seems quite possible that sizes vary from year to year independently of any additional help. The answer to the question is of great interest to those who enter their vegetables in competitions at country shows, where there is often a lot of envy and curiosity surrounding the winners with the largest vegetables. People are concerned to

¹Ibid., p.56.

know whether, for example, Mr. Ramsbottom's marrows were pumped with Baby Bio, or whether it was just a good year for his marrows. To decide this, on Smart's account, the biologist could calculate, perhaps over a period of time, how many cabbages were bigger when the mineral was used and how many cabbages were bigger when the mineral was not used. Obviously, if more cabbages were bigger when the mineral was used in the soil, then one would conclude that the mineral helps increase the size of cabbages. The biologist can then be seen to use statistics to calculate what is more or less probable in a given situation.

Smart calls the use of statistics in biology "extra-theoretical". Statistical methods are used after the results have been arrived at, to explain the results. In the case of the cabbages we had two possible conclusions about the effect of adding a mineral to the soil while growing our cabbages. The first was that the mineral made them larger, and second that they grew larger by chance. We then used statistics to arbitrate between these two results. By contrast, Smart terms the physicist's use of statistics "intra-theoretical", by which he means that the use of statistics is integral to demonstrating the laws of physics.

However, although Smart makes this apparent demarcation between biology, which uses statistics extra-theoretically, and physics, which uses statistics intra-theoretically, this sharp demarcation is clouded by his admission that both disciplines do use both methods. He writes:

I do not wish to deny that in physics, often enough, statistics are used in the sense of the theory of errors, that is, in the extra-theoretical way. Contrawise, in the theory of evolution we have studies of the spreading genes in the populations which constitute an intra-theoretical use of statistics¹.

He gives astronomy as an example of the extra-theoretical method being used within physics. He then argues, however, that astronomy can in fact be distinguished

¹Ibid., p.59.

from physics, and so is, presumably not a genuine science, because it more concerned with the history of planets and stars than with the identification of physical laws. He acknowledges that data from astronomical observations can be used to test physical theories. However, it is primarily concerned with historical facts (a view that might well be disputed by such contemporary cosmologists as Stephen Hawking).

Smart says that sometimes biology, that is evolutionary biology, is sensible enough to use the intra-theoretical statistical methods that are used in physics. However, he adds that evolutionary biology and astronomy, are, “not, in the logician’s sense, typically ‘scientific’ in nature. They are quite obviously ‘historical’ subjects”¹. Evolutionary biology is, then, not typically scientific for Smart because it is not dealing with universal laws. Its subject matter is confined to localised instances from which we cannot generalise. On Smart’s view, in the same way that astronomy is concerned with the history of the stars and planets, so, too, is biology concerned with the history of our species. It is this historical aspect which sets these subjects apart from science and prevents their “laws” from being genuinely scientific.

In the conclusion of his chapter entitled “The Nature of the Biological Sciences”, Smart stands by his claim that, despite any intra-theoretical statistical methods that biology may use, it is still not a science in the way that physics is. His conclusion is, however, somewhat tentative. For example, he acknowledges the problems that might arise about the division between that which is biological and that which is physical from the occurrences of instances of the intra-theoretic use of statistics in biology. Nor is it clear, he admits, why something like a gene should be thought of as biological thing and something like an atom a physical thing. He sometimes seems to admit that difference between such things is only a difference in complexity.

¹Ibid., p.59.

In the end he seems to rest the difference between what is science and what is not on the fact that, on the one hand, in a true science such as physics we find the scientist “using propositions of observable fact in order to test laws” and, on the other hand, in a non-true-science such as biology, we find the investigator “using laws in order to test propositions of observable fact”. In the former case, one relies on observation to confirm or disconfirm one’s theories, and, in the latter, one uses already established laws in physics and chemistry to test one’s observations. In biology, then, according to this view, one doesn’t derive laws of nature but uses physical laws to test what one observes. Thus biology relies on physics but does not derive any biological laws of its own. Hence, whatever the similarity in kind of the phenomena found in biology and physics, there is a radical difference in methodology. The one is concerned with universal laws and the other with the natural history of our earth and with how its organisms and species behave over time.

One final point made by Smart is worth noting, since it touches on something that, as we shall see when we come to discussions of falsifiability, has been alleged against Freudian psychoanalysis. Smart suggests that evolutionary biology is not a science. For, rather than producing laws, it produces tautologies. Thus it might appear that all one is saying when one says the fittest creatures survive, is that whoever survives, survives. This seems not to be saying anything. He writes: “We can say that even in that great nebula in Andromeda the ‘fittest’ will survive, but this is to say nothing, for the ‘fittest’ has to be defined in terms of ‘survival’”¹.

The relevance of Smart’s discussion for our purposes in this thesis is that it throws light on why precisely Wittgenstein might have been dubious about Freudian psychoanalysis as a science. Smart, like Wittgenstein, thinks that psychology, is not a science, or at least not a science comparable to physics, for the same reasons as

¹Ibid., p.59.

biology is not a science like physics. He asserts, as Wittgenstein, did that psychologists inappropriately used the scientific method and in so doing stunted the development of their subject. Of psychology Smart writes:

Its progress has been slowed by wrong ideas about methodology, more than with biology generally. This is perhaps because psychologists have been more unsure of themselves and have been influenced by logic text book ideas about the nature of science. Psychologists have tended to search for strict laws of the stimulus-response type, and so to integrate these laws in a body of what may be called 'molar' theorising: that is, the theories that concern the animal as a whole¹.

Smart quite rightly points out that there are many psychologies and not just the one he has dealt with. However, he still maintains that psychology is not a science and, at best, can only hope to make useful generalizations. The way forward for psychology, Smart recommends, is by making conjectures, say about the neural life of creatures such as octopuses, and testing them experimentally. Smart thus thinks we should begin with understanding the nervous systems of smaller creatures and work our way up to larger creatures such as ourselves. And then: "one day, when we fully understand octopuses and other advanced creatures, we may aspire to understand more advanced animals and even rather better than we do at present?"

III

Ruse's Rejoinder to Smart

We saw that Wittgenstein was inclined to deny the scientific status of psychoanalysis because, like Darwinian biology and Copernican astronomy, it differed in status from physics. But he did not say precisely where the difference lay. Smart's work may be taken as an effort to make clearer what Wittgenstein only hinted at. But as we have

¹Ibid., p.62.

²Ibid., p.63.

seen, even on Smart's account, it is not obvious that there is a categorical difference in status between biology, say, and physics and, similarly, psychology and physics. So, if Wittgenstein wished to attack the scientific status of Freud's enterprise, it would have to be on different grounds.

For a clearer statement of why Smart's attempt to establish a difference between physics and biology is inconclusive, and so no help to justifying Wittgenstein's claims about the non-scientific status of psychology, we may look at Michael Ruse's "Are there Laws in Biology"¹.

Ruse asks, "What are Laws?". What is the difference between statements like, "Turning the left hand knob of the radio produces a squeak", and "Force=Mass x Acceleration"? One answer might be that the latter is in some way necessary, whereas the former is not. But what do we mean when we say "necessary"? Do we mean "logical necessity", so that it would not make sense to say, for example, that gold is pink, because yellowness is necessary condition of gold. But what if, as Ruse points out, we found an isotope of gold that was pink. Would this not falsify our law and render yellowness not a necessary condition of gold. We want to say that the isotope would still be gold, but it would no longer be logically necessary that gold was yellow. Thus, suggests Ruse we would have to call such scientific laws, laws of nomic necessity as opposed to laws of logical necessity. In other words, laws would not be constituted by logically true statements but by empirically based statements.

Smart, according to Ruse, believes that laws are nomic necessity because they hold throughout time and space. In other words they are empirically observable and apply throughout the universe. Ruse however thinks that this does not help us ascertain what is a law and what isn't. Someone may try and convince us that there is

¹ M.Ruse, "Are there Laws in Biology ?" *loc. cit.*

a law that all radios squeak when their left hand knob is turned. Why should we have any less reason to believe them than not to believe them? Further, why should we think that Boyle's Law of gases is any more applicable universally than the law about radios. For we have no more experience of gases on Mars than we have of radios on Mars. Thus we have no more reason to falsify the universal law about radios than we do to falsify Boyle's Law. What if there were more instances of radios squeaking than there were instances of gases. Ruse writes that:

the radio fan might turn round and show that in fact, his statement is supported by a study of more radios than some of our more esoteric supposed 'laws' are supported by observed physical phenomena in the lab¹.

Ruse offers a hypothetical case, the case of the radio fan's "law", to illustrate the fact that the physicist can fall into the same trap as the radio fan, namely, the trap of thinking that because he has identified instances of the behaviour of gases here on earth that the same must hold throughout the universe. So we can ask, why shouldn't Smart's criticism that the statements of the biologist or of the radio fan don't necessarily hold universally, equally well apply to the physicist?

Ruse is not supporting the radio fan's claims. In fact he says that those claims don't apply on earth never mind anywhere else. He simply thinks that the physicists' evidence for laws may not be as empirically verifiable as is thought by those who argue as Smart does. In the light of this, one may need to revise one's definition of necessity and hence of laws. There may be many cases in which Boyle's Law holds true. However, one could never hope empirically to observe all instances of the law in operation and thus conclusively confirm it.

¹Ibid., p.238.

Ruse gives a detailed example of a biological law. The law he cites is the Hardy-Weinberg Law, which is concerned with population genetics. Ruse tells us that this law involves the assumption that all sexual organisms can “interbreed without restriction”, and that, further, at any one gene location there may be one or two different genes. Each sexed organism will have pairs of chromosomes and corresponding to each of these chromosomes will be a gene, one from each parent. Thus, at one particular gene location, the organism can be seen to have a number of gene possibilities. Ruse represents them as follows: if an offspring gets an A_1 gene from each parent he or she will be A_1, A_1 . If an offspring gets an A_2 gene from each parent he or she will be A_2, A_2 . And, finally, if an offspring gets a different gene from each parent she or he will be A_1, A_2 . According to the Hardy-Weinberg Law, the number of A_1 genes to the number of A_2 genes in a population will always remain the same throughout succeeding generations. Thus in a population of Britons, for example, one might find that there are more fair complexions than there are dark, and more straight haired people than curly. Granted “interbreeding without restriction”, this ratio will remain unchanged. This, Ruse says, is an example of a universal law. He writes:

For a start, it certainly seems to fit the required form for laws, since it is a universal statement claiming that for all populations (at any place and at any time), if they have certain properties (eg sexuality) then certain other things follow¹.

Ruse cites research into blood groups of a large sample of English people as possible evidence for the Hardy-Weinberg law. Such a sample, in being representative of English people, is not affected by any external factors that might significantly affect the predictability of the ratio of blood groups, one to another.

¹Ibid., p.240.

Further given the fact that the English “mate randomly”, as Ruse puts it, the expectation is that the blood groups would have the same ratio for all succeeding generations. For if people mate randomly, then the gene pool will remain stable. However, if people mated only with identical types, dark hair with dark hair, blond hair with blond hair, then certain genes would die out and there would be no fixed ratio between blood groups. Ruse, is however sceptical as to whether this observational evidence is enough, and thinks even accurate observations of such blood groups would not be enough to establish the claim that the Hardy-Weinberg law was a law. Ruse thinks, rightly or wrongly, that in order to show that it is a law, one should show how such a law follows in theory from Mendelian genetics.

As we have seen, Mendel’s law states that each of two mating organisms passes on one of its respective genes to its offspring. Given this one can then calculate the genetic possibilities of the next generation. Ruse demonstrates in detail how such possibilities enable one to predict what the ratio between gene types will be for all future generations¹. He then claims that this demonstrates a scientific law equal to any found in physics or chemistry, and wishes to defend himself against any suggestion from Smart that Mendel’s law is merely generalisation and speculation.

Smart objected to Mendel’s law being a law, on the ground that it couldn’t be applied universally. For there is no evidence that organisms on other planets have the same genetic structure as organisms on ours. Thus, on Smart’s view, we have no way of knowing if genes on other planets will be passed on by parents in the way in which they are passed on on earth. The law only concerns itself with one gene locus. It cannot tell us what happens at other gene loci. Thus, as Smart says, on Mendel’s law

¹ For further details on how Mendelian genetics supports the Hardy-Weinberg law see M. Ruse, “Are There Laws in Biology?”, p.242.

of segregation, “there is no crossing over”. There is no guarantee that at another locus each parent will pass on one of its genes to its offspring.

However, Ruse points out that Smart’s objection should not be levelled at Mendel’s Law of Segregation, but rather at Mendel’s Law of Independent Assortment, which states that “the way genes segregate at one locus is independent of the way in which genes separate at another locus”¹. This does not always happen, says Ruse, because two genes at different loci may pass on genes at the same time, thereby linking them. On the other hand, he reflects, not all linked genes do get passed on to the offspring at the same time. Some get separated.

Although, Ruse admits that there is the possibility that genes may not get passed on the same way in all locations, he does not wish to say that Mendel’s law of segregation, on which the Hardy-Weinberg law depends, is thereby rendered useless. For although physicists may rightly claim that it is feeble to attempt to derive so general a law as Mendel’s Law of Segregation solely from experiments with peas, more evidence is forthcoming than that. The law seems to hold for so many different kinds of things: elephants, fruit flies and cabbages, but to name a few.

Objectors want to say that there still isn’t enough observational evidence to establish a law. The rejoinder to this is simply to say this if this were an objection to the possibility of biological laws, it would be an objection to physical laws as well. Further, Ruse wants to say, although in the case of Mendel’s law one will find counter-examples, this is no less true of laws in physics and chemistry.

In defining what a law was, Smart had said anything that looked like a law had to be a physical or chemical law. There are no specifically biological laws. Any law that any biologist might come up with up would, on Smart’s account, be derivative

¹*Ibid.*, p.243.

from physics or chemistry. Ruse strongly disagrees with this assumption. For, he says, the Hardy-Weinberg law is concerned with Mendelian genetics. It is not concerned with “DNA or other physico-chemical entities, and hence is a paradigmatic example of something biological and not something physical or chemical”¹.

What of Smart’s claim about statements of the type “All albinotic mice breed true”, statements which, he claims, are not universal, and hence not lawlike, since we don’t know about possible mice on other planets. Ruse still sees room for a defence of biological laws in this eventuality. He says that one can simply regard laws as having different functions. Hempel and Oppenheim, indeed, made this assumption when they distinguished things called “fundamental laws” and things called “derivative laws”. The latter “refer to particular things and are derived from fundamental laws².” A fundamental law would be one that did not make reference to particular circumstances on this earth, and would be of the kind, “Albinotic genes are recessive”, or, as in the case of Mendel’s law, “each sexed organism inherits one gene at one gene locus from each of its parents”. From these fundamental laws one is then able to derive a law of the kind, “All albinotic mice breed true”. One might say then that Smart hasn’t shown that there are no biological laws. Rather he has shown that there are different types of biological laws. Further one may say that the same is true of physical laws. As Ruse points out: “this is because in physics as well as biology, one can draw a distinction between fundamental laws like Newton’s Laws and derivative laws like Kepler’s Laws”³.

¹Ibid., p.245.

²Ibid., p.246.

³Ibid., p.246.

In conclusion, Ruse returns to Smart's problems about the definition of mice. Ruse says that Smart's notion of what it is to be a mouse is incompatible with the way the notion of a mouse is used in biological investigations. To show this he gives an example. We are asked to imagine that man has created life on earth in two different places, Guelph and Adelaide. When the creators of the two places were making the life at those two places they both did exactly the same things with the same chemicals. Given this one would want to say that the life forms at the two places are identical. Therefore, when one referred to the species of either Guelph or Adelaide mice, one would want to say that one was referring to the same species. Thus one would not be making a particular reference to a particular place, neither Guelph nor Adelaide. Ruse is attempting to show that our definitions of organisms do not have to refer to particular places, such as Earth, and so do not have to have the kind of damaging particularity that Smart attributes to them. The laws referring to mice refer to anything like what we call mice, wherever in the universe they occur. Thus when we make biological statements we do not have to violate Smart's condition for laws being independent of particular places or things. Hence, Smart's condition does not count against there being biological laws.

We have been examining Smart's work to try to make clear why Wittgenstein might have thought biology is not a science as physics is. In the light of Ruse's criticisms it becomes unclear that biology cannot be a science in the way in which physics is. If biology can be a science, then one might say by the same token so too can psychoanalysis be a science. However, before examining whether or not Ruse's defence of biology as a science can be applied, contrary to Wittgenstein's belief, to Freud's psychoanalysis, let us first look briefly at what Freud took his psychoanalysis to be.

Freud's Psychoanalysis

It is clear from the following quotation that Freud felt facts about the psyche to be as much facts as any scientific facts:

It is strange how little respect you have at bottom for the psychological fact! Imagine that someone had undertaken a chemical analysis of a certain substance and had arrived at a particular weight for one component of it - so and so many milligrams. Certain inferences could be drawn from this weight. Now do you suppose it would ever occur to a chemist to criticize those inferences on the ground that the isolated substance might equally well have had some other weight? Everyone will bow before the fact that this was the weight and none other and will confidently draw inferences from it. But when you are faced with the psychological fact that a particular thing occurs to the mind of the person questioned, you will not allow the fact's validity: something else might have occurred to him! You nourish the illusion of there being such a thing as psychological freedom, and you will not give it up. I am sorry to say I disagree categorically over this¹.

Freud believed himself to have created a new and radical science of these psychic facts, a science which departed significantly from the sciences of neurology and physiology in which he had initially been trained. Freud came to believe that the methods of neurology and physiology were inappropriate for understanding various neurotic illnesses. For although these disciplines attempted to apply their understandings of the functions of the body and brain by explaining how various forms of neuroses were caused in a law-like manner by certain lesions in the brain, they could not, according to Freud, give an adequate scientific account of how the operations of the mind and the formation of its ideas played an important role in causing behaviour. This was because, on the traditional neurological model of neuroses, any idea had by a patient was regarded as symptomatic of the state of their brain. Hence psychological ideas were regarded merely as the results of neurological

¹S. Freud, Introductory Lectures On Psychoanalysis, ed. J. Strachey. trans. J. Strachey. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973), p.48-49.

processes. However, it was, and is not, at all clear how one could identify a single idea as belonging to one particular brain process rather than any other. Freud, though, felt that he could, unlike the neurologists, show empirical evidence of unconscious ideas and of their causal effects on behaviour. He wished to oppose the traditional medical model, which had regarded the mind as that mysterious entity that fell under the auspices of poets and not scientists for its articulation. Thus he wrote:

You have been trained to find an anatomical basis for the functions of the organism and their disorders, to explain them chemically and physically and to view them biologically. But no portion of your interest has been directed to psychical life, in which, after all the achievement of this marvellous complex organism reaches its peak. For that reason psychological modes of thought have remained foreign to you. You have grown accustomed to regarding them with suspicion, to denying them the attribute of being scientific, and to handing them over to laymen, poets, natural philosophers and mystics¹.

Freud sought to show how the irrational and seemingly inexplicable behaviour patterns of mentally ill and non mentally ill patients could be explained scientifically. For Freud believed that just as there were laws that could explain events in the natural, physical world, so, too, there were laws of the mind that could explain behaviour. These laws of the mind, according to Freud, operated at the level of the unconscious and were causally efficacious in bringing about certain conscious forms of behaviour which themselves operated with law-like regularity. He came to see through observation, not only of his own patients but of himself and people in everyday life, that much of human behaviour was governed not by impulses in the brain or the nervous system but rather by unconscious ideas.

Freud claimed, for example, that the observable slips of tongue made in everyday speech are evidence of unconscious ideas that had been repressed but had, in a particular context, leaked out into conscious life. Hence, rather than the slip being a

¹S.Freud, Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, p.44.

mistake, which is what one would normally assume, Freud takes the slip itself to be revelatory of what the person really intended to say. Similarly, Freud noticed that the telling of jokes was also evidence of unconscious ideas, albeit disguised in the form of a joke. The joke is, then, what a person really wants to say but under normal circumstances cannot. Freud believed himself to have found further evidence of the unconscious when he got his patients to recall their dreams. For their dream reports, he believed, revealed to him desires and wishes that the patients had not encountered in conscious life. These helped explain behaviour which previously had remained an enigma to them.

Freud took what he supposed to be such instances of the operations of the unconscious as good grounds for inferring that much of our conscious life and, in particular, the conscious life of neurotics, could be explained in terms of the operations of the unconscious. To cure neurotics, then, one had to explore this material, material that had been temporarily forgotten or repressed. To do this one needed a technique that enabled one access to this unconscious information. Freud then discovered not only could he get patients to recall past experiences and events through dream reports but he could also get them to do so through hypnosis and free association: free association being the method of prompting the patient by asking them questions of the kind, "what do you think of when you think of your mother?", and then simply allowing their ideas and associations to flood out.

His patients, through hypnosis and free association, were induced to recall events from their pasts, most notably from their childhoods, events that had been repressed due to the unacceptable or painful nature of their content. These events, which had been repressed, Freud believed to be the cause of various adult neuroses. It was only through the patient's conscious recognition of such unconscious events or ideas that he or she could be cured, though Freud acknowledged that, if the resistance

in accepting the existence of such ideas or events was strong, there might be little hope of a cure.

All this was hailed by Freud as a scientific discovery. He believed he had discovered a way of empirically identifying the existence of the unconscious and of unconscious causes of various forms of neurotic behaviour. Hence he believed he could provide a scientific explanation of them. He gives an emphatic statement of this view in The Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis when he says;

We can challenge anyone in the world to give a more correct scientific account of this state of affairs, and if he does we will gladly renounce our hypothesis of unconscious mental processes. 'Till that happens, however, we will hold fast to the hypothesis; and if someone objects that here the unconscious is nothing real in the scientific sense, is a mere makeshift, une façon de parler, we can only shrug our shoulders resignedly and dismiss what he says as unintelligible, something not real, which produces effects of such tangible reality as an obsessive action¹.

Freud began by developing a theory of the laws governing the nature and operation of the unconscious, in which he sought to show how the structure of the personality is formed by the operations of the id, the ego and the super ego in various stages from infancy to childhood. Briefly summarised there were three stages. The first stage, the id, occurs at birth where the baby seeks the instinctual pleasures of sucking and touching. The baby's first libidinal desires, then, are oral and begin with the sucking of the mother's breast. After this desire to put everything in the mouth, the infant, during toilet training becomes preoccupied with the all things anal, for the infant finds pleasure in gaining control over his or her bowels. When the infant is about three or four he becomes aware that he has genitals and becomes preoccupied with all things phallic. Girls, too, become preoccupied with all things phallic, but this is due, according to Freud, to penis envy. They are preoccupied with what they lack. It is at this stage that the sexual differences between the sexes become prominent. At

¹Ibid., p.318.

the second stage, the ego develops in conjunction with the onset of parental control, where the child is discouraged from fulfilling the libidinal desires of the id. Thus the child develops a way of controlling certain instinctual impulses. The ego develops mechanisms of defence in order to repress the impulses of the id. In the third stage, the super-ego develops as the child, through fear, anger and love of its parents, internalizes their authority. Thus the child's aggression toward its parents finds its expression in the acceptance of authoritarian ways of behaving and of repressing behaviour. This internalisation of authority is shown in adult life by the need for such things as religion and morals. Thus one's identification with the father as an authority figure could, Freud hypothesised, explain one's subsequent identifications with other authority figures, for example, in religion, with God the Father¹. Further, one's identification with one's mother as an authority figure could also explain one's subsequent identification with certain authoritarian figures or authoritarian patterns of behaviour. For example, if a male chooses an authoritarian wife or partner, this may be due, on Freud's account, to an unconscious identification with his mother's sanctioning and restricting of his behaviour in early infancy. Thus, Freud wants to say, these unconscious operations of our childhood sexuality are what form our adult personalities and hence our adult neuroses.

For psychoanalytic research has had to concern itself, too, with the sexual life of children, and this is because the memories and associations arising during the analysis of symptoms (in adults) regularly led back to the early years of childhood².

¹S. Freud, Totem and Taboo, trans. J Strachey (London: Routledge, 1950), p.147. Freud writes: "God is nothing other than an exalted father. As in the case of totemism, psychoanalysis recommends us to have faith in the believers who call God their father, just as the totem was called the tribal ancestor. If psychoanalysis deserves any attention, then without prejudice to any other sources of meaning of the concepts of God, upon which psychoanalysis can throw light- the paternal element in that concepts must be an important one."

²S. Freud, Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, p.352.

If, at any one of these stages, or at all of these stages, we became fixated with a unacceptable idea and then repress it, our adult personalities become neurotic in some form. We will then, according to Freud, develop certain personalities. One of the most famous of the very many types of personality described and explained by Freud, and one of the most often cited, is the anal retentive personality. According to Freud, a person who, as an adult, suffers from obsessional behaviour, notably of orderliness, cleanliness and so on, became fixated at the anal stage with holding back faeces.

Freud tests these laws in analysis. He makes a hypothesis about the cause in the operation of the unconscious of a certain psychological condition, for example hatred of the father, and tests it against the evidence elicited during the analysis of a patient. For example, suppose Gordon to be a man who hates his father. The analyst's hypothesis might be, "All men who hate their fathers are repressing an unconscious infantile desire to sleep with their mothers". It will follow that Gordon, who hates his father, is repressing an infantile desire to sleep with his mother. If, during hypnosis, this desire is something that Gordon reports or shows strong resistance to admitting, then the analyst's hypothesis will be confirmed. If this hypothesis is confirmed in numerous instances, Freud sees this as evidence for a law. Freud's Oedipal Complex theory then becomes a universal law covering all cases of men hating their fathers:

In a study of the beginning of human religion and morality, which I published in 1913 under the title of Totem and Taboo, I put forward a suggestion that mankind as a whole may have acquired its sense of guilt, the ultimate source of religion and morality, at the beginning of its history with the Oedipus complex¹.

We can say, on Ruse's interpretation of what counts as scientific, that this kind of law would pass the test for being a law. For it holds in numerous reported instances

¹Ibid., p.375.

and is derived from the more fundamental law, that everyone is born with a libido and develops it during childhood. For, without this fundamental law it would not be possible for there to be derived laws, such as the law such that men who hate their fathers want to sleep with their mothers. That derived law requires the more fundamental laws of childhood psychological formation and the views about sexuality implicit in them.

V

If there are laws in biology, can the same be true of Freudian psychoanalysis ?

Freud believed psychoanalysis to be scientific and lawlike and no more lacking empirical evidence in support of its laws than any other natural science. He seems to have shared Ruse's view that though the evidence might not be wholly conclusive, in this respect psychoanalysis was no worse off than sciences such as physics. In An Outline of Psychoanalysis, he says:

The . . . view which held that what is mental is in itself unconscious, enabled psychology to take its place as a natural science like any other. The processes with which it is concerned are in themselves just as unknowable as those dealt with by the other sciences, by chemistry or physics, for example: but it is possible to establish laws which these processes obey¹.

Freud, unlike Ruse, does not give any specific arguments to show how one might develop a view of science which maintains that scientific laws are possible while accepting the inconclusiveness of the evidence for them. If, however, Freud's theory were supplemented by the kind of account that Ruse gives in his defence of biology as

¹S. Freud, An Outline of Psychoanalysis, trans. J. Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press, 1949), p.18.

a science, then it might be maintained that his psychoanalytic theories, too, are scientific.

Thus, the question as to whether Freud's psychoanalysis is a science or not seems to rest on one's definition of science. If we take Smart's definition of science, according to which a claim is scientific in virtue of its applicability not merely to particular things at particular times and places but in virtue of its universal applicability throughout space and time, then one might be inclined to say psychoanalysis cannot be regarded as scientific. For example not everybody suffers from the Oedipus Complex and not all people are narcissists. A Freudian theory about the laws governing the operation of the unconscious would not pass Smart's test for lawlikeness. For he would say one cannot know if people on other planets have the same unconscious personality structure as we do, in the same way that one can know that there is motion wherever it occurs in the universe. But, as we have seen, a problem may arise about this attempt to show that Freud's theory fails Smart's test of lawlikeness. Freud thought that all human beings, whenever and wherever they might be, had personalities moulded by the same basic unconscious structures of the id, the ego and super ego. This unconscious structure of the personality was for Freud, universal human nature. Moreover, if we remember Ruse's argument that what makes a claim scientific is its ability to hold not in all but in numerous instances and to have consistency and derivability from more fundamental laws, then it looks as if psychoanalysis on that view, might be scientific. For it may well be empirically possible to show that there are numerous instances in which people behave in a certain way. For example, when frustrated, people can be seen to regress to an earlier stage of development. They might regress to the anal phase and become obsessive, or to the oral phase and seek instant gratification. This regression can be seen when people become frustrated with waiting, for example, in a shopping queue. People tend to

regress to such childlike behaviour as wanting to get to the front of the queue, complaining that the supermarket is disorganised and pacing up and down officiously. People who do this seem to have regressed both to the anal and oral stages of development. For they are anal and obsessive, on the one hand, in thinking that the supermarket should be operating purely for their benefit alone, and oral, on the other, in wanting to be immediately gratified in not having to wait. We can then take this to be evidence for a law of the kind, "when frustrated, people tend to regress to an earlier stage of development". This is consistent with, and derivable from deeper Freudian psychological laws, laws which explain how people repress certain painful or unacceptable feelings, feelings which can be hinted at when they are expressed in the kind of behaviour such as the one displayed by the frustrated person at the supermarket. Thus the law which states, "frustrated people tend to regress" is consistent with the law which states, "people repress painful or unacceptable feelings", the first rests on the second as the Hardy-Weinberg law rests on Mendelian genetics. To regress one must have somewhere to regress to. That somewhere is the unconscious, where unacceptable material is kept under lock and key. It only sees the light of day when it is exhibited in certain kinds of behaviour, such as for example, frustration.

Thus we begin by seeing a pattern of behaviour exhibited in numerous instances of people being frustrated and leads us to posit a law. But this law, as we said relies, on a more fundamental law, a law which states that our behaviour is governed by the determinations of the unconscious mind. The derivative law is causally contingent on the fundamental laws governing the nature and operations of the unconscious, for it is the fundamental nature of the universal structure of the unconscious which causes the person to behave in such and such a way under such and such conditions. That a person, for example, continually washes his or her hands

every time he gets upset can on this account be seen to be caused by his or her unconscious fixation with infantile pleasure in holding back faeces. The analyst could test this causal relation in psychoanalysis by taking the person back to the events of her or his childhood where this ritual was enacted. For it may be that the person became obsessed with being able to control his or her bowels in childhood and that this form of control manifested itself in adulthood in the form of obsessional hand-washing. This hand-washing can be seen as an attempt to gain control over the messiness of life.

The fundamental laws of psychoanalysis, then, appear to be statements about the mental mechanisms of the unconscious. The derivative laws appear to be statements about behaviour. One might say that the first relates to what goes on inside a person and the second to what a person does as a consequence of that. The first explains the second. We are tempted to say that we have more evidence for the second, since we can see what a person does, whereas we cannot observe what goes on inside them. However if one takes behaviour as the expression of the unconscious, then one might say that statements about the operations of the unconscious can indirectly be verified empirically.

However, it is clear that Freud thought that these unconscious mechanisms of the mind could not be understood simply by the observations of conscious behaviour. Rather, he believed, one had to explore deeper into the mechanisms of the unconscious mind, through hypnosis, free association and dream interpretation. These somewhat elusive internal mechanisms do seem to be harder to justify on scientific grounds. For although it seems plausible that there are numerous instances in which when frustrated, people do regress to an earlier stage of development, that is to say, they behave like children, it does not seem as plausible to say that this is caused by an internal mechanism that cannot be seen. For, as we know, by "internal mechanisms"

Freud was not referring to the operations of the brain, which one might argue could be seen under certain conditions. Neither was he referring to these unconscious mechanisms as simply a manifestation of conscious behaviour, although behaviour was governed by them. Therefore one is inclined to say that there can be no observable ways in which the unconscious can directly show itself. The unconscious begins to look far more like a theoretical entity, a matter to be much more extensively investigated in Chapter Three.

That there can be no direct observational evidence for the existence of the unconscious and its operations does not entail that psychoanalytic theory is non-scientific. There are two reasons for this. The first is that there are fundamental laws in physics which require us to postulate entities that are not directly observable. This has not rendered physics non-scientific. Why, by the same token, should psychoanalysis be rendered non-scientific by virtue of positing an entity that is not directly observable?

Of course, Wittgenstein, as we mentioned earlier, does not think that unobservable entities, such as Hertz' masses, are scientifically establishable. Rather he thinks of them as norms of expression and, in this, likens them to unconscious processes. But as we have said Wittgenstein's views about science were not always clear. Here, for example, one wants to ask why norms of expression cannot count as a part of science. Indeed, in his later work this is what Wittgenstein sometimes seems also to say. In On Certainty he says:

It is clear that our empirical propositions do not all have the same status, since one can lay down such a proposition and turn it from an empirical proposition into a norm of description... Think of chemical investigations, Lavoisier makes experiments with substances in his laboratory and now he concludes that this and that takes place when there is burning. He does not say that it might happen otherwise another time. He has got hold of a definite world-picture - not of course one that he has invented: he learned it as a child. I say world-picture and not

hypothesis because it is the matter-of-course foundation for his research and as such also goes unmentioned¹.

VI

Empirical Generalisation

The second reason why lack of direct observational evidence of the existence of the unconscious does not make Freudian psychology unscientific is that even if one interprets the unconscious, as Wittgenstein did, not as an entity, but as a way of speaking about the way people behave, then one could still produce something akin to scientific generalisations. Wittgenstein in Lectures and Conversations himself said of Freud's explanations that people found them attractive because of their generality.

The attraction of certain kinds of explanation is overwhelming. At a given time the attraction of a certain kind of explanation is greater than you can conceive. In particular, explanations of the kind "this is really only this"²

In this case Freud's explanations will be like the empirical generalisations that are often thought to be the products of science. For example, one could say that in numerous instances when people are frustrated, they unconsciously behave like children. One could say, as Farrell does, that statements of the kind, "if boys are very close to their mothers in certain cultures, the adult men in these cultures will exhibit certain specifiable sexual disturbances (for example a fear of menstruation)" could hold as a law-like scientific generalisation.

One does not have to posit unconscious entities for such generalisations to hold. One might simply be persuaded that one has valid empirical evidence for such a

¹L. Wittgenstein, On Certainty, ss. 167, 24.

²L. Wittgenstein, Lectures and Conversations, p.24.

claim. Of course one might not have such evidence in a conclusive way, but that is true of the kind of generalisations that scientists make as well. Why, then, should the kinds of empirical generalisations Freud makes be seen as any less scientific than the kind of generalisations that the naïve inductivist scientist makes on the basis of observation. These generalisations may or may not hold, but they are no less determinate than the generalisations that the naïve inductivist makes. If such psychoanalytic generalisations fail, then they fail for the same reasons that the scientific generalisations do. They seem to share, too, the same problems of inconclusiveness. For I have no more reason to suppose that all dreams must be disguised wish fulfilments than I have to suppose that all swans must be white. It is possible, if my statement about dreams is an empirical generalisation, that someone could have a dream that did not fulfil a wish. Similarly, empirical generalisations about the whiteness of swans does not rule out the possibility that a black one might turn up. Why, then, should one assume these kinds of statements to have a different logical character so that one is allowed to be called “scientific” and the other is not?

VII

Falsification

One might say Wittgenstein’s understanding of Freud’s explanations as forms of persuasion, rather than part of a science like physics, are like Popper’s rejections of Freud’s explanations as unfalsifiable. For Wittgenstein, like Popper, thinks that Freud attempts to make everything count as confirming his hypotheses and nothing as disconfirming them. Wittgenstein says of Freud’s explanations:

Here is an extremely interesting psychological phenomenon, that this ugly explanation makes you say you really had these thoughts, whereas in any ordinary sense you really didn’t¹.

¹Ibid., p.25.

Perhaps, then, it was suspicions about the unfalsifiability of Freud's claims that made Wittgenstein doubt their scientific status. Again, since Wittgenstein did not elaborate this, we have to go elsewhere, in this case to Popper's work, for that elaboration.

Popper, like Hume, saw difficulties in deriving universal laws from observational inferences. The legitimacy of such derivations could never be conclusively proved. Consequently Popper thought that science would better be characterised as the attempt to disprove hypotheses. Rather than attempting to prove a universal law from a finite number of instances, one would test one's hypotheses against any proposed counter-evidence. If it were open to such testing, then it could be regarded as a truly scientific hypothesis.

Were Freudian psychology merely a matter of making empirical generalisations by induction from particular instances, Popper would have seen it as inadequate because of that inductive methodology. But, having introduced the requirement of falsifiability, he also saw it as failing for a more devastating reason. For, he believed, its statements could not be falsified and thus could not be scientific. The statements of the naïve inductivist could be falsified. For example, the assertion, "All swans are white", could be countered by the discovery of a black swan. However, Popper believed that the psychoanalyst's claim that all dreams are the disguised fulfilment of a wish, cannot be falsified. This is because, according to Freud, if one resists such a claim by attempting to give counter examples of dreams that did not fulfil wishes, then, rather than falsifying the claim, one is providing further evidence for it. As we have seen, a patient's resistance to a psychoanalytic explanation is regarded as evidence for the truth of the explanation and not evidence for its falsity. For example, if a person says to the analyst, "but I did not fulfil any such wishes in my dream of my mother", the analyst will see this not as falsifying the explanation, but, rather, as

providing evidence for its truth. For in saying that he did not fulfil any such wishes the patient is revealing a repressed desire to fulfil certain wishes that he cannot bring himself to confront or admit. Thus one is damned if one does and damned if one doesn't. Whatever one says is taken as further evidence for the psychological condition one is supposedly in. Freud himself said that:

If an otherwise intelligent patient rejects a suggestion on not too intelligent grounds, then his imperfect logic is evidence for the existence of a . . . strong motive for his rejection¹.

The harder we try to show that the psychological claim is false, the more evidence we give for its truth. Thus, according to Popper, Freud's psychoanalytic statements remain non-contradictable. For whatever way the world is, all proffered counter-evidence will be taken as further evidence for the truth rather than the falsity of the statement. Popper writes that:

This self-defensive attitude is of a piece with the attitude of looking for verifications; of finding them everywhere in abundance, of refusing to admit that certain cases do not fit the theory. . . . Once this attitude is adopted, every conceivable case will become a verifying instance².

The reasoning involved in psychoanalytic explanations, as they are understood by Popper, is reminiscent of the reasoning of primitive cultures, such as the Azande, discussed by Peter Winch in his "Understanding a Primitive Society":

At an oracular consultation benge is administered to a fowl, while a question is asked in a form permitting a "yes" or "no" answer. The fowl's death or survival is specified beforehand as giving the answer "yes" or "no". The answer is then checked by administering benge to another fowl and asking the question the other way round. "Is Prince Ndoruma responsible for placing bad medicines in the roof of my hut?". The fowl

¹Cited in K. Popper, Realism and the Aim of Science (London: Hutchinson, 1983), p.164.

² K. Popper, Realism and the Aim of Science, p.168.

DIES, giving the answer "Yes". . . "Did the oracle speak truly when it said that Ndoruma was responsible?" The fowl survives giving the answer "Yes"¹.

We can understand this reasoning in the same way as Popper understands the reasoning of psychoanalysis. On a Popperian understanding of the Azande's reasoning, truth is dependent on what a particular community and specifically here, the Azande, takes the truth to be. In other words what counts as the truth has already been decided on beforehand in such a way as to prejudge questions of falsifiability. Imagine McPhee to have been murdered and Jones to be a suspect. What would we say if the procedure the police used for finding the truth is as follows: they pose a question such as, "Is Jones guilty of the murder of McPhee?" , to the oracle of their choice, in this case a poisoned fowl. Before poisoning the fowl, we decide that if the fowl dies, then McPhee will be guilty, and if it lives McPhee will not be guilty. The fowl dies. Now the assertion that McPhee is guilty because the fowl dies can't be falsified. There can't be a counter- explanation. One can't say, "but McPhee is innocent because he was having tea at my house when the murder took place". A different criterion of what counts as true has already been established. One might say the same about psychoanalytic explanations. The analyst has already decided on what counts as criteria for determining the truth.

Looking at psychoanalytic explanations in this light, one might begin to understand why Wittgenstein had thought Freud's theory mythical, primitive and non-scientific.

In fact Freud has done something quite different. He has not given a scientific explanation of the ancient myth. What he has done is to propound a new myth. The attractiveness of the suggestion, for instance that all anxiety is a repetition of the anxiety of the birth trauma,

¹P. Winch, "Understanding a Primitive Society", in B. Wilson (ed.), Rationality (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970), p.86.

is just the attractiveness of a mythology. "It is all the outcome of something that happened long ago." Almost like referring to a totem¹.

Even that, however, is not enough to show that psychoanalysis differs from science in this respect. For on some views of science, that held by Feyerabend for instance, scientific explanations themselves also have this mythical and primitive character. He wrote:

Thus science is much closer to myth than a scientific philosophy is prepared to admit. . . . An examination then reveals that science and myth overlap in many ways, that the differences we think we perceive are often local phenomena which may turn into similarities elsewhere and that fundamental discrepancies are results of different aims rather than of different methods trying to reach one and the same rational end².

Popper did not share Feyerabend's view. For he regarded theories, such as psychoanalysis, as pseudo-sciences, in which anything could be made to confirm the psychoanalytic hypothesis. True science in his view does not have this character and is not a matter of prejudice or ideology. It should, rather, be what survives after all attempts have been made to prove it wrong. Popper wanted to say that with dogmatic theories, such as psychoanalysis, nothing can prove them wrong, for everything confirms the theories and nothing falsifies them. This may be dangerous in that one could claim anything independently of whether it was true or not. One can see this danger, he thought, not only in forms of psychological determinism but also in forms of social determinism, namely some versions of Marxism. For the Marxist, history is determined by the forces of production which shape all human relations. Thus any conflict is a conflict between those who own the means of production and those who are the means of production. It is a class conflict which, with the inevitable collapse of

¹ L. Wittgenstein, Lectures and Conversations, p.51.

²P. Feyerabend, Against Method (London: Verso, 1975), p.295-296.

Capitalism due to its internal contradictions, will lead to bloody revolution and the overthrow of the owners of the means of production. For the Marxist, everything one observes in society confirms this materialist conception of history. One could not point out to the Marxist that there are instances in which people act independently of their economic position, or that there are instances where there is no conflict between classes where one would expect conflict the most. Popper wrote that:

The reinterpretation of Marx's theory of revolution to evade this falsification immunized it against further attacks, transforming it into the vulgar-Marxist (or socioanalytic) theory which tells us that the "economic motive" and the class struggle pervade social life¹.

The central idea in Popper's view is put thus by Chalmers: "If a statement is unfalsifiable, then the world can have any properties whatsoever, can behave in any way whatsoever, without conflicting with the statement"².

Chalmers points out, science should according to Popper be information giving, in other words scientific statements should tell us how the world is, not how we want the world to be. Unfalsifiable statements tell us nothing about the world and cannot therefore be scientific.

Even granted that Popper is right to make falsifiability a criterion for the scientific status of a statement, is he right in thinking that psychoanalysis is not, for that reason, scientific? Adolf Grünbaum, for one, thinks not. In Part One, Chapter One of The Foundations of Psychoanalysis, he criticizes Popper's attack on psychoanalysis as non-falsifiable.

¹Karl Popper, Unended Quest (Glasgow: Fontana / Collins, 1976), p.43.

²A. F. Chalmers, What is this thing called Science? (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1978), p.40.

Grünbaum's attack stems from his belief that Freudian psychoanalytic theories are falsifiable. In other words, clinical evidence can be adduced to prove such theories to be wrong. Freud, according to Grünbaum, admits to the falsifiability of his own theories. Grünbaum, indeed, points out that one of Freud's cases, a case involving a paranoid woman, was admitted by Freud himself to falsify his theory that all paranoids are repressed homosexuals. The case is described thus:

The patient was a young woman who had sought out a lawyer for protection from the molestations of a man with whom she had been having an affair. The lawyer suspected paranoia when she charged that her lover had gotten unseen witnesses to photograph them while making love, and that he was now in a position to use the photographs to disgrace her publicly and compel her to resign her job. Moreover letters from her lover that she had turned over to the lawyer deplored that their beautiful and tender relationship was being destroyed by her unfortunate morbid idea¹.

The lawyer came to Freud asking for his opinion on whether the woman was deluded or not. Freud came to the conclusion that if, indeed, the woman was deluded, and it was not clear that she was, there was no evidence that her delusion was the result of a repressed homosexuality. Her delusion, if she was suffering from one, was one in which, in order to protect herself from loving the man who was her lover, she had turned him into her persecutor rather than her lover. Thus Freud said of the case that "in these circumstances the simplest thing would have been to abandon the theory that the delusion of persecution invariably depends on homosexuality²".

One can conclude, then, that either the woman was not paranoid at all, in which case the theory linking paranoia to repressed sexuality doesn't apply; or that the woman was paranoid, not because she is a repressed homosexual, but because she

¹A. Grünbaum, The Foundations of Psychoanalysis (London: University of California Press, 1984), p.109.

²Ibid., p.109.

was afraid of love. But the latter case shows that Freud did allow the falsifiability of his theories.

Perhaps Popper is right in his characterisation of psychoanalysis. Perhaps he is right that there is an unfalsifiability about it. But then he may be wrong in thinking that science is any different in this respect from psychoanalysis. Just as the psychoanalyst is guided by his theoretical pre-occupations, so too will the scientist be influenced by her's or his. Thus science might be more like psychoanalytic theory than we are prepared to admit. We might, for example, investigate Feyerabend's claim that although Popperian science claims to be free from prejudice in its quest for truth, this is an impossibility. For science emerges out of particular contexts and particular cultures. In other words science is a human practice and as such reflects human life and its concerns, concerns which are multifarious. Thus there can be no one pure scientific method from which the truth will emerge. Feyerabend makes this point in his book, Against Method, where he says:

The history of science, after all, does not just consist of facts and conclusions drawn from facts. It also contains ideas, interpretations of facts, problems created by conflicting interpretations, mistakes and so on. On closer analysis we even find that science knows no 'bare facts' at all but that the 'facts' that enter our knowledge are already viewed in a certain way and are therefore essentially ideational¹.

This seems to bring the discussion back to the theme, with which we began this chapter, of Wittgenstein's two views of science. For Wittgenstein's remarks about Darwinism and Copernicus's astronomy as "points of view" seems to be consistent with Feyerabend's view of science. However, unlike Wittgenstein, Feyerabend does not regard physics as differing in this respect. For as he says in Against Method:

Let us assume that the expressions 'psychology', 'anthropology', 'history of science', 'physics' do not refer to facts and laws, but to

¹P. Feyerabend, op.cit., p.19.

certain methods of assembling facts including certain ways of connecting observation with theory and hypothesis¹.

VIII

SOCIOLOGICAL EXPLANATIONS AS ANALOGOUS TO PSYCHOANALYTIC EXPLANATIONS

So far I have suggested that psychoanalytic practice is unlike natural science in that it cannot provide empirical evidence in the way that natural science typically can. This, as we saw, is not to suggest that science is independent of points of view or interests, possibly in the form of theoretical biases, but that the methodologies of natural science are inappropriate to an understanding of psychoanalytic practice, where that practice involves the giving and accepting of reasons and not in demonstrations of the existence of logically independent causes. In this respect the practice of psychoanalysis can be seen to be more akin to sociology than to natural science, because the reasons given in psychoanalysis are reasons that reflect the social world in which the patient lives and are not causes that operate independently of the kind of human agency characteristic of social life. That social world about which reasons can be given has been thought to be explicable in terms of scientific and logical methods, such as for example the methods involved in inductive and deductive explanation on the basis of which, it is thought, predictions about the social world and human behaviour could be made. Other methods include the compilation of statistics from which one could derive explanations about what, for example, in a given social situation, would be the most rationally probable outcome. Further, some social scientists thought that by observing the social world in the way that scientists observe the natural world one could establish social facts from which causal laws could be

⁵² Ibid., p.259.

derived. Sociologists, such as Durkheim¹, took biology as the appropriate method for understanding the social world. Durkheim thought that society operated organically and functionally in the way that evolutionary processes did. Thus in the same way that a natural system functions, with all its parts adding to the smooth operation of the whole, so, too, was society made up of parts that fitted together to make a functioning unit or organic whole.

Whether or not the methods of the natural sciences are appropriate to the discovery of social and psychoanalytic explanations is matter of contention, both in sociology and in psychoanalysis. Traditionally sociologists such as Comte, Durkheim, Mill and Marx along with psychoanalysts such as Freud believed their disciplines to be scientific. Thus although they agreed that the content of their subject differed from the content of the subject matter of the natural sciences, they did not think that there was a difference in methodology. However, I wish to argue as do philosophers such as Habermas² and Winch³ that the very subject matter of the two disciplines entail that their methods are different from those of the natural sciences. Hence they have a different grammar. This is not to suggest that there are not sociologists or psychoanalysts who do employ the methods of the natural sciences. However, I wish to suggest that if one looks at the philosophical assumptions that underlie their claims one can see that the claims that they make about the social world may not rest on the empirical evidence that is claimed for and by them. That is not to suggest that one cannot produce empirical data but what is problematic is whether certain kinds of

¹ Emile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, tr. W.D, ed Stephen Lukes (London, 1982).

² Jurgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, 2 vols, tr Thomas Mc Carthy (Boston, 1984 and 1989).

³P.G. Winch, *The Idea of a Social Science* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958).

claims can be made on the basis of that data, and hence whether that data in fact provides the causal explanation of a particular social phenomenon or rather, as my view would suggest, a posited reason among reasons. In that latter sense then sociology is akin to psychoanalysis in that it is a practice in which reasons are given and accepted. This, as I say later in the dissertation, does not have to imply that statements about reasons are incorrigible. For at a later time, sociologists and psychoanalysts might come to see that the reasons given were inappropriate and that new reasons better explain or describe the phenomenon. For example, a sociologist might come to see that although Marx's account of historical materialism may be a correct explanation of social unrest among the worse off, that explanation is not causally linked, as Marx thought, to the explanation that social unrest of necessity leads to bloody revolution and the overthrow of the ruling classes. Thus one can change what one sees as a correct explanation of revolutions.

The notion of causality as it is used in the natural sciences begins to look out of place here. For, as I shall suggest, natural causality is independent of acknowledgement whereas the reasons cited in sociological explanations such as Marx's, are not independent of acknowledgement but rather depend ultimately upon agreement by persons and hence are true in virtue of that and not true in the realist sense of that term. This point can be illustrated in Marx's theory by the fact that what he predicted did not happen where he predicted it would happen. Thus in the most advanced capitalist industrial society at that time, Britain, where division of labour was highly stratified leading to class division and social unrest, Marx had predicted a revolution that did not occur. Thus one is left to conclude that the worse off are not causally determined to act in a particular way given particular conditions. They may act in such a way, but that is not something that we can say is caused in the way that a scientific event is deterministically caused. Even on Marx's own theory proletariats'

had themselves to become conscious of their own class position in order to do something about it. Thus on that view it is the person's acknowledgement of the explanation, here namely that one is in a subordinate position, that makes the explanation correct, namely that one should alleviate one's subordination. However as we shall see in Chapter Five what makes an explanation correct is not a matter of simple agreement but rather is connected to the coherence of the person's understanding of the explanation and hence of its intelligibility. Thus Marxist explanation concerning class consciousness and its subsequent alleviation cannot be understood as being independent of the agreement of proletariats that subordination, is indeed the case. Sociological explanation, then, can be seen to be more akin to psychoanalytic explanation than to natural science because for its explanations to be true as is the case with psychoanalytic explanations, persons have to acknowledge that they are.

IX

Interim Conclusion

Wittgenstein seemed reluctant to admit psychoanalysis to be a science, where physics seemed to be some paradigm of science. Probed more carefully that claim looks dubious. Wittgenstein had possibly underestimated the kind of empirical evidence that is available in such disciplines as biology and, possibly, psychoanalysis and one might add, sociology. As we have said, he did recognize the possibility of scientific treatments of art and psychology in his Lectures on Aesthetics. In that eventuality, as Ruse points out, one can say that scientific generalisations can be made in those subjects. The fact that they may not apply to beings on Mars doesn't have to imply that they don't hold here, and are not therefore scientific when they do. If the definition of what counts as scientific is understood as in terms of empirical generalizations which hold in numerous instances, then the psychoanalyst, who is in

possession of generalizations that hold in this way, can be said to be proceeding scientifically. However, it might be a different question to ask if such generalizations can tell us anything about the practice of psychoanalysis where central to that practice is the activity of persuading patients by reasons to see themselves under new descriptions. Thus we must get clear that there might be a difference here between psychoanalysis as a scientific theory and psychoanalysis as a non-scientific practice. Bouveresse may be reaching for this point when he says of Wittgenstein that:

we might even suspect him of sometimes confusing the generic hypotheses of the theory (which we would have to locate at a specific level in the construction of the theory and if necessary imagine a way of testing them) with the particular hypothesis the psychoanalyst is led to formulate and verify in the course of the cure¹.

In other words, what counts as verification in psychoanalytic theory is different from that which counts as verification in psychoanalytic practice. As we shall see Freud mistakenly thought that psychoanalytic practice was scientific in that he saw reports elicited during analysis as evidence of unconscious processes and states.

It is easy to misunderstand what Wittgenstein was getting at when he said that psychoanalysis is not a science. Sometimes he suggests that psychoanalysis differs from science in that it is merely a point of view. However, this can't be the basis of the difference, because later he also talked of physics, as being a point of view, which makes obscure his earlier assertion that psychoanalysis is not a science like physics. Moreover, as we have shown by examining Freud's work in the light of Ruse's analysis of biology as a science, that earlier claim is also dubious.

The central point Wittgenstein may have been after, however, seems to be better put by saying that even if psychoanalysis can be scientised that doesn't help us understand what is distinctive about the psychoanalytic practice, which, Wittgenstein

¹Bouveresse, op.cit., p.57.



thought, was better compared to bringing someone to see the relevant aesthetic features of a painting or we could add bringing someone in the sociological case to see for example their role in the class structure, than to doing science. Though such activities can be studied by science, engaging in them isn't doing science but involves a different kind of activity requiring and resulting in a different kind of human accomplishment. What is involved in that kind of accomplishment is a subject of some later chapters.

Not only is psychoanalysis misunderstood by those who defend it as science, there is every evidence that its creator so misunderstood it. The next two chapters will show evidence of this misunderstanding, first by discussing Freud's inability to see the distinction between reasons and causes, and, then, further, by examining his unhelpful account of the unconscious as a real entity. These misunderstandings, however, are symptomatic of deeper malaises which have to do with a misunderstanding of what it is for something to have meaning and what it is for us to have justifications for our practices. Freud thought this lay in scientising them. Eventually we shall see that this is not the way forward.

CHAPTER TWO
REASONS AND CAUSES
Unravelling Freud's "abominable mess"

Introduction

Getting clear about the grammatical differences in the language game of reasons and the language game of causes.

The attraction of certain kinds of explanation is overwhelming. At a given time the attraction of a certain kind of explanation is greater than you can conceive. In particular, explanations of the kind "this is really only this"¹.

In the first chapter, as part of my project of seeking to understand Wittgenstein's various remarks about Freud, I looked at his remarks about the alleged scientific status of Freud's work. This chapter continues that theme. For part of our understanding of science involves the notion that science is the arena of causes. Now a further part of Wittgenstein's scepticism about Freudian psychoanalysis as a science clearly had to do with his belief that Freud confused reasons and causes. In this chapter, therefore, I wish to look more closely at the claim that Freud confused causal explanations with reason-giving explanations.

In various places throughout his work Wittgenstein argued that the language games in which we give reasons and the language games in which we cite causes constitute two separate activities, activities that can be easily confused with one

¹L. Wittgenstein, Lectures and Conversations, p.24.

another when making the kinds of psychological claims to be found in Freud's work¹.

A quotation from his Lectures on Freud, may demonstrate the way in which Wittgenstein thought it possible to conflate these two activities when attempting to make claims about feelings:

Or suppose you want to speak of causality in the operation of feelings: "Determinism applies to the mind as truly as to physical things". This is obscure because when we think of causal laws in physical things we think of experiments. We have nothing like this in connection with feelings and motivation. And yet psychologists want to say: "There must be some law"- although no law has been found².

Wittgenstein thought Freud had confused causes, which, at this stage of Wittgenstein's work³, are understood as Hume would have thought of them, with psychological reasons. He begins by diagnosing the source of the error.

Freud's confusion, Wittgenstein thought, arose because of the compulsion people have to generalize, a condition that Bouveresse has termed, "the generalizing

¹H-J. Glock, A Wittgenstein Dictionary, pp.72-76, cites the following places in Wittgenstein's work where the view that reason explanations and causal explanations are two different activities can be found. They are, Wittgenstein's Cambridge Lectures 5, 28, 37-40; Blue and Brown Books 57-8; Lectures and Conversations 18, 23-25; Philosophical Grammar sections 475 and 487-8; Lectures on Philosophical Psychology 23.

² L. Wittgenstein, Lectures and Conversations, p.42.

³ Later Wittgenstein comes to see that the Humean model of causation is one amongst many other possible models. Thus later he recognizes that there are accounts of non-necessitating causes as well as accounts of nomological causes. Glock makes this clear when he says of Wittgenstein's later view. "Firstly, he rejects a uniform nomological account of causality. There is an irreducible variety of 'prototypes' of causal connections: (a) impact (collision of billiard balls);(b) traction (pulling a string);(c) mechanisms like clocks which combine (a) and (b);(d) human reactions to sensations or emotions (being hit on the head or being frightened by someone's facial expression); (e) statements which are based on observing regular successions of events. Wittgenstein stresses both the variety of cases and the fact that we use the same word, he arguably regards 'cause' as a family resemblance concept". H-J. Glock, A Wittgenstein Dictionary, pp.72-73.

impulse”¹. Glock, too, writes that Wittgenstein, “blames the ubiquitous temptations of assimilating the two on the fact that reasons, like Humean causes, are general”². That tells us what Wittgenstein thought, but not why? What was Wittgenstein after here?

In a Humean account of causation, one goes from the constant conjunction of events in one’s experiences to general laws. Thus, granted that whenever in the past there have been rainbows, there has always been sun shining through rain, we conclude that in all future case where there is a rainbow, then there will be rain and sunshine at the same time. That combination of rain and sunshine is what causes rainbows. Hume puts it thus;

If reason determin’d us, it woul’d proceed upon that principle that instances, of which we have had no experience, must resemble those, of which we have had experience, and that the course of nature continues always uniformly the same³.

There is a sense of the term “reason” in which reasons also have a generality. When asked “why (for what reason) do women end up doing most of the housework”, we could respond “whenever in the past men have done housework they have always made a big show of it”. So we will expect in all future cases in which men do the house work that they will make a big show of it. We then add that women would rather not be witnesses to big shows. This gives them a general reason for doing the housework, namely, so that they do not to have to witness big shows. Wittgenstein, then, may be taken as suggesting that the generality of that sort of reason

¹Jacques Bouveresse, Wittgenstein Reads Freud, pp. 42-68.

² Glock, op.cit., p.74.

³ David Hume, Enquiries Concerning the Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), p.89.

leads people to think that such reasons have the generality of an Humean cause, and thus to be a species of Humean causal reasoning.

There are, indeed, superficial similarities between the two cases. In both cases we arrive at statements that have a satisfying generality for us. In their generality, moreover, they ignore possible, and even actual counter cases, cases in which, for example, it has been raining and sunny at the same time and there has been no rainbow, and cases in which men have done the housework without making a big show of it. We are, Wittgenstein seems to think, attracted by the generality of such explanations. We think that we have been provided with quite general causal explanations even though, as the possibility of imaginable counter instances demonstrates, no such general causal laws can be established solely on the basis of our limited experiences of constant conjunction.

Wittgenstein, then, is inclined to think that one reason for the confusion he attributes to Freud between reason explanations and causal explanations is that both may have a generality. But, fully to make his case, he has to show that the generality of reason explanation is not the generality of causal explanation, so that the kind of induction involved in causal explanation has no role to play in psychological explanation. And here it is essential to see that although Wittgenstein is later critical of Humean inductivism in general, and not just in its applicability to psychology, he nonetheless in some respects still subscribes to his earlier view, in ways documented by Glock¹, that causes are to be understood as Hume understands them.

Central to that Humean understanding is the claim that, as these terms are used in the sciences, cause and effect are logically independent from one another. In other words there is, say, no logically necessary connection between a cause and an effect

¹ Glock, *op.cit.*, pp.72-76.

as there is between desire and what would satisfy it. For there is nothing prior to my observation that establishes what caused a billiard ball to move, and nothing to establish what kind of effect hitting a ball with a billiard cue might have. For, in the former case, a billiard ball might move because a person in a pub carrying a tray of drinks knocked the billiard table, or a child rolled the ball, or there was a slight earth tremor and it moved the billiard ball. In the latter case, a person might hit a ball with a billiard cue and it might fly out of the pub window, or it might roll accurately into one of the pockets, or it might hit several other balls and sink them into various pockets. However, in the case of desire and behaviour, a desire seems not to be a cause of behaviour in the sense we are now examining. I don't have to look and see what effects my desires might have, as I would have to do if they were Humean causes. For my desires are internally and logically related to my behaviour. If my desires were separate from my behaviour, desiring to drink a cup of coffee could be satisfied by my eating a packet of salty peanuts or by running a marathon or any number of disconnected forms of behaviour. And, of course, my desire for a cup of coffee is not satisfied by my eating salty peanuts. I don't, then, wait to see if my desiring a cup of coffee will cause me either to eat salty peanuts or run a marathon, as I might wait to see whether hitting the billiard ball causes it to be sunk into the pocket. This, incidentally, is related to one of the views about science that we ascribed to Wittgenstein, in Chapter One. He steadfastly maintains the Humean view, which is found also in the Tractatus¹, that causal relations, unlike psychological intentional relations, are external, that is to say, he maintains that, as far as science is concerned, causal relations obtain between logically independent events (see Philosophical

¹Ludwig Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1922). Section 4.122 reads "I introduce these expressions in order to indicate the source of confusion between internal relations and relations proper (external relations), which is very widespread among philosophers".

Investigations sec. 220; Zettel sec 296) and that we believe that such relations obtain because of an observed conjunction between these events.

Although Wittgenstein retains something of the Humean model in his understanding of what a cause is, his later understanding of the variety of models of causality can be used to show how Freud misappropriated the scientific language of causation. Perhaps if Freud had understood the grammar of causation, he would not have fallen into the kinds of confusions that he did.

Wittgenstein contrasts the Humean scientific use of the term “cause” with the ways we ordinarily use a causal language, when we are not doing science. Freud’s mistake was to think that the everyday use of the causal language in explaining behaviour rested on our having established empirical causal relations, whereas in the everyday language the term “cause” is not used in that way. It is, rather, used to illuminate, various possible logical relations. As Glock says:

The cause and effect language-game of everyday life is rooted not in observation or experimentation, but in a practice, which in turn is based on certain primitive reactions. For example, we react to a painful blow by pointing to someone and saying ‘He did it’¹.

The attempt to find out what causes a person to be sad, on the basis of numerous observed circumstances which surround instances of a person being sad, would probably reveal that one can’t account for all future instances of sadness with anything like the predictability one can with cases of predicting the weather or the motions of the planets. Whether or not that is so, this kind of predictability, even were it available, is not, Wittgenstein claims, the kind we rely on when giving explanations as to why we are, for example, sad or happy.

¹Glock, op. cit., p.73.

As we have said Wittgenstein had two views about science. On one view, science aspired conclusively to establish the predictability of causal mechanisms in a physical world. On the other science concerned human beings and their interests, a matter on which conclusive outcomes were unlikely to be forthcoming. The former kind of enquiry, Wittgenstein thinks, is one which Freud inappropriately tried to apply to psychology, whereas it is the latter that better clarifies what Freud was actually doing in his psychoanalytic practice. For the first kind of enquiry, he thought, applied more aptly to subjects such as physics and engineering, whereas the latter applied more appropriately to biology and psychoanalysis.

That in psychology we cannot have the kind of predictability available in physics does not stop people wanting such predictability and thinking that it can be provided. As we have said, people might attempt to conduct psychological experiments in order to find out why people behave aggressively. But in the face of inconclusive reasons they may, given their desire for conclusivity, provide a cause which implausibly cancels out all the other options. We tend, when partaking in philosophical or psychological exercises, to wheel in the notion of causation when our reasons run out because it seems to provide us with ready-made answers to the question, "why?". Wittgenstein says in the Blue Book:

One is led into this confusion by the ambiguous use of the word "why". Thus when the chain of reasons comes to an end and still the question "why" is asked, one is inclined to give a cause instead of a reason. If, e.g., to the question, "why did you paint just this colour when I told you to paint a red patch?" you give the answer: "I have been shown a sample of this colour and the word 'red' was pronounced to me at the same time; and therefore this colour now always comes to my mind when I hear the word 'red'", then you have given a cause for your action and not a reason¹.

¹L. Wittgenstein, The Blue and Brown Books (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958), p.15.

This is consistent with the view that we often use the words "cause" and "effect" quite unproblematically in talking about actions. The confusion only starts when these terms are used to make epistemological claims of the sort Freud made, claims, that is to say, to have knowledge of a scientifically causal relation between the unconscious and behaviour. The claim made, in Glock's example, by the person who on being hit says, "he did it", is very different from the Freudian claim that there is a state X which caused John to hit James.

In "Philosophy and Understanding of Human Fact" Melden makes a remark that throws light on the distinction I am trying to make between the ordinary, as opposed to the technical, use of the word "cause":

And there are interesting and peculiar linguistic features that mark our use of "cause" in connection with human actions. For we speak, not of the causes of actions but of what sorts of agents or persons do this or that. And among the sorts of things we cite as causes in the field of human action - the things that cause persons to act in such and such ways - are reasons of peculiar sorts not encountered in the domain of physical events¹.

II

Reasons and Causes: The General Line of Wittgenstein's Thinking

In order to know the reason which you had for making a certain statement, for acting in a particular way, *etc.*, no number of agreeing experiences is necessary, and the statement of your reason is not a hypothesis (Blue Book 15).

Wittgenstein, then, attributes the temptation to confuse reasons and causes to a conflation of the generality sought in causal explanation with the generality possible in reason-giving. Whatever the source of the confusion, Wittgenstein categorically

¹A. Stroll (ed.), Epistemology: New Essays in the Theory of Knowledge (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p.237.

believes that Freud confuses reasons with causes. I shall now look more closely at, and offer some assessment of, this complaint.

Freud attempted, unsatisfactorily as we shall see, to appropriate a Humean model of causation, a model, according to which causes are supposedly known inductively from experience, in order to talk of the reasons for human actions. He attempted to conjecture hypotheses about what caused people to behave as they did. As we have said he believed that there were internal causes, of which people exhibiting neurotic behaviour were not aware, that could explain such behaviour. The problem was, however, that Freud did not, in practice, in giving explanations, observe the causal states and tell the patient that these states caused that aberrant behaviour. On the contrary, he was not reporting on states at all. Rather, he was giving possible reasons that the patient might be prepared to accept for her or his actions. Glock puts the point neatly:

Wittgenstein's distinction between reasons and causes is at odds with a causal conception of the mind, according to which mental phenomena are the inner causes of outward behaviour. Part of this picture is a causal conception of intentional action, for which human behaviour is explained by reference to efficient causes - acts or events which take place either in a private mental realm (the soul) or, more plausibly, in the brain. Wittgenstein, by contrast, holds that intentional behaviour is explained teleologically, by reference to an agent's reasons (beliefs, intentions, wants)¹.

Freud had attempted to infer the internal causes of certain types of observed neurotic behaviour. Yet he had no empirical basis for his causal claims. For although he could observe the behaviour of his patients and talk to them, he could not look inside them and observe what was causing which types of behaviour. Thus his conjectures, unlike the conjectures of say, meteorologists about the causes of tornadoes, are speculations and not hypotheses that could be tested in experience.

¹ Glock, op. cit., p.75.

Since there can be no experiential evidence for the sorts of things that Freud postulates as causes, we surmise that he was, at best, providing people with what, Wittgenstein called “persuasive reasons”. Unlike causes, these are things that depend on people agreeing to them. For example, if a person were asked why she or he was behaving in an aggressive manner, the reply would not ordinarily be that in all instances of behaving aggressively the cause has always been found to be an unconscious need for love so that I, the patient, am acting aggressively because I have an unconscious need for love. The patient might say “I behaved aggressively because of an unconscious need for love”, but the patient would not be resting that assertion on an established law that had been based on similar reported instances of people with unconscious needs for love. How could such a thing possibly be established? Not only would it be unclear what it would be to identify some causal entity called a need for love, but, further, even if one could, how could one possibly account for all cases in those terms? As Wittgenstein says in the Blue and Brown Books;

In order to know the reason which you had for making a certain statement, for acting in a particular way, etc., no number of agreeing experiences is necessary, and the statement of your reason is not a hypothesis¹.

The statement of the reason is not a hypothesis, because a hypothesis is something which one seeks to test and conclusively establish experimentally. There seems to be no way of providing conclusive evidence to show that, for example, aggression is, as a general rule, caused by an unconscious need for love. We may, of course, try to provide reasonable grounds for the assertion that there are certainly some aggressive people who are aggressive because they lack love. However, that would not account for people who have been loved and are still aggressive. This is not

¹L. Wittgenstein, The Blue and Brown Books, p.15.

to deny that facts about aggressive people might affect the reasons given for their aggression. But this has nothing to do with establishing a causal law. Rather it has to do with the reasons people are prepared to accept.

Thus Wittgenstein comes to this conclusion about Freud's explanations: they are he says: "An entirely new account of a correct explanation. Not one agreeing with experience, but one accepted¹".

There will be a range of reasons that people will give for acting aggressively. These reasons will differ according to circumstances and practices. For example a group of hippies might argue that aggression is caused by an unconscious need for love, whereas a group of rugby players on the other hand might argue that aggression is a natural and healthy instinct. Mary Whitehouse, on the other hand, might say that aggression is the result of television violence. What makes a reason a reason and not a cause, then, is that it is involved with human evaluation, deliberation and justification, as opposed to causes whose operations are themselves independent of any such justification. Thus understanding human behaviour is not about describing the operations of states, processes and events but is concerned with what people say about what they do. Mark Johnston in his book, Wittgenstein and Moral Philosophy sums this matter up thus:

While a cause is established by experiment, through statistics, or by tracing a mechanism, the reason for an individual's action is typically established simply by asking the agent².

A similar claim about the difference between the two kinds of explanation that we are here explicating is made by Marcia Cavell in The Psychoanalytic Mind:

¹L. Wittgenstein, Lectures and Conversations, p.18.

²M. Johnston, Wittgenstein and Moral Philosophy (London: Routledge, 1989), p.38.

There are, in general two kinds of explanations with which we are familiar. We say that the troops got scurvy because they lacked vitamin C: that the crystal shattered because of the cannon blast: that Mary's skin cancer was caused by excessive exposure to the sun. Or we say that someone did x for such-and-such a reason - John hit the man over the head because he thought he was a robber: Mary collected the twigs because she wanted to build a bird-cage: the Rat Man removed the stone from the road because he believed that it might injure his beloved. (All the complexity of that story, as Freud (1909) tells it, qualifies the reasons that explain the man's behaviour: it doesn't replace reasons with some other explanatory idea.)¹.

Now one might want to say that the above distinction may be too simply put. As I said in the previous chapter, it is not always the case that we give the scientific explanations of the causes of physical events in the unqualified way that Cavell suggests. It is not always clear what the cause of broken glass is, for glass can shatter without anything being thrown at it. It can be broken by things other than stones. In this eventuality we can say that the stone is a sufficient rather than necessary cause of the broken glass, for it could have been shattered by the force of the wind or it could have shattered because it had been ill fitted. We say "sufficient cause" because glass can be shattered by stones but can also be shattered by lots of other things as well. However even if we concede that this is so, and that both causal and reason giving explanations may be somewhat tentative and qualified, we still, on Wittgenstein's account, have to assert a general distinction between two types of explanation. Although scientific causal accounts of events are variegated and Wittgenstein himself realized this, particularly when he discussed non-necessitating causes², this does not

¹M. Cavell, The Psychoanalytic Mind (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), p.58.

²L. Wittgenstein, "Cause and Effect; Intuitive Awareness", in L. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Occasions, (U.S.A: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993), pp.371-405. For further details on non-necessitating causes see G.E Anscombe, "Causality and Determination" in ed E. Sosa and M. Tooley (eds.), Causation (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp.88-104.

have to undermine the other claim Wittgenstein wants to make, namely, that the reason-giving explanations Freud actually offers cannot be conflated with the kind of empirically established Humean deterministic physical causal explanations. Although there may be no one necessary cause of, say, lung cancer, there are still sufficient causes that could be empirically established. However, it is Wittgenstein's contention that no empirical observation-based foundation of this kind operates in Freudian or any other reason-giving explanations. Although scientific causal explanations may be highly variegated this does not mean that they can be conflated with reason-giving explanations for human actions and behaviour.

We shall see, in due course, that even if there are physical processes or psychological states, one can't conclude that a description of these, such as an empirical scientist might try to give, can explain why we act intentionally, why we fall in love, why we have incompatible wants, why we choose one explanation over another. It is, therefore, important to understand that there are different types of explanations that have different uses. But those types become confused when philosophical and or psychological claims of the Freudian type are made. (It is another issue whether those different types of explanation are or are not compatible with each other, an issue with which Chapter One was concerned. Malcolm, for example, takes the view that mechanistic and purposive explanations of an action are mutually incompatible, a view endorsed in Jaegwon Kim's "Mechanical Purpose and Explanatory Exclusion"¹. This would support Wittgenstein's view that there are two kinds of explanation here).

Freudian explanations, in contrast to Humean causal explanations, are, according to Wittgenstein, explanations that require the patient's agreement. Hence

¹J. Kim, Supervenience And Mind (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp.237ff.

such explanations are dependent upon the articulation of the intentions, beliefs and desires of human subjects, and not upon the mind-independent operation of physical states and processes. This is not to suggest that there are no such states, events or processes to be investigated and described. But it is to say that these physical causes will go on whether we agree to a description of them or not. By contrast, Wittgenstein clearly wishes to argue, psychoanalytic explanations depend for their very existence on our acceptance of descriptions of why we act as we do. Psychoanalytic explanations don't, then, invoke states of affairs. They give us possible reasons for why we act the way we do, and in so doing may well give us new ways of understanding our behaviour.

So, what, according to Wittgenstein, distinguishes explanations Freud actually gave from the kind of Humean causal explanations described earlier, is the fact that Freudian explanations depend on the assent of the patient to the given explanation. Only if this is forthcoming, is the true aim of psychoanalytic practice, namely to effect a cure, to be realized. Acceptance is related to the notion of correct explanation (where this is a notion that needs and will receive a fuller examination in Chapter Five). What is being described here is not the kind of cure that is related to causal physicalist explanations, as if, for example, one tried to cure lung cancer by getting the patient to accept a true causal story of how his or her lung cancer arose.

The possible causes of lung cancer, such as smoking or heredity, and their cure, do not rely for their existence on the patient's acknowledgment of them. Such causes are operative whether the person agrees that they are the causes of their lung cancer or not. However, the psychoanalytic explanation of why a person did X, is, on Freud's account, and this is what interested Wittgenstein, dependent on the patient's acknowledgement of that explanation. What the patient is agreeing to, are reason explanations rather than causal explanations. For, the argument is, causes operate

independently of one's agreement that they do, whereas reasons are dependent upon that agreement. This is what underlies Wittgenstein claim, which I hope in various ways to defend, that Freud had confused what he was doing, namely giving reason explanations, with what he thought he was doing, namely giving scientific causal explanations.

III

Epistemological Problems about Freud's Psychoanalytic Explanations

If, as we have said, Freud's explanations are not scientific causal explanations to be supported by the kind of observable evidence sought in science, on what basis can we know that the psychoanalytic explanations Freud gives are the right explanations. How do we know that what a person agrees to is the reason why he acted? By what method can we determine the truth of such questions?

We could, Wittgenstein argues, posit a cause to explain why a person laughed at a particular joke. We might get that person to agree to that causal explanation. But we have no way of showing that what the person agrees to is genuinely a cause in the sense in which causes are thought to be operative in science. Imagine that every time someone laughs at a joke about the Irish we posit as the cause the fact that that person is a bigoted anglophile. It might be that the person concerned is a bigoted anglophile and that is why laughter occurred. But there is no mechanism that we could detect as operative inside the person that told us that he was a bigoted anglophile and hence that he was thereby caused to laugh at Irish jokes. We could not see the mechanism in operation as they laughed. To become clear why one laughed is not to become clear about internally operating mechanisms. It is, rather, to acknowledge and accept the

reason posited for one's laughter¹. In his Cambridge lectures of 1932-1935

Wittgenstein made this point when he said:

Being clear why you laugh is not being clear about a cause. If it were, then the agreement to the analysis given of the joke as explaining why you laugh would not be a means of detecting it. The success of the analysis is supposed to be shown by the person's agreement. There is nothing corresponding to this in physics².

To be presented with a reason for one's laughter is not necessarily to be presented with a cause for one's laughter. One does not have to agree to the statement that something is a cause for it to be a cause. As we saw with the lung cancer example, a cause does not require an acknowledgement by the patient. This is unlike the case in which, in actual practice, Freudian psychoanalysts explain to a patient why he or she laughed at a particular joke by getting them to acknowledge something as their reason for laughing. Freud misrepresented this by treating unconscious states as somehow causally operative in producing laughter at jokes, so that unacknowledged unacceptable feelings somehow cause us, whether we acknowledge the cause or not, to laugh at a man who trips on a banana skin. That account first supposes that we can correlate an inner state with outward laughter. It is unclear how that it is to be empirically established. For not all people laugh at the same jokes. Second, even if there were a correlation this is not an account of laughter. Laughter is not the emission of noises under stimulus. It is the emission of those noises for a reason. And people have different reasons for finding things funny. If we were caused to laugh, incidentally, what would be the point in laughter. We might as well take a pill to induce laughter and cut out the joker.

¹This raises problems about truth which will be addressed in Chapter Five below.

²Wittgenstein's Lectures, Cambridge 1932-1935, pp.39-40.

Is there a problem of knowing if a posited reason for someone's laughter is the reason that explains the laughter? If there is, we are no better off with reasons than with causes as explanations of behaviour. The reply is that in the case of reasons, with some qualifications to be dealt with in Chapter Five, that someone acknowledges a reason as his or her reason, makes it true that it is. Although there could be other possible reasons, this is what the person accepts. He or she might later have a change of mind and acknowledge different reasons. A person might no longer find something funny and give a reason for that. A cause is not in the same way active in assessments about what's funny and what's not. People and their reasons are.

There seems, then, to be no empirical way of testing if the reason someone accepts as explaining his or her laughter is the reason for the laughter. There is, ultimately, only his or her say so. However reasons, as we shall see, are nonetheless contestable. And we can say that there are, in various sorts of ways, good and bad reasons. Melden writes:

Reasons that are relevant, good and sufficient, show the action to be right and reasonable, as distinct from the reasons we cite in physics or physiology which merely show how it is that events are brought to pass¹.

People might act for what we think are bad reasons, but these have to be regarded nevertheless as their reasons, if they are acknowledged by the agent as the correct explanation at that time. In addition, it is also possible to make erroneous ascriptions of reasons. A good psychoanalytic reason-explanation would be one which was to some degree consistent with the circumstances of the patient's life and behaviour. A bad psychoanalytic explanation would be one that was indifferent to such constraints. For example, a patient comes to the analyst with a nervous stammer and the analyst says, "Your stammer has been caused by wearing suits that are too

¹A. Stroll, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

small for you". This would be seen as a somewhat bizarre reason to cite for someone's stammering, particularly if the person had told the analyst that as a child he had been shy and did not speak with confidence because his shyness had inhibited him from forming his words properly and so they came out in a stammer. Now if the person who had suffered from shyness had always been dressed in an old suit of his father's that had shrunk, this might be a contributory factor. The restriction of the suit made the child feel uncomfortable and was therefore not conducive to confident speech. However, we would not be giving a good reason were we to say that wearing his father's tight suits explains the patient's stammering. The most we can say is that the claim that the boy's shyness and lack of confidence which had led to the stammering was further exacerbated by the wearing of small suits, provides, prima facie, a good reason. Of course, the more we know of a person's life, the better and more sophisticated become the reasons we can give for that person's behaviour.

This is not to suggest that our reasons are made up simply of facts about a person's life. If giving reasons were simply reporting facts, then our reasons would be of the form, "he wore suits that were too tight", "he was shy", "his manners were appalling". These statements alone do not tell us how they are connected with stammering. Rational characterisation is required in order to do that. Giving psychoanalytic explanations is not merely a matter of supplying empirically ascertainable facts to which the patient agrees. Rather the patient agrees to a characterisation of the facts. This agreement does not have to exclude the possibility that such characterisations of facts might be later evaluated as inadequate.

**Why Freud's theory of psychological causal determinism won't work
for the practice of psychoanalysis.**

It is ironic that Freud believed his psychoanalytic explanations to supply causally determining features, whereas his psychoanalytic cure was dependent upon the patient's assent to a suggested reason-giving explanation. The central role of the notion of agreement in Freud's theory seems at odds with his notion of psychological causal determinism. For one would assume that if a person was being caused to act in a certain way, their acceptance of their being caused to act would not affect their present acting, given that their acting was determined independently of them. Yet Freud, given his notion of cure, wants to say that the acceptance of the explanation does affect the behaviour. But how can it on Freud's account, for the behaviour is unconsciously determined?

Since the patient's behaviour is, according to Freud, affected by the psychoanalytic explanation, we are led to conclude that the patient can change his attitude toward his past behaviour in the way that the analyst shows him. What the analyst shows him, as we have said, can't be the causally determining factors that lead to his or her behaviour. For, if this were the case, there would be no point in any analysis that was meant to produce change *via* acknowledgment. How can one voluntarily change what is causally determined? Freud's analytic practice presupposes that the patient's behaviour is not causally determined but is open to explanation and change through the offering and acceptance of reasons. If it were determined, then the patient would have no control over how he came to acknowledge his behaviour in a certain way and over how he came to change his past behaviour in the light of this acknowledgement. If we are causally determined, it seems we would not be able to

take alternative courses of action. But the whole point of psychoanalysis is to enable the patient to adopt alternative forms of action, to change certain forms of neurotic behaviour that have disabled one in the past. It appears that Freud has wrongly applied the notion of causal determinism to human action. Determinism would, by definition, rule out any decision and deliberation on part of the human subject of the kind supposed by his own psychoanalytic practices.

Even if a defender of Freud wanted to say that any change in the patient's evaluation of actions and future behaviour is itself causally determined by recognition of its causes, he could not explain why some patients don't accept the reasons given by the analyst as being the causes of their actions and therefore don't change their behaviour accordingly. One could not, moreover, say that patients are caused to see the causes of their behaviour, because, as we have said, some patients apparently choose not to recognize them. If that is so, recognition is not causally determined. So, on Freud's account, change of behaviour cannot be inevitable and, therefore, neither can cure be.

What is strange is that Freud acknowledged that for those patients who resist the explanation, cure is impossible, thereby apparently allowing that patients are not causally determined. Thus it looks as if he saying, for example, all neurotic patients are causally determined to act in various ways, only some patients won't believe that they are causally determined to act in various ways, that is, until they, are shown by the analyst that they are. But why should a recognition, brought about by the analyst, that one is thus determined have any affect on one at all. One is just brought to see that there is nothing one can do. Yet Freud wants to say that the recognition of the explanation is the crucial factor in changing one's behaviour. We can only conclude that Freud had attempted to posit the analyst's reason explanations as if they were causes, thus landing him in a muddle about free will and determinism.

Freud could have avoided some of his problems if he had not attempted to combine his deterministic psychological theory with his non-deterministic psychoanalytic practice, a mistake that we located in Chapter One, when we saw that Freud wrongly took psychoanalytic practice to be scientific. If we take Freud's theory of psychological determinism seriously, that is, if we believed that from birth there are inclinations to sexual behaviour which become repressed but yet cause us to behave in certain ways, then it would be inconsistent of us to think that such forms of behaviour could have been and could be different. Hence it would be inconsistent for us to think that a cure of certain forms of neurotic illnesses would be possible.

Freud's theory is often called a theory of human nature and by human nature one usually thinks of some fixed essence, an unalterable set of properties which humans possess. The notion of changing things by psychoanalytic practice does not sit happily with that.

Moreover, in Civilization and its Discontents Freud claims that whole civilizations and whole movements of history are the determinate effects of repressed unconscious desires:

Sublimation of instinct is an especially conspicuous feature of cultural development ; it is what makes it possible for higher psychical activities, scientific, artistic or ideological, to play such an important part in civilized life¹.

Freud's attempt to illustrate how whole civilizations could be causally determined by unconscious repressions and frustration, seems to raise doubts about how psychoanalysis could work. Would psychoanalysis itself on his view, not simply be the result of sublimated desires? If this is so, how then could an analyst be able to

¹S. Freud, Civilization, Society and Religion (London: Penguin Books, 1985), p.286.

see beyond his own repression to that of the patient's? What would give the analyst the privileged vantage point?

Freud had believed psychological causal determinism to be true, yet, inconsistently with that view, he had believed in the reasoning capacity of the subject to change the course of what had seemed like the unalterable embedded personality structures of the id, ego and super-ego. Freud, it appears, could not reconcile his deterministic theory of the causally efficacious unconscious structures of the human psyche with the practice of psychoanalysis, a practice in which patients, in order to be cured, were involved in evaluating and possibly changing the course of their lives. This is what led Wittgenstein to characterise Freud's whole theoretical and practical project as an 'abominable mess'. For in the rift between his theory and his practice he reveals himself philosophically to have misunderstood his own project. What the practice of psychoanalysis revealed was that both analyst and patient were engaged in giving and accepting reasons as opposed to being, as the theory would have it, determined by psychic forces.

V

Marcia Cavell's Objections to Wittgenstein's Challenge on Psychoanalysis.

In the foregoing I have sketched the possible line of thought that led Wittgenstein to object to Freud's procedures on the grounds that Freud confused reason explanations with causal explanations. It is time now to look further into this line of thought and to discuss some of the objections that have been offered to Wittgenstein's analysis.

In her book, The Psychoanalytic Mind, Marcia Cavell raises an objection to the Wittgensteinian challenge to psychoanalysis outlined in my earlier remarks. She writes:

The Wittgensteinian argument apparently challenges psychoanalysis on two fronts. First, if reasons are the sort of things that are in principle avowable, then the concept of unconscious reasons seems to be in trouble. This is not my primary concern in this chapter. But in brief, my answer is that to say that reasons are the sort of thing we can acknowledge implies nothing about when, or under what conditions. As I noted in chapter I, Freud himself held that beliefs and desires are in principle avowable¹.

I wish to assert, contrary to Cavell, that an account of reason-giving explanations of actions which requires an avowal by the agent that the suggested reasons are his or her reasons, can imply something about the conditions, circumstances, or, as Wittgenstein might say, grounds for avowal. Avowing reasons, as the patient does, is accepting grounds, although not Humean causal grounds, for belief. Such grounds are not Humean causal grounds because giving Humean causal grounds requires the citing of logically independent events whereas the giving of reasons requires the giving of statements between which there are logical relations which are internal to the practice in which they are given. In other words the giving of reasons although not requiring causal grounds does require the giving of grounds in the form of justifications, in this case justifications that are internal to the practice of psychoanalysis. Thus Cavell's criticism that Wittgenstein's account implies nothing about grounds for avowal, I think is misconceived. For in the psychoanalytic case it seems more plausible that one could give sufficient grounds for believing a particular psychoanalytic reason, than one could give sufficient grounds for believing in a particular psychoanalytic unconscious cause. In the former case it looks like we could know what justifies us in believing a particular reason because first reasons are the

¹Marcia Cavell, op. cit., p.60.

sort of things that are knowable and avowable and second because the justifications given for reasons are connected to the logic of our justificatory practices. In the latter case we don't know what it would be like to agree to and know an unconscious cause and thus it becomes obscure what grounds could be given. On the Wittgensteinian account, psychoanalytic explanations are concerned with normative explanations of actions. For example, a patient can come to see, through therapy, that the reason why he is acting aggressively towards his wife is because as a child he was hit by his father and has never been able to come to terms with it. Thus there are conditions in one's life, such as having been hit by one's father, that may be accepted and avowed by the patient as being the correct interpretation of why he is aggressive. There may be other conditions which might have led him to become aggressive, but the choice of which condition on the occasion led to the aggression is up to the analyst to decide, for that after all is his or her job. Then it is a matter of persuading the patient into avowing the particular interpretation he thinks explains that patient's behaviour.

Cavell, although acknowledging that Wittgenstein is right that agreement is a part of what makes a psychoanalytic explanation a correct one, thinks that the notion of agreement alone cannot explain to us why patients act as they do. Agreement to reasons as the sole test for the adequacy of psychoanalytic explanations does not, Cavell thinks, explain the causes which the analyst's reasons attempt to describe. This leads her to two reasons for attacking Wittgenstein's challenge on psychoanalysis.

The first is that, unlike Wittgenstein, she sees the need to posit a causally operative unconscious in order to explain actions in which people act without knowing their intention for acting:

Wittgenstein was right that one criterion by which we assign a belief or desire to someone is that he avows it. But there is another: the role of beliefs and desires in explaining action. . . . There seems to be no way of explaining Becky's wounding remark without imputing to her an

intention to wound, which she denies: no way of accounting for the fact that Graham repeatedly sabotages his own sincere intentions without assuming he has other intentions of which he is unaware¹.

Second, again unlike Wittgenstein, she wants to defend Freud's notion that reasons are causes along Davidsonian lines, a defence which she supposes would require the existence of causal laws which reasons describe:

I want to establish that reasons are causes, a position now so widely accepted among philosophers that I will only briefly rehearse first the negative, then the positive arguments².

I only want to deal here with the first of her claims. The second will be dealt with later in this chapter when I consider Davidson's defence of Freud.

Cavell's first claim, then, is that without a causally operative unconscious we cannot explain why people act without knowing why they act. I wish to argue, and this will be dealt with more fully in my next chapter, that in order to understand why people act without apparently knowing why they act, one does not need to posit an unconscious. We cannot conclude, simply because people won't accept a reason for their actions, that they do act without knowing and that their knowledge has, therefore, been buried in an unconscious. Becky, in one of Cavell's examples, denies she intended the wounding remark (when she clearly did) precisely because she is aware that it is wounding. How could she deny what she didn't know. We don't like to admit to intentionally hurting others. This does not have to entail that we don't know what we intend in hurting them. Our actions demonstrate whether we know we have wounded another by a remark.

¹ Marcia Cavell, *op. cit.*, p.60.

²*Ibid.*, p. 61.

Human communication at any level depends on our knowing certain things and also on our having the capacity to be shown things (which also depends on knowing certain things). Becky might come to see that the reason that the analyst gives better describes the intention of the wounding remark than the one Becky had herself given. Moreover Cavell overlooks the possibility that Becky's denial of an intention to wound is a possible characterisation of her action. For there may be cases in which a person did not intend to wound and was playfully teasing another. Again to assess this we would look at the circumstances in which the remark was made and at the consistency and sincerity of the person's behaviour in those circumstances. For as Wittgenstein says in section 337 of the Investigations, "an intention is embedded in its situation, in human customs and institutions".

I want to claim that the existence of psychoanalysis depends on the possibility of persons re-evaluating their lives in certain ways. They could not do this if they were not, as I have claimed, intentionally involved in their actions. In order to participate in psychoanalytic treatment one must be able to evaluate one's own actions. This requires an already acquired set of beliefs about oneself and others.

I do not want, however, to claim that all human actions can be explained by reason-explanations. Reasons can give out and people act without justification, in the sense that when asked they do not give reasons but say something like "I just did it". That possibility is certainly envisaged by Wittgenstein:

"How am I able to obey a rule?" - if this is not a question about causes, then it is about the justifications for my following the rules in the way I do.

If I have exhausted the justifications I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: "This is simply what I do"¹.

¹L. Wittgenstein, The Philosophical Investigations (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953), sec. 217.

That I can't give an explanation of my actions does not entail that I acted unconsciously, but simply that my reasons ran out¹. That people do thus act without justification does not mean that justification can't be given. For example in cases of neuroses we may not be satisfied with the notion that reasons simply run out, we may require that reasons can be given. For in the 'normal' case it might not be so troubling that reasons run out but it seems in the case of neurosis, that psychoanalysis has a commitment to finding reasons. After all that is the nature of the practice, namely that behaviour that persons can't explain to themselves can be explained by others.

VI

Cioffi's Freud

In his article, "Wittgenstein's Freud" Frank Cioffi challenges Wittgenstein's view, the view to which I have subscribed, that Freud has confused his meta-theory - which is explained in causally determinate terms and where the patient's symptoms and dream reports are characterized in terms of such causal determinates of the unconscious, as the id, the ego and the super ego - with his psychoanalytic practice, a practice in which the patient is involved in accepting reasons given to her by the analyst. Cioffi writes:

The objection to speaking in this connection of the 'abominable mess' made by Freud's disciples in confusing cause and reason is that it represents the state of affairs too much as one of helpless confusion and overlooks the way in which the confusion is ingeniously exploited in the interests of the theory. In the notion of reasons which are causes there is more grammatical flair than muddle².

¹It is at this point Wittgenstein might say, that our lack of a reason-giving explanation makes us wrongly think that we should look for a causal one.

² F. Cioffi, "Wittgenstein's Freud", in P. Winch (ed.), Studies in the Philosophy of Wittgenstein (London: Routledge, 1974), p.195.

Cioffi's point in speaking of Freud's muddling of reasons and causes as grammatically ingenious rather than grammatically mistaken is, I think, this: Freud, in seeing reasons as causes provided us with a (causal) vocabulary in terms of which we could talk about those things of which we are unaware. Cioffi wants to stress the "ingenuity" of Freud's causal explanations rather than their scientific implausibility. He is interested in the attraction such theories have. The following quotation illustrates what Cioffi means by Freud's "grammatical flair".

Freud's unconscious permits him to forget to keep his professional engagements, which are not lucrative, and to miss a train while travelling to Manchester via Holland, and thus fulfil a long-cherished wish to see Rembrandt's paintings without defying his elder brother's request not to break his journey¹.

Another example of the superior dexterity of talk about the unconscious is given in the way Freud can talk of the manner in which he broke the marble cover of his inkpot:

My sweeping movement was only apparently clumsy: in reality it was exceedingly adroit and well directed, and understood how to avoid damaging any of the more precious objects that stood around. It was my belief that we must accept this judgment for a whole series of seemingly accidental, clumsy movements. . . . They prove to be governed by an intention and achieve their aim with a certainty which cannot in general be credited to our conscious voluntary movements².

We touched on the notion of the "grammar" of the causal language earlier, when discussing Wittgenstein's view of the everyday use of the language of cause and effect. There we saw how we can quite unproblematically use the words "cause" and "effect" without that having to commit us to beliefs about scientifically conceived and provable relations between events. However Freud does not use the terms "cause" and

¹Ibid., p. 187.

²Ibid., p.187.

“effect” in this way. As we have seen, he wishes to use them, at least in his theoretical work, in the scientific Humean sense. Cioffi is, therefore, granting too much too him, in thinking that he uses the grammar of causes unproblematically and without those scientific commitments. This is not to deny that on occasion his use of these terms with a different “grammar” is ingenious. It is, however, to say that his use often displays a misconception about the explanation of actions. Misconceptions can indeed be ingenious. That does not, however, stop them from being misconceptions. I once made an ingenious “grammatical” mistake at a posh dinner party by saying “Oh what a faux fas!” instead of “Oh what a faux pas!”. The reason why the mistake was ingenious, in Cioffi’s sense, was that my misuse was describable by the very phrase I misused. But the “ingenuity” of the mistake, did not prevent it from being a mistake.

Bouveresse, who shares my view about Cioffi’s account of Freud, takes the matter even further by arguing that Cioffi is committed to a more Davidsonian line. For Cioffi is not content simply to say that Freud found some ingenious uses for the causal language but, further, agrees with Freud that there can be reasons, of which we are unaware, that simply are causes. Bouveresse writes:

Cioffi wondered whether in speaking of a confusion between reasons and causes, we are not leaving out an essential element: reasons which are causes do indeed constitute reasons which the subject may very well be unaware of (as he is unaware of most causes of his behaviour)¹.

This argument is, as we shall now see, very much in line with Davidson’s views about irrationality, views which, I shall argue, are untenable.

¹Bouveresse, *op.cit.*, p.72.

Davidson on Freud

In his article "The Paradoxes of Irrationality", Donald Davidson addresses himself to a view he thinks to be commonly held by philosophers, namely that there is a rupture in Freud's thinking between explanations in terms of reasons and explanations in terms of causes. He writes:

It seems then that there are two irreconcilable tendencies in Freud's methodology. On the one hand he wanted to extend the range of phenomena subject to reason explanations, and on the other to treat these same phenomena as forces and states are treated in the natural sciences. But in the natural sciences, reasons and propositional attitudes are out of place, and blind causality rules¹.

Davidson, himself, however, wishes, in defence of Freud, to argue that explanations in terms of reasons and explanations in terms of causes are compatible with one another.

There is no inherent conflict between reason explanations and causal explanations. Since beliefs and desires are causes of the action for which they are reasons, reason explanations include an essential causal element².

How then does Davidson defend Freud from claims that there is a rupture in his methodology between reason-giving and causal explanations?

In 'Paradoxes of Irrationality' Davidson conducts this defence in terms both of reason-giving in the case of rational action, and of reason-giving in the case of certain kinds of irrational actions, and this is in line with Freud's own work. For Freud

¹ D. Davidson, "Paradoxes of Irrationality", in R. Wollheim and J. Hopkins (eds.), Philosophical Essays on Freud (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p.292.

²Ibid., p.293.

attempted to make the irrational, rational, in attempting to show that there are explanatory reasons for making slips of the tongue or for forgetting various things.

In order to see how the irrational is rationally determined and explicable, or, as Davidson would put it, to see how the reasons the analyst gives are the causes that have motivated the patient to act irrationally, Davidson wants in the first instance to get clear about what normal, rational action is.

Here the central thought is that when one acts rationally, one seeks to fulfil a goal that has been deliberated over. On this view, when one acts rationally, it is from a deliberate and known motive or reason, and this is the cause of the subsequent action. Therefore what causes one, at least to intend, to act are one's reasons. 'The reasons', he writes, 'must have played a causal role in the occurrence of the acting'¹

Davidson gives examples in support of the view that in rational action our reasons for acting are the causes of our acting:

If a person intends to steal some Brussels sprouts, then, whether or not he executes his intention, the intention itself must be caused by a desire to possess some Brussels Sprouts and a belief that by stealing them he will come into possession of them².

This established, Davidson then turns to the paradox of irrationality. In the case of irrational action a conflict arises between what someone does and the reasons given for that action. For although he or she desires (and the desire here may be unconscious) to bring about some action, a reason is provided for acting that is not that desire. It follows, therefore, that on Davidson's view irrational action is action, the reasons one gives for which are not the real causes of one's action. And the real

¹Ibid., p.293.

²Ibid., p.293.

reasons which cause one to act in one way rather than another lie, at least according to Freud, in the unconscious.

People, then, may give reasons that are not reasons that explain what caused them to act in certain ways. A patient says that she is continually washing her hands in order to get them clean. Why do we say that she gives the wrong reasons for why she is continually washing her hands? She says that her reason for continually washing her hands is in order to get them clean. However this can't be the reason that is causing her action. Continual washing does not get hands any cleaner than they already are. What causes her to wash them continually, then, is not the reason she gives. So it must be something else. In other words, the reasons that are given are irrational because they do not explain why a person acted as she or he did. The reasons the irrational person gives don't explain the cause of their irrational behaviour.

However, although the irrational reasons people give for their actions are not necessarily the real causes of those actions, there are, nonetheless reasons which are the causes of their actions. These are reasons of the sort that Freud gives. For Freud wants to say that the agent is unaware of the causes of an action precisely because they have been repressed by that agent. So the agent gives reasons that are not the real causes of their actions in order not to have to confront the painful or unacceptable nature of the real causes of their actions. Hence, as Bouveresse points out, there is, on this account a connection between reasons and causes¹. The irrational reasons people give are caused by unconscious causes which themselves can be explained in terms of reasons why the agent has them. Thus there is a connection both between what causes people to give irrational reasons and the reasons that themselves explain the cause why people give irrational reasons.

¹Bouveresse, op.cit., pp.77-82.

Although Davidson wants to assert a compatibility between reasons and causes in the case of irrationality, since the reasons that the analyst gives for an irrational person's behaviour are the causes of that behaviour, he also wants to say that the mind of the irrational person is partitioned into, on the one hand, its unconscious causal functionings (from which reason explanations are absent) and on the other its propositional attitudes, in terms of which a person gives reasons for his or her intentional actions, reasons which, in the case of the irrational person, are quite separate from the causes of those actions. For in the case of irrational people, their reasons are not the causes of their behaviour.

This being so, there seems to be a partitioning of the mind between non-rational causal functionings and the activity of reason-giving. This appears to show that, in the case of the irrational person at least, there do appear to be two levels operating. But then it may look as if Davidson is weakening his resolve to defend Freud from accusations that there is a rupture between reasons and causes and hence between Freudian theory, which appeals to determining causes, and Freudian practice, which appeals to reason giving¹.

Davidson argues that these two parts of the partitioned mind do nevertheless causally interact. For, as we know from the case of the irrational person, the reasons that person gives do not give the causal explanation of the action. Yet (and this is the crucial interaction), the actions of the irrational person are nonetheless caused by the cause that his or her reasons do not cite. Thus, although reasons that don't explain the

¹This would fit with Kim's worries that Davidson's anomolous monism unsuccessfully attempts to join the causal and physical with the mental and the non-mental. See J.Kim, "Mechanism, Purpose and Explanatory Exclusion", in A. Mele (ed.), The Philosophy of Action (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp.256-282.

cause of an action and the true cause of an action are autonomous, there is an interaction between them. Davidson sums up the matter thus:

The mind is to be regarded as having two or more semi-autonomous structures. This feature we found to be necessary to account for mental causes that are not reasons for the mental states they cause. Only by partitioning the mind does it seem possible to explain how a thought or impulse can cause another to which it bears no rational relation¹.

When it comes to the attempt to rationalise the irrational, as Freud had attempted to do, Davidson understands Freud's problem and the need for a notion of the mind which on the one hand operates causally, affecting various forms of behaviour, and on the other a mind which rationalizes and gives reasons for that behaviour. Although such reasons may in some way be caused, they do not explain their cause.

In the end I think Davidson wants to say that not all reason-giving supplies real causes. This seems a weaker conclusion than the one which was initially expected, which was that the rift between reasons and causes can be healed, even in the case of irrational actions. Moreover, in arguing for the compatibility between reasons and causes in the explanation of irrational action, Davidson tends to underplay a worry he raises at the end of his paper. For there he says that, there are often causes which our reasons don't explain not just in the case of irrationality but generally speaking. He writes that 'if I manage to remember a name by humming a certain tune, there is a mental cause of something for which it is not a reason; and similarly for a host of other cases²'.

But now it appears that the rift between reasons and causes that had earlier been supposedly healed, opens again. For if we can say that not all causes are reasons, then

¹Davidson, op.cit., p303.

²Ibid., p.305.

why should we assume that the causes of irrational behaviour are reason-giving. And, how can we know that in every case of reason-giving we are citing a cause? Why should the analyst be regarded as able to give reasons that cite unconscious causes of irrational behaviour whilst the hummer can't? What makes the analyst's case a case of citing reasons which are causes and the hummer's case a case of citing causes that are non-reason giving? Does this admission not simply lead one to think that there is, in Davidson's thinking, after all a categorical difference, and not a compatibility, between the theoretical citing of causes and the practice of giving reasons. This is clearly illustrated in this next quotation:

The agent has reasons for changing his own habits and character, but those reasons come from a domain of values necessarily extrinsic to the contents of the views or values to undergo change. The cause of the change, if it comes, can therefore not be a reason for what it causes¹.

VII

On Davidson's "Defence" of Freud

Although at the end of his paper we have an admission that there are causes that are not reasons, the rest of the paper argues the different line that in psychoanalytic explanation causes are cited which are reasons and, in the case of irrationality, argues the line that there are reasons for irrational actions that explain them in terms of unconscious causes².

How, though, can Davidson move from a central thesis that reasons explain an action by indicating its causes, to the view that in certain instances and not just

¹Ibid., p.305.

²Davidson's view has been influential in the philosophy of psychoanalysis. A contemporary sympathiser is Marcia Cavell. See The Psychoanalytic Mind, (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993).

irrational instances, they don't, for example, where the reason a person gives for continual hand washing is to get their hands clean but where that reason is not the cause of their continual hand washing. The Davidsonian response to this is to say that although there are instances in which the reasons people give don't explain the causes of their actions, there are reasons that could be given that do. In the case of the irrational person, these are reasons that, perhaps, an analyst could give.

This raises an awkward question. How, on Davidson's view, do we know, in the case of the persons whose reasons are said to be irrational, what the real causes of their behaviour are, if what they say has nothing to do with why they do what they do? In the 'normal' case, on Davidson's view, what the person says gives the cause and so the explanation of the action. But in cases where it is not clear that what a person says explains what he or she did, then Davidson posits an unconscious cause which is known to others but not (at least not before analysis) known by the irrational person. When it comes to the irrational speaker, Davidson separates that agent's reasons from the causes of that agent's actions. But the rational observer, in giving explanations of the actions of an irrational person, is able to run together again the reasons and causes of that agent's actions. That observer claims to know the reasons (causes) of the action.

What we need to unravel, given this account, is the question, What makes the analyst or other rational observers authoritative about the unconscious causes of the irrational persons actions? According to Davidson's overall thesis, rational people know that they intend to do this or that. They know the causes of their actions, and they know them in a way, according to Davidson, in which another person could not know them. But that view of first person authority leaves unexplained the way in which someone else, for example, in the Freudian case, an analyst, could know what the causes of an irrational person's behaviour were. If we think that there are causes

(reasons) and also think that we have a special first person access to them, it appears we are debarred from claiming to know the reasons (causes) motivating the actions of irrational persons more authoritatively than they know them themselves. On any account giving the first person authority, the irrational person, knows in a way that someone else could not, what motivates his actions. It is this that lies behind a comment by Hacker in a recent article about Davidson:

For the assumption that I know what I mean necessarily gives me, but not my hearer, knowledge of what belief I expressed by my utterance. . . . It is, according to Davidson, essential to the nature of interpretation that there be a presumption that speakers are not wrong about what their words mean. . . . The speaker “cannot wonder whether he generally means what he says”¹.

Further, Hacker reminds us that on Davidson’s more general views, and in Davidson’s own words:

There can be no general guarantee that a hearer is correctly interpreting a speaker: (he is always) liable to general and serious error. In this special sense, he may be always regarded as interpreting a speaker².

Given that view, it would follow that irrational people, being speakers, know what they mean and intend by what they say. It is other people who are liable to misinterpret what they mean and intend. This would seem a direct contradiction to what Davidson says in “Paradoxes of Irrationality”. There, in defence of Freud, he says that, in the irrational case, a person does not have first person authority. The irrational person thinks that something is the case which is not. Davidson writes:

In the cases of irrationality we have been discussing, there is a mental cause that is not a reason for what it causes. So in wishful thinking, a

¹ P.M.S. Hacker, “Davidson on First Person Authority” *Philosophical Quarterly*, **47**, 188 (July 1997), p.289.

²*Ibid.*, p.289.

desire causes a belief. But the judgment that a state of affairs is, or would be desirable, is not a reason to believe that it exists¹.

Davidson wants to say, then, that there are reason-giving explanations that supply the causes of irrational action. These can't be based on first-person authority because, as we have said, the things irrational people say do not explain their actions by supplying true causes. So the reasons that do explain irrational actions will have to be reasons other people give.

This is to concede that in some cases reasons can be more authoritatively known by others than by the agent. But these are the agent's reasons only if they attribute to the agent a motivation that the agent can come to acknowledge, possibly with the help of the analyst, as his or hers. Only so can they be his or her real reasons for acting. Conceding this would throw into doubt Davidson's belief that reasons are causes. A cause is not a cause only if it could be acknowledged by the agent. Causes happen independently of acknowledgment. Thus, in the end, we may have to conclude that, in the case of Freudian explanations of irrational actions, we can only postulate possible reasons that people might be willing to accept, rather than thinking that our reasons cite unconscious causes. But if we have to say this about irrational actions, won't the same be true of rational actions, namely that they will have to be regarded as possible reasons rather than as causes.

It appears that Davidson has not noticed an ambiguity in the word "reason". It is true that scientists in giving reasons cite causes, as when it is said that the reason the tides move is that the gravitational pull of the moon. However in the case of psychoanalytic reasoning, and this is the reasoning that Davidson examines in his article, a reason is a reason only if it is something the patient ought ultimately to accept

¹Davidson, op.cit, p.298.

and acknowledge as an explanation of his or her behaviour, and that kind of reason is not the kind cited by a scientist interested in blind causality.

Not only does the irrational case raise questions about one's right to claim to know better than the agent the unconscious causes of his or her actions, but it also raises the question as to whether Davidson has overplayed the notion of first person authority in the normal case. For to know the reason why we act is not to know something about a blind causality which is operative whether or not we acknowledge it.

Davidson might attempt to escape this conclusion by arguing that actions over the explanation of which third persons have authority are the exception rather than the norm. For it is only in cases of irrationality, where there is, as he puts it, some cognitive abnormality that others can question the validity of the speakers claim to know his or her own motivations. Hacker remarks:

Davidson rightly notes that we do not always accept A's word when he says that he V's that p. Despite first-person authority, doubt is possible. But he construes this as equivalent to the claim that A may be mistaken in believing that he V's that p, hence as an abnormal exception to the cognitive assumption¹.

Davidson wants a view according to which, save for some exceptional cases, in the main we know what we do and why we do it². Hence we have no need to

¹Hacker, op.cit, p.293.

²In fact, even Davidson's claims about first person authority are suspect. Without the community of others, in which context notions of correctness and incorrectness are established, we would not possess the notions of giving correct and mistaken reasons for acting. What criterion of correctness would we be using to assess what counted as a right reason if it were not something that had been established by agreement in practices. Getting it right can't be something that is privately known anymore than getting it wrong can be. For how could one even understand what it is to be right or wrong in describing one's motivations if not by being part of a community of people who had notions of right and wrong. One cannot, then, distinguish cases of irrational explanations in terms of the special authority in the case of descriptions offered by

appeal to others's beliefs to know the causes of our own actions. However, if Davidson does think that beliefs about motivation are not generally those about which people other than the agent are authoritative, how could he claim to know that what a person said was not the reason for his or her action. For how could he arrive at a knowledge of the difference between a reason that explained an action and a reason that did not explain an action, if he does not have the notion of third person authority about the motives for the actions of others.

persons other than the agent since explanations in the case of rational actions are also subject to the agreement of others.

CHAPTER THREE

THE UNCONSCIOUS

INTRODUCTION

In Chapter One I showed how Freud mistakenly thought that psychoanalytic practice could be construed using a scientific model. In my last chapter I have shown that this led him to make the further mistake of assimilating reasons to causes. In this chapter, I will show how working with such a scientific model led Freud to the further errors about the notion of an unconscious mind. I shall examine the notion of the unconscious as it is discussed in the remarks made by Wittgenstein about Freud in his Lectures and Conversations. I shall also refer to remarks made by him in the Philosophical Investigations, and in his Remarks on The Philosophy of Psychology in which he discusses “the nature of the mind”.

In the first part of this chapter I look, briefly, at what, for Freud, the unconscious is. Then I will examine how Freud, along with such defenders of Freud as Davidson, are committed, in accepting the notion of an unconscious mind, to a form of “internalism”, a form which, as I shall show, is not only empirically untenable but philosophically misleading. By internalism, here, I am referring to the view according to which the mind, and including here the “unconscious” mind, is understood as something existing “internally” as a set of mental states which are causally operative in producing external states of behaviour and which are known through psychoanalytically assisted introspection. Thus, for example, in his article “Paradoxes of Irrationality”, Davidson reveals his commitment to Freud’s internalist view of the mind, when he posits the unconscious as a way of accounting for the fact that we appear to mistake our reasons or act irrationally:

For suppose we are led to realize by a genius like Freud that if we posit certain mental states and events we can explain much behaviour that otherwise goes unexplained; but we also discover that the associated verbal behaviour does not fit the normal pattern. The agent denies he has the attitudes and feelings we would attribute to him. We can reconcile observation and theory by stipulating the existence of unconscious events and states that, aside from awareness are like conscious beliefs, desires and emotions¹.

This location of the unconscious mind “inside”² persons, is, I shall argue, misleading because, as I shall seek to show, the mind is not a thing that can be located in the way that a physical object can be located. That is to say, it does not take up space or have particular physical properties that can allow it causally to move things, in the way that, for example, the force of the wind can cause trees to move. This is not to suggest that the mind, although not extended or visible, is, as Descartes would have it, a mysterious non-material entity. That would be to make what Ryle saw in Descartes as the category mistake of thinking of the body with its material properties as having some sort of non-physical body with non-physical properties attached to it.

¹D. Davidson, “Paradoxes of Irrationality”, in R. Hopkins and J. Hopkins (eds.), Philosophical Essays on Freud (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982),p.305.

² It is clear from Freud’s writings that he had a conception of the mind as being inside persons, for as we know the real effects of the mind were not directly perceptible to consciousness and thus could not simply be located according to Freud by actions but had to be accessed by inner processes. It is clear that Freud takes unconscious states to be mental states that go on as do physical states although as I suggest by making the analogy with Descartes what those unconscious states are becomes mysterious. Thus we have a picture of the unconscious mind as being located, for the nature of being a something means having location and it would seem from the physiological language that Freud uses that he takes that location to be inside persons as arteries are inside persons. A clear instance of this can be seen in Freud’s own writings in his Lectures on Psychoanalysis, when he says: “I follow Breuer in asserting that every time we come upon a symptom we can infer that there are certain definite unconscious processes in (my emphasis) the patient which contain the sense of the symptom”. Sigmund Freud, Introductory Lectures On Psychoanalysis, p.320.

In his book, The Concept of Mind, Ryle illustrates, by various analogies, the mistake of thinking that the mind is a non-material adjunct of the body. One analogy he uses is that of a person who mistakenly thinks that besides the colleges of Oxford or Cambridge there is something else called the University. The analogous mistake, which, I shall argue, is made by Freud, is to think that there is, as well as the body, some other thing, for Freud the unconscious, which is nevertheless attached to the body and which causes it to act³.

In fact Freud, I shall argue, incorporates into his conception of the unconscious both a materialist notion of the mind, namely the notion that a mind is a physical thing taking up space, and the Cartesian view of the mind as the non-material adjunct of the body. For, on the one hand, he argues that the unconscious mind actually exists as a thing with specific internal locatable properties in the form of its preconscious, conscious and unconscious systems. On the other hand he wants to say that the operations of the unconscious mind are mysterious to us and can only be known through introspection. For Freud this introspection took a form that needed the help of psychoanalysis. For Descartes it took the form of radical self doubt. Both the central state materialists such as Smart and Armstrong⁴ and Cartesians such as Nagel⁵

³ Gilbert Ryle, The Concept of Mind (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1949). Thus Ryle writes (p 19): "Minds are things, but different sorts of things from bodies; mental processes are causes and effects, but different sorts of causes and effects from bodily movements. And so on. Somewhat as the foreigner expected the University to be an extra edifice, rather like a college but also considerably different".

⁴D.M. Armstrong, A Materialist Theory of Mind (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 73. Armstrong writes: "If the mind is thought of as 'that which has mental states', then we can say that, on this theory, the mind is simply the central nervous system, or less accurately but more epigrammatically, the mind is simply the brain".

⁵T. Nagel, The View from Nowhere (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp.29-30. Nagel there says: "The fact that mental states are not physical states because they can't be objectively described in the way physical states can doesn't mean that they must be of something different. The falsity of physicalism does not require non-physical substances. It requires only that thing be true of conscious beings cannot, because of their subjective character be reduced to physical terms. Why should the

are guilty of conceiving of the mind as a discrete thing that must be an inhabitant of a “somewhere”, that somewhere being somehow “inside” the body. I shall argue, however, that the mind is not a thing at all and hence is not identifiable or locatable as a discrete object. It will follow from this, as we shall see, that our understanding of why, for example, we act neurotically is not helped by locating inner mechanisms or inner ideas. Rather it is to be helped by looking at what we ordinarily say about what we do and at the psychological concepts that we ordinarily employ when talking about our behaviour. I shall argue, therefore, that if we look at the way in which the concept of the unconscious is employed in everyday life and, specifically, the way in which it is employed in the practice of psychoanalysis, we will see that it is not used to imply the existence of a real, empirically locatable mind, a knowledge of the workings of which reveals to us the causes of human behaviour. Rather the notion of the unconscious is a conceptual tool used to illustrate the way in which we can come to see aspects of ourselves that we had previously not contemplated. Charles Elder in his book, *The Grammar of The Unconscious* supports the view that I shall take in this chapter when he says:

I am trying to show that many of the puzzles that surround the concept of the unconscious can be dispelled by looking at it from the perspective of grammar - that is by examining its uses and its distinctive grammatical features. If I say that statements about the unconscious are grammatical, I am making a statement about how the concept is used or about at least one of its uses¹.

Finally, in this chapter, I want to show how, in regarding the mind as an internal hidden force, Freud is led into epistemological problems, most notably

possession of physical properties by the body not be compatible with its possession of mental properties- through some very close interdependence of the two”.

¹Charles Elder, *The Grammar of The Unconscious* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), p.49.

problems about self-identity and self-deception. To illustrate this contention I shall examine the claims made about the unconscious by Sartre, Davidson and Pears.

For example, Sartre's criticism of Freud in his paper, "Mauvaise foi and the unconscious¹" can be summed up in the claim that there can be no such thing as the unconscious because, for deception to be possible at all, we have to be directly aware of that about which we deceive ourselves, whereas, of course, for Freud the unconscious is understood as something of which we are not directly aware. On Sartre's view, we can attempt to conceal things from ourselves. We know, however, what it is that we conceal, since it is we who perform the act of concealment and not some other unknown motivating force. Thus, Sartre argues, knowledge of one's motivations implies a unified rather than divided mind. Hence, rather than the division of mental labour posited by Freud between the unconscious mind and conscious mind, there is, Sartre argues, only the conscious mind. Freud, on Sartre's account, cannot account for how we can know our unconscious motivations without making them conscious motivations.

Although critics of Freud's unconscious have dispensed with the notion of the mind as a mysterious and unknown set of forces, which through various techniques can be brought to light, they have still tended to maintain the notion of mind as an internal thing whose functions and processes are known by rational agents rather than unknown by irrational ones. I wish to argue, with Wittgenstein, that the notion of self-consciousness, even understood in this way, is no clearer and no more helpful than is the notion of the unconscious that it replaces. For there is, as we shall see, still in that critical account, an appeal to a notion of the mind as an inner object, a notion which is unhelpful to us in our search for an understanding of psychological cases.

¹ Jean-Paul Sartre, "Mauvaise foi and the unconscious" in R. Wollheim and J. Hopkins (eds.), Philosophical Essays on Freud (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp.203-211.

What Freudians and critics of Freud see as empirically real states of the mind, whether they be conscious or unconscious, are unhelpful to any attempt to understand, for example, why people deceive themselves. Deception, I shall argue in the final part of this chapter, is neither a conscious nor unconscious mental state.

I begin, then, with some remarks on the notion of the unconscious as it appears in Freud's work.

I

Freud's Notion of the Unconscious

It must be made clear at the outset that Freud's notion of the unconscious varies from work to work. Here I shall be concerned with his later, dynamic view of the unconscious. On that account the unconscious is not, as in his earlier view, understood by Freud to be a second consciousness, or a mechanism of awareness akin to some kind of neural process, whereby energy is stored and then released. (As we shall see it is not clear that Freud does actually dispense with his earlier understandings of the unconscious, for many similar analogies reappear in his statements of his later views, analogies that I shall later argue cannot be avoided if one accepts an internalist conception of mind).

In the later view, the unconscious is that which is the cause of all mental processes, the implied conclusion being that all mentality is essentially unconscious. He wrote that "in psychoanalysis there is no choice for us but to declare mental processes to be in themselves unconscious¹".

The unconscious is not, on this later view, a mere adjunct to the already existing mechanisms of the mind. It is what the mind is. However, this does not, on Freud's account, have to imply that there are no such things as conscious ideas.

¹S. Freud, "The Unconscious" in *Collected Papers*(London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psychoanalysis,1915), p.104.

Rather, it implies that conscious ideas are themselves governed by unconscious ones. This does not seem helpful in explaining how becoming conscious of unconscious thoughts can cure neurotic behaviour. For how could I ever become sufficiently conscious, if all my ideas are essentially unconscious in their motivation. The ideas that supposedly became conscious would simply be unconsciously motivated. Thus how would one ever arrive at a knowledge of what one's unconscious motivations were, if that knowing would in turn be unconsciously motivated. It looks as if there is an infinite regress here. Further, if the mind is essentially unconscious, then the analyst's motivations for selecting particular unconscious ideas as the cause of the patient's behaviour would also be unconscious. The conclusion, then, would be that all knowledge is unconscious, which seems to be a contradiction because knowledge, by definition, is that which is known. It may look as if Freud, in the end, would have to concede to Sartre that there are two minds at work in his account, an unconscious mind that is not known and a conscious mind that is. Alternatively he might have to abandon the hope, given his view that the mind is unconscious, of ever bringing unconscious ideas to consciousness.

I shall return to these matters. For the moment, to continue the exposition, there are three systems in Freud's conception of mind, the preconscious, the conscious and the unconscious, all, as we have said, governed by the operations of the unconscious, which are primarily motivated by the Pleasure Principle.

We are born, Freud argues, with primitive urges which form the basis of what Freud refers to as "the Id". At this pre-conscious stage of our existence, our primary aim in life is to seek gratification. However, it is in seeking gratification from an object other than ourselves, namely the mother's breast, that we begin to become conscious of ourselves and the world around us and, hence, to develop an ego which is capable of gauging reality and adapting accordingly to it. In adapting to the world around it, the ego gradually turns into a super-ego, a stage at which one internalizes one's

parents' censorship concerning certain primitive and immature drives. The super-ego thus becomes the mechanism of control, a censor preventing forbidden ideas from becoming conscious.

The mind for Freud is at once both the seat of desire and the mechanism for repression of desire. At one level such a repression could be seen as a necessity. Take, for example, the activity of getting food in a survival situation. If one simply desired food, it is not clear how one would know how to get hold of it. To survive, then, it seems, one would have to overcome the primary desire for food and think about actual ways of getting it. Although we can see how the external world can demand, for practical reasons, the repression of our desires, Freud noted at another level how more extreme forms of repression could lead to neurotic illnesses. Thus unconscious desires, although appearing to conform to the reality, principle were actually being transferred into conscious forms of neurotic behaviour.

Freud first observed the phenomenon of transference in Viennese women, suffering, as he saw it, from hysteria, which he then came to posit as a conscious expression of their having been sexually abused in childhood. (Later, of course, it was alleged that some patients had, with the help of Freud, fantasized or imagined that they had been abused)¹.

Although Freud argues that repression is not all the unconscious is, the unconscious is typically associated with repression because it is central to the practice of psychoanalysis. In that practice, patients are said to be cured of their neurotic symptoms through the bringing to light and acknowledgement by the patient of

¹ Richard Webster, *Why Freud was Wrong* (London: Harper Collins, 1995), p.329 comments: "As in much psychoanalytic writing, the observer's own distinctively adult fantasies and anxieties have been attributed to the children who are being analysed. Dreams of destruction, of sadistic cruelty or of 'perverted' sexual behaviour, which adults find difficult to acknowledge as their own, can in this way be imaginatively disowned but still indulged and expressed under the guise of an 'analysis' of childrens' 'inner mental life'".

unconscious ideas, ideas which have hitherto been repressed because they have been too painful or unacceptable to be consciously entertained.

Freud gives various examples of the way in which unconscious thoughts get transferred and unconscious activities find their substitutes in conscious behaviour. One memorable example Freud gives occurs in his 1915 essay, "The Unconscious". There he describes a schizophrenic patient who continually squeezes his blackheads. This persistent activity, Freud argues, masks a fear of being castrated which emerges from the desire for masturbation. The act of squeezing the blackheads is substituted for the forbidden desire to masturbate. The schizophrenic has transformed his desire to masturbate, which is regarded as unacceptable, into the 'somewhat' more acceptable activity of squeezing blackheads, which, Freud argues, does have some resemblance to the activity of masturbation. The schizophrenic's remorsefulness in having ruined his skin by squeezing is a transference of the unconscious fear of castration because the hole he leaves in his skin after squeezing supposedly resembles the vagina, which reminds him of his guilty act and, hence, of the fact that he may be castrated for his wrong-doing. Thus the schizophrenic's squeezing of blackheads has been unconsciously motivated both by a desire to masturbate and by a fear that so doing will lead to castration. Freud writes:

Analysis shows that he is working out his castration complex upon his skin. . . . Pressing out the content of the blackheads is clearly to him a substitute for onanism. The cavity which then appears in consequence of his guilty act is the female genital, *i.e.*, stands for the fulfilment of the threat of castration¹.

The real motivations of his actions are, of course, unknown to the schizophrenic. He simply knows that he feels guilty after the squeezing. Thus all the schizophrenic knows is that he feels anxiety. What he does not know is that his anxiety is about something other than the mere squeezing of his blackheads. However,

¹S. Freud, Collected Papers, p.132.

the schizophrenic unconsciously knows what he desires, and hence substitutes that desire for something that resembles it. Thus what the analyst has to do is to get the patient to recognize what is being substituted for what. In other words the analyst has to make the unconscious, conscious. How does this process work?

During analysis, for example, our schizophrenic patient will be told that he squeezes his blackheads because he is repressing his fear of castration. At first he will reject the idea. However, what is important is that he now has the idea of the fear of castration in two mental localities at the same time, in the conscious, that is, in what we have just told him, and in his unconscious. The task is then to unite the conscious idea with the unconscious memory trace and this can only be done once resistance to the repressed idea has been overcome. The memory traces will come from the original repression of a conscious idea. However, until the person recognises that his conscious fear has been projected onto objects other than the real objects of his fears, there is really no hope of a cure. For example, in the case of the animal phobia, the patient has to recognise that the experience of fear on meeting animals is a projection of fear about something else. Until the real motivation for fear is acknowledged, the patient will continue to experience anxiety on meeting animals.

One of the techniques that Freud thought useful in making unconscious ideas known is free association, whereby an analyst uses words to prompt the patient to recall unconscious thoughts. Freud believed unconscious thoughts, in so far as they were transferred into various forms of behaviour, were non-verbal and, so, not directly detectable. Thus he conjectured that if he could present a word to the patient that corresponded to the image possessed by the patient of the repressed object, then the repressed thought could become conscious. In "The Unconscious" Freud writes:

The solution suggests itself that the cathexis of the verbal idea is not part of the act of repression, but represents the first of the attempts at

recovery or cure which so conspicuously dominate the clinical picture of schizophrenia¹.

Freud argues that in schizophrenia, where the word-relation dominates the thing-relation. The patient is closer to cure than to repression and illness. Schizophrenics tend to make use of striking verbal analogies to describe feelings. For example, Freud tells us of the man who thought that knitted stitches, that is to say holes, in stockings, were female genitals. Here the man himself makes the connection between the word and the thing repressed, hence bringing his own unconscious thoughts nearer to consciousness. Freud says of such a case that the man “was able to tell the meaning of his inhibitions without any resistance²”.

Language is, then, crucial for Freud in making unconscious thoughts, conscious. Words somehow denote unconscious objects, thus rendering them meaningful and, hence, bringing them to consciousness.

I shall now turn to what is conceptually misleading about Freud’s way of talking about the unconscious before going on to show how, when alternatively conceptualised, such a concept can indeed be useful in psychoanalytic practice.

II

Freud’s Notion of the Mind

1. The Wrongheadedness of Internalism

At the beginning of the previous section, I expressed reservations about whether Freud, in the end, does actually manage to dispense with his earlier view of the unconscious, namely, the view that unconscious processes are neural physiological processes. I wish now to argue that, when explicating his theoretical notion of the

¹ S. Freud, Collected Papers, p.136.

² Ibid., p.132.

unconscious, he does not manage to disentangle himself from the language and grammar appropriate to physiological characterisations of the mind. This leads him into intractable epistemological problems. It leads him, inappropriately, to mischaracterise non-physiological things, such as beliefs and desires, in physiological terms. This mischaracterisation arises, I shall argue, because of the belief that meaning, knowledge and perception are something internal, and hence are processes and states akin to those that genuinely do take place inside one's body. Thus thoughts, to take one example, are taken to be processes, and thus to be understood to function in much the same way as physical processes such as, for example, the circulation of blood in the arteries. And I suppose one might be led into this way of talking by the thought that, given the notion of the unconscious, we are unaware of the ideas that go on inside us in much the same way that we are unaware of our arteries pumping blood around our bodies.

In a recent article, "Is Knowing a state of Mind", Timothy Williamson, has characterized the internalist's project in a similar vein to mine. He says of internalists that they, "hold that one's mental states are determined by one's internal physical states; thought is located in the head¹".

Williamson goes on to examine whether it is an implication of such a view that knowledge cannot be a mental state. For it seems plausible (though not to Williamson) to argue that a mental state can be known simply by introspection, so that if knowledge is an internal mental state, then one could know simply by introspection that one knows that it is raining, and since what one knows must be true, one could know simply by introspection that it is raining. He denies, however, the conclusion that knowledge cannot be a mental state, simply because he denies that all mental states must be thought of as the internalist thinks of them.

¹T. Williamson, "Is Knowing a State of Mind" *Mind*, **104** (1995), p.543.

Whatever the truth of Williamson's case against internalist accounts of mental states, I wish to go further. For I shall argue that it is misleading to think of such things as knowledge and belief (and, more generally, of minds) as either internal or external or any combination of these. Later I shall show that one can dismiss internalism not by appealing to externalism but by showing how the terms "inner" and "outer", which are implicit in these formulations, simply confuse the issues at stake.

In the essay on the unconscious to which I have referred, Freud argues that the mental processes with which he is concerned cannot be understood as physiological processes. He asserts that "every endeavour to think of ideas as stored up in nerve cells and of excitations as passing along nerve- fibres has completely miscarried¹".

Further he denies that the conscious and unconscious can be located anatomically:

The same fate would await any doctrine which attempted to recognize, let us say, the anatomical position of the system Cs- conscious mental activity - in the cortex and to localize the unconscious processes in the subcortical parts of the brain².

One might, at first glance, think that this is evidence to show that Freud is not using, indeed explicitly rejects, a language appropriate to physiology to explicate his theory of the unconscious. However, a closer reading of his work reveals that, although Freud does not want to be specific about the anatomical locations of the unconscious, that is to say, he does not want it to be located in a certain region of the brain, he still locates the unconscious mind inside the body and regards it as operating much in the same way as one would regard the operations of a physical state.

In his writings on the unconscious Freud talks of it in terms of processes, mechanisms, functions, resistances, discharges, regularities and excitations. We get a

¹S. Freud, Collected Papers, p.107.

²Ibid., p.107.

picture of the unconscious as a system that stores, discharges and withdraws thoughts or ideas in the same way that the body stores, discharges and withdraws energy. In “The Unconscious”, Freud talks of the way in which ideas initially stored in the unconscious demand to be “released” or “discharged”. However, due to the unacceptable nature of their content, which is libidinal, the ideas are withdrawn and discharged in a way other than their original form, in this case, in the form of anxiety behaviour. The language used here simply posits internal mechanisms:

We must suppose that there was present in the Ucs some love-impulse which demanded to be translated into the system Pcs: the preconscious cathexis, however recoiled from it in the manner of an attempt at flight and the unconscious libidinal cathexis of the rejected idea was discharged in the form of an anxiety¹.

I don't want to argue here that Freud is really a neurophysiologist who won't directly admit it, or, in other words, that he does actually believe that there is an identity between physiological states and the states of the unconscious. That is a view subscribed to by, for example, Nagel in his article “Freud's Anthropomorphism”. He says that:

Freud continued to be convinced that the psychic apparatus which he was investigating and describing in mentalistic terms was in its true nature a physical system - though little was known about neurophysiology to permit anyone to think about psychology in physical terms².

I wish, rather, to claim that Freud believed he was breaking new ground in psychiatry in showing how neurotic illnesses were caused by psychological ideas rather than by physiological states. Unfortunately he characterized such psychological ideas in the grammar of physiology which was inappropriate for describing the phenomena in which he was interested. He had misunderstood the way in which

¹Ibid, p.114.

² Thomas Nagel, “Freud's Anthropomorphism”, in R. Wollheim and J. Hopkins, op. cit., p. 228.

psychological concepts, such as the unconscious, operated in the language both of psychoanalytic and non-psychoanalytic contexts. In so doing, he set himself insuperable epistemological problems. He attempted to treat psychological concepts as like those of the physical sciences, for which certain sorts of evidence are needed. However, in failing to realize that psychological concepts are not understood or articulated on the basis of either internal or external evidence, he was not able to provide the kind of evidence that he thought he had provided. Freud had, then, misunderstood the nature of his inquiry. This is what led Wittgenstein to write:

Misleading parallel: psychology treats of processes in the psychical sphere, as does physics in the physical. Seeing, hearing, thinking, feeling, willing, are not the subject of psychology in the same sense as that in which the movements of bodies, the phenomena of electricity etc., are the subject of physics. You can see this from the fact that the physicist sees, hears, thinks about and informs us of these phenomena, and the psychologist observes the external reactions (the behaviour) of the subject¹.

2. The Grammar of Freud's Unconscious: the unconscious as a mental state

Freud treats the unconscious, as we have said, as if it operated like a mechanical process or state. Oddly, however, he assigns to this mechanical process, qualities that one would normally assign to human agents and not to states. To think of states in this way is to commit what Kenny calls "the homonculus fallacy", which involves assigning to states and processes qualities of, for example, intentionality, forethought and knowledge, which ordinarily we assign to ourselves, and not to states or processes. Kenny writes in The Legacy of Wittgenstein:

I shall call the reckless application of human-being predicates to insufficiently human-like objects the "homonculus fallacy", since its

¹L. Wittgenstein, The Philosophical Investigations, section 571.

most naïve form is tantamount to the postulation of a little man within a man to explain human experience and behaviour¹.

We don't ordinarily commit this fallacy, unless perhaps intentionally, when writing a science fiction novel, say. However, in the case of such fictions we don't literally mean that non-human things have psychological qualities. Rather we are using figures of speech to illustrate a point. For example, if I say she felt torn just like a fractured ligament, I don't mean that she, the person in question, is literally in bits on the floor, anymore than when I say of a boring man that he was as dead as a door nail, I mean he was actually dead. Freud is however guilty of making figures of speech into empirical claims by attempting to speak of the referents of psychological concepts as if they were real objects, and, moreover, quasi-human ones.

For example, Freud believes that unconscious repression, rather than being a psychological concept that one employs to characterise a person who cannot act on what he or she feels, refers to a real state that somehow goes on inside us. This much is clear when he says in his Introductory Lectures that:

We can challenge anyone in the world to give a more scientific account of this state of affairs, and if he does we will gladly renounce our hypothesis of unconscious mental processes. Till that happens, however, we will hold fast to the hypothesis; and if someone objects that here the unconscious is nothing real in a scientific sense, is a makeshift, une façon de parler, we can only shrug our shoulders resignedly and dismiss what he says as unintelligible: something real, which nevertheless produces effects of such tangible reality as an obsessional action².

Freud assumes that repressions, desires and wishes are unconscious mental states that function, as we have said, in a similar way to states inside the body, like fevers, that cause external states of behaviour. However, as Wittgenstein points out, there is a distinction to be made here between the language used to describe states such

¹Anthony Kenny, The Legacy of Wittgenstein (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), p.57.

²S. Freud, The Introductory Lectures, p.318.

as pains, and the language used to describe psychological concepts such as intention, knowledge, belief. Wittgenstein makes this point in his Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology:

If I now say that the experience of remembering and the experience of pain are different in kind, that is misleading: for 'experiences of different kinds' makes one think perhaps of a difference like that between a pain, a tickle, and a feeling of familiarity. Whereas the difference of which we are speaking is comparable, rather, to that between the numbers 1 and $\sqrt{-1}$.

Wittgenstein wants us to be quite clear that there is not simply a difference in the kind of felt experience between psychological phenomena, such as wishing, hoping, believing, desiring, and states of pain, in the way that there is a difference between a pain and a tickle. There is an absolute difference. Thus, one can be in a state of pain but one can't, whatever Freud would have us believe, be, in the same sense of "state", in an unconscious state of intention or knowledge, for states like pain have duration and, typically, location whereas intentions do not. My headache may last a couple of hours, but can I say that my intention to catch a train lasted a couple of hours? There is no way of testing the duration of one's intentions. How would one be able to distinguish between intentions in the way that one can distinguish the difference in duration between the pain of a knock on the funny bone and the pain of a hangover? A knock on the funny bone is usually momentary. A hangover usually lasts a couple of hours. But what could distinguish the difference in duration between my intention to catch a train and my intention to go to the library. Such intentions cannot be distinguished by their duration or location, but are distinguished by differences in the characterisations we give of them and of their place within the unfolding patterns of our actions.

¹L. Wittgenstein, Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology, G.E Anscombe and G.H.Von Wright (eds.) (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), para 108.

To understand what it means to intend something we need to have already acquired certain psychological concepts. But one does not have to acquire psychological concepts of this sort to have the experience of knocking one's funny bone or having blue dots before the eyes. One may, of course, need to possess other non-psychological concepts, if one wants to talk about the objects of our experiences of knocks on one's funny bones and dots before one's eyes. However, unlike the case of intending, in which the possession of psychological concepts is a necessary condition for avowals and ascriptions of intention, in the case of states or sensations one need not have such concepts in order to have or express such experiences.

Of course if I were an optician seeking to explain ocular phenomena I certainly would need a certain range of concepts, but I need not know why I get blue dots to experience having them. That's why I go to the optician. He has acquired concepts that enable him to tell me what's wrong.

Intending to go to the library, then, is not like a state, in the sense that it simply happens to me, as suddenly seeing blue dots is something that might simply happen to me. It is, rather, bound up with already acquired concepts, beliefs and ways of understanding such things as our work, libraries, our commitments and so on.

That psychological concepts, such as unconscious wishings and intendings, are not states does not have to entail, as many anti-Wittgensteinians have supposed, that one does not experience states or sensations at all. The assumption is that if one says that, for example, sadness can't be described as a physical state, then one is thereby committed to saying that one does not experience physical sensations when sad. However, it can be seen that one certainly does experience physical sensations when sad, for example, feelings in the stomach region, the prickling of tears on the cheek, and the feeling of tension in the muscles of the face and throat. These can all be described and tested for physiologically, for we can observe or experience the wetness of tears or the contracting of muscles. But we don't say that tears themselves are

actually sad but rather that I am. Thus, ordinarily, we do not describe sadness as a sensation, as we might describe the feeling of tension in the throat. Rather we describe sadness in terms of the relation of what is now happening to the context in which it occurs, where that includes the background of a person's life. Hence when asked the question, Why is he sad? we would not tend to give a physiological account of what crying is. If we did, we might be thought a trifle unsympathetic. No, when asked this question, we say he is sad, for example, because his best friend died, or his labrador is sick, or whatever the circumstances of his life might be.

The upshot of all this is that it is odd to think of, for example, sadness, as Freud would have it, as a state or process. Understanding why a person is sad is not like understanding how for example the tear-ducts work. Sadness does not have a specific location and duration in the way that a state of the body typically does.

Wittgenstein expressed the point thus:

If I direct my attention to my bodily feelings, I notice a very slight headache, a slight discomfort in the region of the stomach, perhaps a certain tiredness. But do I mean that, when I say I am severely depressed?¹.

Now, if we look at the way in which in fact we employ concepts such as the unconscious, we find that their use is not in defining unknown yet empirically real states or objects. If the ordinary language were used in this way, its customary grammar seems ill-adjusted to the task. We don't ordinarily use the noun phrase, "the unconscious". Rather we use the adjective "unconscious" or the adverb "unconsciously", where there is no implication of reference to a thing or state. We don't, for example, say of a man that his unconscious desires a Pina Colada, thereby ascribing a wish to a thing. We say that he unconsciously desires a Pina Colada. This

¹Ibid., para 133.

latter usage entails no substantive reference. It is merely a way of characterising his behaviour. Thus, to understand what is being said, about his desire for Pina Colada, for example, one does not need evidence of an existent object or state that has Pina-Colada-desiring properties of which the person actually desiring the Pina Colada is unaware. The unconscious is not a real entity but a psychological term that can be usefully employed in various contexts. In Consciousness and the Unconscious, Archard makes this point when he says of Freudians that:

They obviously believe that it is necessary to introduce, quite gratuitously, a dubious entity called 'the unconscious', when all that is required is the adjectival and adverbial use of 'unconscious' to qualify the mental element used in explanations of behaviour in the common meaning of the term. The coherent use of the adjective 'unconscious' does not necessitate the introduction of the noun, which in itself raises serious and perhaps insoluble philosophical problems¹.

Positing the unconscious as a real object causes epistemological problems for Freud. For he wants to say that we can know the properties of something that is not and could not be visible or directly perceptible to us. Thus we are in search of something that appears to have none of the hallmarks of being a real thing. Usually real objects, such as dogs, tables, books do fulfil certain criteria. They tend to be things that we can see, things that take up space, things that can be capable of doing things or having things done to them. In this vein T. R. Miles, in his essay, "The Unconscious", makes an unofficial list of what he thinks are relevant criteria for being a real object:

(a) whether the alleged entity can act and be acted upon, (b) whether the alleged entity lasts through a period of time, (c) whether the alleged entity has spatial boundaries, (d) whether the alleged entity is visible and tangible and (e) whether for any reason it is valuable or important to treat the alleged entity as a unity².

¹David Archard, Consciousness and the Unconscious (La Salle, Ill: Open Court Publishing, 1984), pp.125-26.

² in B. Farrell (ed.), Philosophy and Psychoanalysis (New York: Macmillan, 1994), p. 19.

Freud might attempt to get round the imperceptibility of the unconscious by arguing that one of its functions is to prevent us from having knowledge of it. If he does want to argue this he will have problems explaining how the unconscious can be known at all, and thus how it can be known to have the properties he claims for it. For if one of its functions is to prevent us from knowing about it, then it seems self-evident that we would not know about it, and hence could not make the claims about it that Freud does. In the Blue Book Wittgenstein illustrates Freud's problem by getting us to imagine a language in which noun phrases were inappropriately used to posit real objects for which no substantiation can be given:

Imagine a language in which, instead of "I found nobody in the room", one said "I found Mr Nobody in the room". Imagine the philosophical problems that would arise out of such a convention¹.

The irony here is great, for it illustrates the wrongheadedness of thinking that nothing is a something that could be found. Similarly we can see the wrongheadedness of thinking that the unconscious is a something that can be found, namely a something that exists. For Freud's unconscious is also a sort of nobody that has been given the status of a somebody.

This postulation of a "something", or somebody other than me, that has to explain my action, is a result of acting on what Bouveresse calls the 'principle of mythologization'. He is referring to the way in which people, when they cannot assign the causes of actions to conscious agents, posit non-conscious agents to explain them. These posited, non-conscious agents nevertheless know the actions they motivate, although the persons whose actions they motivate do not. As we saw in the previous chapter, an example here of such a mythologiser is Davidson who, when he can't see how the conscious propositional attitudes that irrational persons hold can explain their

¹L. Wittgenstein, The Blue and Brown Books, p.69.

behaviour, posits unconscious agency to explain it, where that agency, as we have said above knows what its doing although we don't. Bouveresse writes:

The principle of mythologization lies in our need to find someone or something responsible for everything that happens: so when an action is performed 'unconsciously' and therefore cannot be attributed to the conscious subject, we are tempted to look for another author, which it is difficult not to conceive as a conscious agent, perfectly aware of what its doing, though the person concerned is not¹.

Interestingly, as Bouveresse hints, this other 'unconscious' author turns out to be none other than the self-same consciousness that posited the unconscious fiction, because it is impossible for something not conscious to have knowledge of what it is or does.

It might be thought that the unconscious is not being given a fair trial here because what is not being taken into consideration is its agent-like character. However, what would that agent-like character be? Would it be a homonculus? If so, see my discussion in this section on the problems of positing the unconscious as a human inside a human. If not, what would it be?²

III

EPISTEMOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

SELF-DECEPTION

1. Sartre

This brings me to the epistemological problems of self-deception and self-identity implicit in Freud's talk of the unconscious. I begin with Sartre and the point Sartre

¹Bouveresse, *op. cit.*, p.34.

²Freud himself in his essay on The Unconscious, talks of the unconscious as another person inside our person which is responsible for actions that we cannot assign to ourselves. He says; 'If we do this we must say that all the acts and manifestations which I notice in myself and do not know how to link up with the rest of my mental life must be judged as if they belonged to someone else and are to be explained by the mental life ascribed to that person.' Sigmund Freud, The Unconscious, p102.

makes in his essay "Mauvais foi and the unconscious". There he argues that there cannot be some other thing besides my conscious self that prevents me from knowing things about myself. He argues that self deception is not possible because, he claims, we know what it is we are trying to deceive ourselves about.

The essence of the lie implies in fact that the liar actually is in complete possession of the truth which he is hiding. A man does not lie about what he is ignorant of; he does not lie when he spreads an error of which he himself is the dupe; he does not lie when he is mistaken¹.

Sartre argues that Freud's notion of deception implies a divided mind, divided, that is, between the id in which my true wishes and desires reside, and the super-ego which prevents me from knowing about such wishes, wishes which nevertheless cause me to act. However, Sartre wants to argue that there can be no such division in the mind between desires that motivate my action and conscious thoughts that are unaware of such desires. For Sartre there is only the conscious ego who is the subject of her or his own actions.

By the distinction between the 'id' and the 'ego', Freud has cut the psychic whole into two. I am the ego but I am not the id. I hold no privileged position in relation to my unconscious psyche. I am my own psychic phenomena in so far as I establish them in their conscious reality. For example, I am the impulse to steal the book from this bookstall. I am an integral part of the impulse; I bring it to light and I determine myself with it to commit the theft².

Is Sartre trying to dodge the problem of self-deception here by simply saying one has awareness of the motivation of all one's actions, which might not look so much an explanation of self deception as a denial of its possibility, because self deception is precisely that of which we are unaware? There is some truth in this. For I think he believes that for the most part we do exist in a form of self-deception but one in which we knowingly participate. We try to deceive ourselves that we are caused to

¹J-P. Sartre, in Wollheim and Hopkins, *op. cit.*, p.204.

²*Ibid.*, p.207.

be the way we are or caused to do the things we do rather than taking responsibility for who we are and what we do. Hence we do attempt to evade painful or unacceptable feelings. But such an evasion is, for Sartre, a conscious evasion rather than an unconscious one, and an evasion that is, Sartre argues, doomed to failure precisely because one is aware of the very thing from which one is trying to hide. Hence one can't hide from it.

2. Davidson

In using Freud's unconscious to explain irrational behaviour Davidson is also guilty of positing a divided mind, for, as we said in the previous chapter, he thinks of irrational people as divided into, on the one hand, a set of conscious irrational propositional attitudes, namely, what they say about themselves: and, on the other, the unconscious reason-causes which actually explain their irrationality. This, Davidson thinks, gets around the problem of how irrational persons can hold contradictory beliefs at the same time. For the irrational person, on his account, is divided into what he or she consciously and falsely believes to be the case, and what really, although unconsciously motivates his or her false belief or self-deception. Thus the mind is divided into that part which is deceived and that part doing the deceiving. In his article 'Deception and Division', Davidson repeats the point he made in his 'Paradoxes of Irrationality' when he says:

The point is that people can and do sometimes keep closely related but opposed beliefs apart. To this extent we must accept the idea that there can be boundaries between parts of the mind; I postulate a boundary somewhere between any (obviously) conflicting beliefs¹.

Interestingly Davidson goes on to claim that these boundaries are not, as he says, discovered by introspection. They are "conceptual aids to the coherent

¹D. Davidson, "Deception and Division", in Jon Elster (ed.), The Multiple Self (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p.92.

description of genuine irrationalities¹”. In other words such divisions within the mind are postulated to enable one to explain self-deception, namely, to enable one to explain why contradictory beliefs can be held at the same time. They are, then, to be regarded as logical or conceptual divisions, and not as divisions that can be known by an empirical examination of mental states. This is a curious admission, one that I welcome, but one that seems at odds with Davidson’s notion of real mental causation both at the conscious and unconscious levels. For if, Davidson is now doubting that there can be such states, that would seem to be at odds with his defence of Freud, where he argues that one can discover reason/ causes by examining the patient’s conscious and unconscious mental states.

3. Pears

It seems that Pears also appeals to the conceptual aid of the divided mind when explicating how sub-systems of the mind explain self-deception. Sebastian Gardner, in his book, Irrationality and The Philosophy of Psychoanalysis neatly characterises Pears’ belief that his sub-systems are not empirical entities but rather stage props:

Pears, thinks, that the language of mental partition is so far only metaphorical; ‘the separateness of the two systems is really only another piece of theatre’, ‘it is just a technical way of restating the facts to be explained’².

I think, however, the question still remains as to whether Pears manages to avoid the internalist pitfalls of positing beliefs as being held at different places in the mind. Although one might be inclined to regard him as giving an account of the logical possibility of self-deception, which might seem to free him from substantive questions, it may turn out that he, in the end, faces the same problems as are faced by

¹Ibid., p.92.

²S. Gardner, Irrationality and The Philosophy of Psychoanalysis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p.66.

any literalist divisionist picture of the mind, namely, first, the problem of giving beliefs internal locations and, second, the problem of accounting for personal identity.

Pears, unlike Sartre, thinks that our ordinary rational beliefs, are conceptually separate from our irrational beliefs, thus making it possible for me to hold both that p and that not-p at the same time. Thus I can believe that it is rational to smoke because I enjoy smoking, and at the same time believe that smoking is bad for the health. Unlike Freud and Davidson, Pears does not then make the distinction in the mind between unconscious beliefs and conscious beliefs. Rather Pears makes the distinction between what he calls the main system, where rational beliefs are held, and sub systems, where irrational beliefs are held. On Pears's model, one is aware in the main system of the mind of rational beliefs, and it is such awareness that enables one create irrational sub-systems of belief. Thus one knows that it is unhealthy to smoke, but desires to smoke and so holds the irrational belief that smoking is good because one desires it. Thus there is a kind of policy of non-interference between rational and irrational beliefs, enabling self-deception to be possible. Gardner says of Pears' functional theory that:

unlike the Freudian theory, which uses consciousness as an independent criterion for drawing the line between main and sub-system, the functional theory only makes reference to facts of interaction and non-interaction¹.

In his essay "The Goals and Strategies of Self-Deception", Pears argues that

beliefs are logically self contained or, as he puts it, "functionally insulated". This means that I can hold both the belief that-p and the belief that not-p at the same time, but at different mental locations. For each location has different criteria for what counts as an ascription of belief. The criterion of the main system of the mind is that of veridicality, and hence it is where our normally held rational beliefs, such as the belief that smoking is bad for the health, are held. Anything that does not subscribe to the main system's rationality exists in a sub-system. Pears makes this point when he says:

¹Ibid., p.66.

When the relation between certain elements in a single, unified system would be too irrational to be credible, we mark off a subsystem, which rids the main system of the troublesome elements and combines them in a way that is internally rational¹.

In his book, Questions in the Philosophy of Mind, Pears argues that such screening of the deception of our irrational beliefs is actually necessary for survival, for it would not be practical to have all one's normally held beliefs eroded, even if false:

Naturally no creature's mind could contain a mechanism which eliminated too many of its well-founded factual beliefs. But such a mechanism has a certain survival value for social creatures when its operation is confined to beliefs about themselves and about each other².

The sub-systems, unlike the main system, are motivated by wishes and desires which override inductive reasoning and make self-deception possible. Thus I can convince myself that smoking is actually good for me because I desire to smoke. Here one can see where weakness of will or akrasia arguments are used to explain self-deception. For although people comprehend what accords with reason they cannot act on it, for their wills are too weak. Deception is not possible in the main system where, for example, smoking and health are not compatible concepts. The sub-systems, in maintaining their irrational beliefs, manipulate the information about the external world that is contained in the main system by interpreting the evidence to make it fit what they wish to be the case. For example, on knowing that a telegram contained bad news, a person desires the best outcome and thus forms the sub-systemic belief that the telegram contained good news. Thus unlike the Freudian system, in which one is unaware that what one believes is irrational, in the Pearsian system one knows what is rational, namely, in this case, that the telegram contained bad news, but one wants to

¹D. Pears, 'The Goals and Strategies of Self-Deception', in Elster op. cit., p. 72.

²D. Pears, Questions in The Philosophy of Mind (London: Duckworth, 1975), p.96.

maintain the irrational belief that the telegram contained good news. Thus one desires the best possible outcome despite one's knowing evidence to the contrary. As the sub-systems are rational centres of agency they can provide themselves with internal justifications that maintain their beliefs. In other words they will find justifications for their irrationality, even though they know a belief to be false. Pears illustrates this by showing the way in which students in an experiment who were asked to lie for a financial reward, were more likely to justify their lying than students who were simply asked to lie without such a reward. Therefore self-deception is more likely to be motivated irrationality, in other words to be the rational holding of irrational beliefs, than to be the holding of irrational beliefs for no reason. One is more likely to deceive oneself that it is right to lie when one can give reasons that justify one's lying. So, for example, one could say it is right to lie because one is being paid to lie, and perhaps this money could be given to one's sick grandmother. However, when one holds an irrational belief for no reason one is not deceiving oneself. This is what one believes to be true. But, there is a problem here, for in the latter case the person may hold a false belief but not know it, and therefore be unknowingly deceiving themselves. In this case, Pears admits, that his functional theory cannot account for, although he thinks Freudian theory can. For the Freudian, such as Davidson, can account for those cases in which a person takes something to be the case which is false because motivated by desires and wishes of which he or she not aware of, desires and wishes which themselves explain what is the case. In his book, Motivated Irrationality, Pears says that "the result is that the functional theory really does not have any explanatory power when it is applied to cases of irrationality produced by the perversions of reason¹".

¹D. Pears, Motivated Irrationality (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p.87.

The main system on Pears's account rejects irrational beliefs but does not itself correct them. It can only, as it were, say what is true or false. It can't act on the desires of a person. If the main system did have this function, it is thought, we could not go on holding irrational beliefs, as we do, alongside rational ones. Gardner writes;

The fault that Pears wishes to isolate and treat with the theory of sub-systems is more finely specified than Davidson's target: it is not so much the fact that a mental state deviates from its ideal rational course, as that nothing is done to correct its aberration¹.

Irrational beliefs for Pears are motivated not by unconscious wishes, as Freud and Davidson would have it, but are themselves conscious (or preconscious) wishes that rebel against the main body of rationally held beliefs and as such take up conceptual residence elsewhere, a residence where they can rationally maintain their irrationality. Of that residence Pears writes: "although it is a separate centre of agency within the whole person, it is, from its own point of view, entirely rational²".

Pears thinks that Freud, in regarding irrational beliefs as unconscious, could not account for the rationality of their operations nor for how such operations came into being, if not rationally. Pears puts the point thus;

The second defect in the theory that O contains what is conscious and S what is not conscious is that it neither explains the genesis of S nor the rationality of its operations³.

To explain why the irrational sub-systems are rational, Pears has to allow some overlap between the sub-systems and the main system. There then has to be a

¹S. Gardner, *op.cit.*, p.64.

²In Wollheim and Hopkins, *op.cit.*, p.87.

³*Ibid.*, p.71. (O is the main system and S the sub-systems)

rational structure to these sub-systems that enables them to hold irrational beliefs at all. Thus sub-systems contain the rational premises of the main system, for, as Pears says, they need a reason for their irrational beliefs. Thus to understand what it is not to rain, I have to understand what it is to rain. I can't hold one belief without understanding the other. This is not to suggest that I believe the two together, but rather according to Pears that I believe both but separately. Thus if I want to say something contrary to reason, I must understand that reason which I want to oppose. Thus to deceive myself that I am not upset, I must know what it is to be upset.

We must include O's premises, because S needs a reason for undertaking the task of producing the belief that p in O, and though the belief that O has the premises would be sufficient, it is hard to see why S should acquire this belief without the premises themselves. The performance of the task will then require further beliefs in S¹.

Pears' point about having to have the premises to acquire the irrational belief does seem rather peculiar, for when people believed it was healthy to smoke they would have taken the irrational belief as their rational premise. People did not have to believe that smoking was unhealthy in order to believe that smoking was healthy. Thus it looks as if what is and what isn't rational changes. If this is so how can one establish anything like Pears' main system as a system of veridicality.

Leaving this aside, Pears wants to say that the sub-systems are centres of rational agency in that they represent beliefs that are not represented by the main system. Thus, in one sub-system there might be the belief that one desires something that is unhealthy, and in another sub-system there might be the belief that one is repulsed by something healthy. It is seen that the sub-systems co-operate with one another in representing in this case the desiring of unhealthy things. This, as we have said, is quite a rational irrational belief to hold, and one that those who believe in smokers' rights would be willing to endorse. Similarly in the situation of wishful

¹D. Pears, The Multiple Self, p.74.

thinking, it might be rational to hold an irrational belief. For example it may be painful and debilitating for people to believe the worst, so they deceive themselves into thinking of and expecting the best possible outcome. There are of course degrees of severity here. In one case it might be practical to believe in the best possible outcome and in another pathological to believe in the best possible outcome. In other words it might be best that an athlete believes she can break the world high jump record even if she in the end does not. However, it is not so practical if a person believes that he or she can jump off the Empire State building and land safely.

The Sartrean criticism of Pears theory would presumably be as follows: if the sub-systems are governed by the rationality of the main system then one would presume that one would hold the beliefs of that main system, that is, one would know what was true and what was false. Thus any attempt at self-deception would not work since one would know what one was deceiving oneself about, for one would know what was true and what was false. Gardner calls this “the Sartrean paradox”, he says

If S is internally rational, why does it not replicate the main system within itself? S has access to all of the main system’s contents, and is itself a belief-former: given that its rational capacities are not inferior to those of O, it ought to share any beliefs in the main system to which it has access¹.

If the belief that it is healthy to smoke is something that is known by the main system to be false, then why is such a false belief thought by Pears to be a sub-systemic belief rather than as a false belief held in the main system, as Sartre would have it? What then, one might ask, is the point in these sub-systems at all? Is Pears’ theory really any different to that of Freud’s or Sartre’s? For on the one hand, like Freud, Pears wants to say that the main system is not aware of the deception of sub-systems, because the main system exists simply to say what is true or false. As we have said its beliefs are not formed out of desires. Yet, on the other, he wants to say

¹S. Gardner, *op. cit.*, p.73.

that both systems are conscious, which then seems to collapse his theory into Sartre's notion of a single consciousness or main system. In this latter case, he says something quite peculiar, namely, that both systems are conscious or (rationally preconscious) but adds that although such sub-systems are aware of the rational premises of the main system, the main system knows nothing of the irrational beliefs of the sub-systems. But, if Sartre is right, those irrational beliefs will be known by the main system. Thus it looks, on Pears' view, as if the sub-systems really motivate everything in the same way that Freud's unconscious supposedly motivates everything. For whereas the main system simply records the way the world is, the sub-systems are motivated by desires and motivated to censor beliefs from the main system. The main system simply has no will or ego of its own, whereas the sub-systems do. Mark Johnston in his article, "Self Deception and Nature of Mind" puts the matter thus:

Pears proposes that we should take quite literally a model that locates . . . a protective system that operates like a paternalist liar, protecting the main system or ego for what the protective system takes to be the ego's own good. The lying protective system need not deceive itself and need never be engaged in the contradictory project of trying to believe what it knows to be false¹.

In this sense the sub-systems appear to make the unwritten ground rules for the mind, which then begins to look very Freudian. This also looks odd, because it looks as if our ordinary beliefs are not in accord with our wishes and although not all of them can be, we can't say all ordinary beliefs are non-intentional in the sense of being unrelated to our desires and motivations. If I hold the belief that hot air rises, I don't wish that this were the case, so that belief is indeed not related to my desires and motivations. It is not a matter of what I want or don't want. But if I believe that lying is wrong, this surely is intentional in the sense indicated. It is related to what I wish to be the case. Thus it would seem as if ordinarily held beliefs of the main system can be

¹ M. Johnston, 'Self-Deception and Nature of Mind' in C. Macdonald and G. Macdonald (eds.), *Philosophy of Psychology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), p.448.

involved with our intentions and wishes and are not simply recordings of the data of the external world. And again the distinction between the, main and sub-systems begins to blur.

On Pears's account it looks, indeed, as if there is no room for a notion of a whole person at all. For the mind is divided into the main system, where our rational propositions are stored, and the sub-systems, where lots of different agents will lots of different, although, according to Pears, compatible things. Even if Pears wants to argue that the agents form a committee who agree to maintain the same irrational proposals, this does not indicate a unified mind because, first, these agents are themselves individuated by their own desires and, second, they are logically and conceptually divided from the main system.

There is an important distinction that has to be made here when talking of divided minds. For there is a difference between regarding the mind as divided and recognizing that persons feel that they are in psychological conflict. Pears, it seems, wants to argue the former and in so doing posits multiple selves, selves that do not have to be entailed by the latter view of psychological conflict. For I can feel torn between my knowledge that smoking is unhealthy and my desire to smoke, and I may deceive myself into thinking that actually it is better to smoke. This does not mean that there are two different people here, one that is rational and knows all about the unhealthiness of smoking, and another who wants to smoke. I am torn between ideas which I as a unitary person entertain. I am not a third party torn between different people in my mind who give me different and conflicting advice.

People with multiple personality disorders often explain their feelings of conflict in this way and are taken by some psychiatrists, psychologists and

philosophers such as R. D. Laing¹ to be making substantive claims about the nature of the mind, namely, that it is actually divided into different selves, rather than existing as the arena of various forms of psychological conflict which can be represented by means of metaphors of multiple selves.

Here Gardner makes an interesting phenomenological point when he asks how it would be possible to experience multiple selves. It would seem that one would still require a concept of the self in order to experience at all. This looks like a very Kantian point about the unity of apperception². Pears attempted to say that there were different conceptual and logical locations for different beliefs that enabled us to hold them at the same time. However, who is the person or self having these beliefs? Gardner says:

Consider how hard it is to imagine a phenomenology of multiple selfhood. How could one experience oneself in a form mid-way between regarding oneself as a single person, and as many persons? Any attempt to describe what it is like to be many selves would immediately become a description of what it is to be one self among many³.

¹R.D. Laing, The Divided Self, (London: Penguin Books, 1965), p.69 writes: “such a divorce of self from body deprives the unembodied self from direct participation in any aspect of the life of the world, which is mediated exclusively through the body’s perceptions, feelings and movements (expressions, gestures, words, actions, etc.)”.

²The following passages from Immanuel Kant’s, Critique of Pure Reason, Norman Kemp Smith trans. (London: Macmillan,1929) are instructive:
“In original apperception everything must necessarily conform to the conditions of the thoroughgoing unity of self-consciousness, that is, to the universal functions of synthesis, namely of that synthesis according to concepts in which alone apperception can demonstrate a priori its complete and necessary identity” (p.139).
“It must be possible for the ‘I think’ to accompany all my representations; for something would be represented in me which could not be thought at all, and that is equivalent to saying that the representation would be impossible, or at least would be nothing to me” (p.153).
“Only in so far, therefore as I can unite a manifold of given representations in one consciousness, is it possible for me to represent to myself the identity of the consciousness in (ie throughout) these representations” (p.153).

³S.Gardner, op. cit., p.82.

On this picture of the multiple self, self-deception would not be possible because one would not at the same time be able to be both the self who knows smoking is unhealthy and the person who desires to smoke. One could only be one of the selves holding one of the beliefs at any one time. This shows the inadequacy of attempting to explain self-deception via a notion of a divided mind. (I intend eventually to show that there is an alternative explanation of self deception which rests not on substantive claims about the mind or of the self but rather rests on understanding self-deception as a description of a certain kind of psychological condition).

Pears' sub-systems seem to suffer all the faults that Freud's unconscious does. First, one is confused as to what sub-systems are suppose to be. Are they being postulated as real entities or as theoretical entities?

We said at the beginning of our discussion that Pears regards them as technical devices which enable him to explain self deception. However, he posits these sub-systems as numerically different centres of consciousness which exist separately from the main consciousness. This leads one to think that these are actual mental locations. However we are given no explanation as to how such locations came into being. Could we be shown empirical evidence of such systems? If we are simply being shown logical relations between concepts, why does Pears think it necessary to postulate the mind as a thing in which a main system and sub-systems are contained? Why could he not simply discuss cases of self-deception and cases of rational belief without appealing to a notion of systems in the mind?

If one were to be generous to Pears, one might say he could be postulating sub-systems theoretically, or metaphorically. However, one would have to say that his theorizing is largely unhelpful because it leads to a confusing picture of the mind, one that is divided into sub-systems, which are given all the attributes and powers of conscious agents but none of the observable features of them. Alexander Bird in his

article, "Rationality and the Structure of Self- Deception" makes this very point when he says:

The first problem with the divisionist account is that it is in danger of introducing the homonculus fallacy, that the mind (or brain) is like a person within a person, the possessor of that mind. Here there is within a person not just one homonculus but several. We have talked of the id and ego having beliefs and the one being deceived by the others as if they were human beings. But they are not human beings, being parts of the mind of one; in which case what sense can be made of the ascription of human attributes, viz possession of beliefs, to them¹?

This objection is one that we made earlier, and one that illustrates the wrongheadedness of thinking that non-human things can have human attributes such as, in this case, the ability to deceive. For how can we say that mental sub-systems have intentionality. For how can something non-human, like a system of the body, protect me from knowing that I deceive myself. For deception is no more something had by a state inside me than pain is something had by my foot and not me. Further, how can I be lots of deceiving selves all at the same time. It looks as if we are led to conclude, with Sartre, that there cannot be anything besides me, besides my rational consciousness, that does the deceiving.

4. Against The "Deceiving Consciousness"

However, I wish now to argue that, a deceiving consciousness is no clearer than a deceiving Pearsian sub-system or a deceiving Freudian unconscious. The notion of the consciousness involved in talk of the "deceiving rational consciousness" is no clearer than the notion of the unconscious.

I begin with a point made by Wittgenstein in The Blue Book, where he says:

They state their case wrongly when they say: 'There can only be conscious thoughts and no unconscious ones'. For if they don't wish to

¹ A. Bird, "Rationality and the Structure of Self-Deception" European Review of Philosophy, (1994), p.22.

talk of 'unconscious thoughts' they should not use the expression 'conscious thoughts' either¹.

I wish to argue, with Wittgenstein, that knowing is not a state of mind, and therefore, contrary to what Sartre says, self-deception is not a state of knowledge. When I deceive myself that smoking is healthy, I am not in a state of knowledge about what I am deceiving myself of, namely that smoking is bad for my health. I simply avoid dwelling on the knowledge I have, namely the fact that smoking is bad for the health. I don't as it were have to think the thought "it's unhealthy to smoke", in order to deceive myself. My knowledge is not like that. For what I know is not stored somewhere waiting to be retrieved. Nothing, as it were, "goes on in me" to let me know that I am deceiving myself. But neither does anything "go on inside me" to prevent me from knowing that I am deceiving myself. In Section 148 of the Philosophical Investigations Wittgenstein says:

But what does this knowledge consist in? Let me ask: When do you know that application? Always? day and night? or only when you are actually thinking of the rule? do you know it, that is, in the same way as you know the alphabet and the multiplication table? Or is what you call 'knowledge' a state of consciousness or a process- say a thought of something, or the like?

Here Wittgenstein is illustrating to us the wrongheadedness of thinking that knowledge is a state, like a state of the body, that has a certain duration, as, for example, knocking one's funny bone results in a state, a sensation that lasts usually for a few minutes is a state, or having a headache is state that may last hours. Can we say the same of knowing that one is deceiving oneself? Is it like a sensation that lasts a few minutes or a few hours? Does a state of knowledge occur only when one thinks about it and, if so, does it disappear when one is not thinking about it? So, too, if I

¹L. Wittgenstein, The Blue and Brown Books, p.58.

don't think continuously of what it is about which I am deceiving myself will my knowledge of my deception cease?

It will not cease, on Sartre's view, because he thinks that one is permanently thinking of one's self-deception. Thus being conscious, that is, having conscious thoughts is, for Sartre, characterized by our attempt to deceive ourselves. Our whole existence is characterized for Sartre by our attempt to convince ourselves, in the eyes of others, that we are other than we are: and although we may convince others, we cannot convince ourselves.

It would seem that knowledge of one's self-deception requires a lot more than just the thought of it. For knowing about oneself is not something that is, as it were, permanently in consciousness. Wittgenstein, for example, wants to argue that knowledge is not a state of mind but is, rather, acquired through one's education, "education" here meant both in the broad sense of acquiring a language and in the specific sense of learning certain kinds of knowledge. In other words one learns to apply certain concepts to oneself and to others, and within what one has learnt acquires various kinds of knowledge. This point is brought out by Wittgenstein in the Philosophical Investigations when he says that "a child has much to learn before it can pretend. (A dog cannot be a hypocrite, but neither can he be sincere)"¹.

What Wittgenstein is saying here is that the acquisition of a language makes deception possible. Deceiving oneself is a possibility that one acquires as one acquires a more sophisticated grasp of the language. Children are not born deceivers. They learn the language and behaviour of deception. Dogs, as Wittgenstein says, can't be hypocrites, nor can they be sincere, because in not having the appropriate language, they cannot not apply such concepts to themselves nor understand the possibilities contained in those concepts. We may assign concepts to the dog, but the dog itself

¹L. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, p.229.

does not share the concept, even though its behaviour may be expressive of what we call “deceit”. My labrador Basil may display all the behaviour of a liar when he sheepishly crawls under the table, pretending that he has not eaten the pork pie which was especially reserved for the party. However, he is not aware that he is lying. He may simply be adopting behaviours that he has observed from humans around him.

Self-deception is a concept that we learn to apply to persons who ignore what they know to be the best course of action. This does not have to imply that when I deceive myself I am in a state of unconsciousness, as Freud would have it, or that I am in a state of consciousness, as Sartre would have it. On the view I wish to take, it is possible for it truly to be said of one, both that one knows one is deceiving oneself or that one does not know that one is. However, this knowing and not knowing are not states. They are ways of regarding oneself or, most importantly, ways of being brought to regard oneself, ways that one might be prepared to accept, for example, from analysts, but also from many other people. Thus what we call self-deception might be a matter of there being a possible way of looking at oneself that one had never contemplated before. I can be brought to see that I was acting in a way that was incompatible with what I regard, or what others regard, as desirable, or, on the other hand I might already see that, for example, smoking is bad for the health but simply choose to ignore it. Thus, in the first case, the job of the analyst would be to get the patient to see what it is he has been deceiving himself about, and, in the second case, his or her job would be to get the patient to pay attention to what he chooses to ignore, namely that smoking is unhealthy.

5. Fairbanks on Self-Deception

Rick Fairbanks, in the latter part of his article, “The Ubiquity of Self Deception” raises what he sees as a sceptical challenge to a Wittgensteinian account of self deception, an account according to which self-doubt (which is involved in the notion of self deception) is possible. Fairbanks’ scepticism arises because for him self-doubt,

doubt as to whether one is deceiving oneself, would, on his reading of Wittgenstein, be a coherent form of doubt only if that doubt could be settled. But, Fairbanks thinks that Wittgenstein having raised problems about the possibility of self knowledge, has also raised problems about the possibility of self-doubt and self-deception. And since, even on my account of psychoanalysis there is a central place in that activity for the concept of self-deception, this challenge must be met. I meet it by arguing that self-deception is a coherent notion within our form of life, and that an acknowledgement of the possibility of self-deception does not have to imply scepticism about the self.

Let us first examine more closely Fairbanks' statement of his problem.

Fairbanks asks how the Wittgensteinian could argue that self-deception is possible, given what Wittgenstein says about the impossibility of certain kinds of doubt in On Certainty and given his general notion of rule following as something immune from scepticism. For Wittgenstein, the sceptic who questions the rule cannot be part of the practice in which that rule is agreed upon, for rules enable us to participate in various practices, games and forms of life. Therefore, we simply cannot understand this scepticism and, having excluded himself from our ways of proceeding, the sceptic cannot even tell us what he means. Thus Fairbanks says;

We don't know how to incorporate his doubt into our practices. Winch argues that for Wittgenstein the bedrock of our language games is the way we instinctively act and react - that is, our forms of life. We don't defeat the sceptic, but insofar as we are engaged in certain forms of life we are compelled to ignore the sceptic's demands. His demands can but appear nonsensical from inside the language-game. We cannot play the games and incorporate the sceptic's doubts into our practices¹.

Fairbanks argues, then, that Wittgenstein in On Certainty dismisses the possibility of a Cartesian deceiver who could make us doubt everything except our own existence. However, how then can Wittgenstein deal with the possibility of self-

¹R. Fairbanks, "The Ubiquity of Self-Deception", Philosophical Investigations, 21 1 (January 1998), p.18.

deception, where what people come to doubt is the knowledge that they have about themselves? Fairbanks asks, rhetorically:

Can we give this kind of Wittgensteinian reply to the sceptic about self-knowledge? Can we explain why we ignore such a sceptic? Can we show why we cannot incorporate the sceptic's doubts into our practices? Can we say that from the perspective of our practices concerning self-knowledge, that we simply cannot understand the sceptic's doubt?¹

Fairbanks points out, however, that there are two kinds of scepticism, only one of which Wittgenstein would think is not coherently formulatable within our practices. The one that is excluded is what Fairbanks calls "global scepticism". This is concerned, as the words suggest, with doubts about the world in general, about trees, hands, one's body and so on. This is the kind of scepticism that Descartes and Moore took as the basis for their investigation of the possibility of indubitable certainty. Local scepticism by contrast, however, is concerned solely with more localised doubts, including doubts about oneself and one's knowledge about oneself. And localised scepticism is a viable form of scepticism. It is a form of scepticism that is part of our language game of self-knowledge. Fairbank says;

The global sceptic stands outside our language-games and points out to us that our fundamental assumptions are unjustified. We respond in a Wittgensteinian fashion, 'things could not be any other way' Scepticism about self-knowledge implied by the possibility of self-deception is internal to the game of self-deception. To scrutinize ourselves for self-deception is an integral part of seeking self-knowledge².

In the case of local scepticism, then, the language game in which we talk about knowing the self is also the language game in which we talk about doubting what we know about ourselves. The same is not true of global scepticism. For in the language game in which we talk about our fundamental beliefs, for example my belief that I

¹Ibid., p.18.

²Ibid., pp.21-22.

exist, that the earth exists, that I have two hands, we cannot meaningfully talk about doubting all of those beliefs. But when the matter is one of local scepticism, it looks as if such talk of doubt is compatible with talk of knowledge.

However, Fairbanks questions this line of argument. He does not see how, in the end, knowledge of the self and doubt about the self can exist side by side in the same game, as can localised knowledge and doubt about such things as trees. For although he initially supposed it coherent to say “To scrutinize ourselves for self-deception is an integral part of seeking self-knowledge”, he goes on to argue that “such scrutiny is what makes any stopping point in the game arbitrary and, therefore, makes the game ultimately incoherent¹”. His point is presumably that when I raise questions about my true motivations, I have no non-arbitrary way of arresting those doubts. How can it be possible, therefore, to know the self at all, and hence know whether or not one is deceiving oneself.

It appears that Fairbanks feels torn between either having a known empirical self that knows its deceiving itself, or a deceived unknown self that thinks it knows itself, but in being deceived cannot know. For Fairbanks says that self deception leaves us with two choices about the nature of the self. On the one hand self-deception leads us to conclude that, since we can deceive ourselves, then we cannot know ourselves, and, if we cannot know ourselves, we cannot give a narrative about who we are. On the other hand we can attempt to give a narrative about who we are. However we will be unknowingly deceiving ourselves that this is who we really are. Fairbanks says;

If we understand the challenge of self-deception we have two choices: either to self-consciously deconstruct our stories of ourselves, as do John Dowell in The Good Soldier and Jean Baptiste in The Fall and

¹Ibid., p.22.

Dostoyevski's underground man, or to insist on telling the authorized story knowing full well that our authority rests on nothing¹.

Fairbanks opts in the end for saying that self-deception entails self-doubt and is always present. What one knows about oneself can always be doubted, presumably unlike what one "knows" about one's hands, which cannot be. For, even if one claims to know, as is the case in the "authorized" story, that is to say, the narrative one gives about oneself, one's self-knowledge can always be doubted. So, on his account "to play the game of self-knowledge without blinkers is to realize that any claim about the self can be seen as self-deceived from some perspective²".

In wanting to say that one cannot know the self, Fairbanks, is in one sense true to Wittgenstein, in that, on Wittgenstein's account, the self is not knowable in any empirical sense, that is, as some sort of internal or external object. However Wittgenstein would not have wanted to regard the language game of self-doubt as one that excluded the possibility of self knowledge and the knowledge of self deception. If we look at the ways in we describe ourselves, and the ways in which others describe us; if we look at the ordinary language in which we talk of these things, we will find a place for talk both of self-knowledge and self-doubt. We talk of knowing ourselves and not knowing ourselves, and also of thinking we know ourselves when we don't. However, when we claim to know ourselves, we can be justified. This is not to suggest we have indubitable Cartesian self-knowledge. For our beliefs might be confounded.

It appears however that Fairbanks, in thinking of the self as not having a Cartesian knowledge of itself, is falling into the same problems as the global sceptic,

¹Ibid., p.21.

²Ibid., p.22.

that is, of thinking that, since there can be no absolute and incorrigible proof of our self knowledge claims, there can't be any justified self knowledge claims.

However, as we have seen, Wittgenstein points out in On Certainty, when addressing the global sceptic, knowledge precedes doubting. We can doubt only against a background of knowing. Even in the case of the self, there must first be some notion, although not empirical in any scientific sense, of justifiably claiming to know oneself, even if this claim is corrigible.

I don't think, therefore, that Fairbank's sceptical challenge to a Wittgensteinian account of self-deception is insurmountable. For if we look more closely at the linguistic appropriateness of both local scepticism and knowledge in relation to the self and linguistic inappropriateness of global scepticism in relation to the world, we shall see that understanding self-deception from a Wittgensteinian perspective does not have to entail as Fairbanks implies, a total scepticism about the self.

In what Wittgenstein calls "the stream of life", one learns various ways of thinking about oneself, for example, that one is such and such a kind of child, that one is funny, or silly, sullen or breezy. Thus one learns to apply descriptions to oneself, descriptions that may get dropped as one no longer sees their relevancy or suitability in the present environment. However, many will be retained and will become part of what we call ourselves. This does not in any way exclude ascriptions of doubt or ignorance to oneself. For I can think of myself as sullen and be brought to see by an analyst that this identification of myself as sullen is a way of avoiding something else about myself. In other words the knowledge one thinks one has of oneself, for example, that one is sullen, can come be doubted by oneself or by others, and one's knowledge of what thinks one is can change. Thus after analysis one may come to see that one is actually a lively individual who acts in a sullen way to avoid the responsibility of being a lively person. Self-knowledge and self-doubt are compatible aspects of the language game in which we talk of the self.

When talking of the self, we ordinarily and justifiably presuppose knowledge of ourselves, notably when we use the words “I”, or, for other selves, the words, “he” and “she”. This does not, however, entail that we are simply objects. For when we use the word “I”, we are identifying persons, and we are understanding those persons as having certain beliefs and attitudes, who act in this way or that. It is these attitudes that these persons hold about themselves or others hold about them that may be in doubt and not knowledge that there is a self who can hold certain justifiable beliefs about itself. Beliefs about oneself, to repeat, are subject to doubt, and hence to change. But that one is capable of holding beliefs about oneself suggests the possibility of having knowledge about oneself, although it suggests also the possibility of coming to doubt what one thought one knew.

An example may help. I may think of myself as smoking very little. I may even claim to know this. However I may come to doubt this belief about myself when I stay with my friend Susan, who has now quit. I may come to realize that I have been deceiving myself that I don't smoke much in order to avoid giving up smoking altogether. That I came to doubt my previous belief does not entail that I do not know something now. Moreover, one has to have some knowledge of oneself in order to be able to doubt oneself, or one's beliefs about oneself. For self-deception to be possible it has to be possible that one has a conception of what one thinks, one is even if one later comes to see this as not what one is.

IV

The Grammar of the Unconscious

In the light of this I stand by my view of the place of self deception in psychoanalysis. Thus, as I said earlier, I wish to claim that self-deception can be understood as both knowledge that, in a sense, one has about oneself, and knowledge that one does not have about oneself but which one could acquire. I want to suggest,

however, that the notion of knowing and not knowing about the self is misleading if understood in terms of conscious or unconscious and hidden internal states.

In section 149 of the Philosophical Investigations Wittgenstein hints that the use, and here we can take that to be Freud's use, of the terms "conscious" and "unconscious" is confusing because these terms are used to describe the same thing, namely consciousness, and in doing this they cover up a grammatical difference.

If one says that knowing the ABC is a state of mind, one is thinking of a mental state of a mental apparatus (perhaps of the brain) by means of which we can explain the manifestations of that knowledge, such a state is called a disposition. But there ought to be two different criteria for such a state: a knowledge of the construction of the apparatus, quite apart from what it does. (Nothing would be more confusing here than to use the words 'conscious' and 'unconscious' for the contrast between states of consciousness and dispositions. For this pair of terms covers up a grammatical difference.)

Freud conflates the language of the unconscious and that of the conscious, speaking as if these referred to the same sort of thing, only things to be found in a different sorts of places, thereby ignoring the distinctive "grammar" of the term "unconscious". This conflation occurs because Freud thinks that mental life is essentially unconscious, yet makes claims about it as if it were conscious. Thus we cannot see what the difference in function between the terms "unconscious" and "conscious" is supposed to be because he assigns qualities particular to conscious entities to what are supposed to be unconscious entities. This simply obscures what an analysis of ordinary language would reveal, namely that the terms have different sorts of applications.

For example, when I say the man was consciously tying his shoe laces, I don't mean the same sort of thing as when I say the man was unconsciously tying his shoe laces. In the first, I mean that the man was concentrating on how he tied the bow, how the bow looked, if the laces were tied tight enough. In the second, I mean the

man whilst tying his shoe laces was looking dreamily into the distance, not concentrating on what he was doing. In neither case do I think of the man either as in a state of consciousness or unconsciousness. I think of him as tying his shoe laces in this way or that, and the expressions “consciously” and “unconsciously” fit what I mean when I describe his actions.

Now at this point an objector might want to say, “so if a person was lying on the floor unconscious, you would merely say that this was a way of speaking about his or her behaviour, that she or he was not in any kind of state”.

I would not say this because, as I said earlier, a physical state of unconsciousness is different from a psychological state that claims to be like a physiological state. Thus in describing a man as unconscious, I would be referring to a man being in a particular physical state. But I would not be referring to what Freud thinks of as an unconscious state. It would be rather peculiar if, when one said that there was an unconscious man lying on the floor, that one meant that he had beliefs and desires that were hidden from him. That we would not ordinarily say this actually brings out the peculiarity of Freud’s use of the term “unconscious” to refer to something akin to a physical state. For there is, as I said earlier, a distinction to be made between states of the body, such as being unconscious, and psychological concepts, such as the unconscious. In order to see that there is such a distinction we should pay attention to the different uses of the term ‘unconscious’. Elder makes the same point when he says;

It is important to recognize that the word “unconscious’ has a large variety of uses and many different senses, according to the context in which it appears. we say, for example, “a man is unconscious’, and “a stone is unconscious” and “ a memory is unconscious.” All of these represent legitimate uses of the word. But now, suppose we ask, Can an idea be unconscious - or still yet a feeling? One person says “yes” another “no”. How do we decide who is right? (One thing we should not do is conduct experiments, for what could experimental data - indeed what could any fact - tell us that was not already built into the meaning of the term)? The issue here is not whether such and such is the case in the world- that is whether unconscious ideas exist - but whether it makes

sense to speak about such things. Similarly, it is a matter of asking, not whether such a thing as the unconscious exists, but whether the concept “the unconscious” has a coherent use, or application¹.

This ignorance of the differences in usage is highlighted, as we have seen, by Wittgenstein’s elucidation of the difference between the grammar of the conscious and the grammar of the unconscious. Bouveresse identifies this ignorance of the difference in grammar between the terms “conscious” and “unconscious” as the source of Freud’s mythology. For in thinking of there being something other than the conscious, namely the unconscious, that nevertheless can only be explained in terms of the conscious, one is postulating a mystery.

Mythology is as always generated only by superficial analogies between things that are, from the grammatical point of view, completely different. As Wittgenstein says there are no small differences in grammar².

Thus in conflating the grammar of the unconscious and the grammar of the conscious, we postulate something that cannot explain itself, because it is itself unaware of itself. Thus we use the grammar of words used to refer to what we do know, what we are conscious of, to explain what is essentially unknowable. This attempt to postulate the unknown via what is known is akin to postulating a mystery. For example, if I say that there is this Being whom no one has ever seen or heard but who nevertheless has all the qualities of a man, one would, as one does with Freud’s unconscious, think of it as many think of God, as an unsolved mystery, a Being or a place that one cannot directly perceive but which is nevertheless the cause of all other things.

Although Wittgenstein implies in his writings on Freud that Freud’s picture of the unconscious as internally locatable is wrongheaded and misleading he would not

¹Elder, op.cit., p.35.

²Bouveresse, op.cit., p.25.

be so unsophisticated as to deny that such a picture exists and that it is a picture that is attractive and compelling. In many places throughout his work, Wittgenstein expresses the fascination such ideas about the mind hold for us. He says in Lectures on Aesthetics:

Many of these explanations are adopted because they have a peculiar charm. The picture of people having subconscious thoughts has a charm. The idea of an underworld, a secret cellar. Something hidden, uncanny¹.

It is not the case, as some would have it, that Wittgenstein thought that Freud's use of the expression "the unconscious" had no appeal or charm or even function. Neither did he think that one must simply do away with the notion of the unconscious altogether. We have a perfectly good use for that notion. What he did think, however, was that Freud's use of the term "unconscious" was misleading in that it led us to think of the mind as like a physiological state or process or the unconscious as a hidden place. Further, it offered a poor way in which to understand psychological ideas and it covered up a grammatical distinction between the terms "conscious" and "unconscious". In conflating these terms so that both referred to a kind of consciousness, it left us in the dark as to the distinctive use of the term "unconscious", a use better divined from ordinary language than from Freud's quasi-scientific writings.

I began by looking at Freud's mistaken belief that his psychoanalytic practice was a science and some of the results of that mistaken belief for the understanding of notions like the unconscious. This initial mistake of Freud's is symptomatic of a deeper set of confusions, notably about the notion of meaning something, and about the notion of understanding the meaning of something. It is in this area that the later

¹L. Wittgenstein, Lectures and Conversations, p.25.

Wittgenstein did some of his most concentrated thinking. It is this thinking that I wish now to bring to bear on the problem of a proper understanding of Freudian psychoanalysis. These confusions about meaning, which are not confined to Freud but which are wide spread in contemporary philosophy, are best illustrated by what Freud has to say about dreams, which he treats as a language that needs interpretation. I now turn to these matters.

CHAPTER FOUR

FREUD ON MEANING

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I want to look, first, at what Freud himself took the essence of dreams to be. Second, I wish to argue that Freud's notion of dream interpretation led him to a confusion about meaning, a confusion that arose because he wrongly assumed, first, that there was an essential meaning to every dream, second, that a dream was a language in need of translation and, third, that the meaning of the dream corresponded to an unconscious process. In this last respect in particular Freud's view was deeply at odds with some central thoughts of Wittgenstein's later philosophy.

The first of these faulty assumptions leads to epistemological problems about how one can know that what the person dreamt meant what the analyst said it meant. The second leads to problems which arise from thinking that meaning is a matter of interpretation, which may lead to further sceptical worries. The third assumption leads to problems which arise from thinking that meaning is a hidden process.

In this chapter I shall argue: first that the meaning of a dream is not established on the basis of "essential properties" of dreams. Dreams only have the meaning we give them in the activities of talking about dreams in various contexts, contexts in which we engage in secondary and metaphorical extensions of our ordinary discourse. Second I show that a dream is not a language whose sense we have to translate into some ordinary language by finding an interpretation for it. Understanding a dream is not a matter of interpreting its meaning because meaning, neither here nor anywhere else, is generally a matter of interpreting something. Here there is a very deep problem which will involve us with some remarks by Kripke. Third, I argue that meaning is

not a hidden process. I shall show that one way in which we are led to this confusion is through thinking that when we feel that we comprehend a dream, our understanding of “the meaning of the dream” involves an inner process of “experiencing meaning”.

In this chapter I argue in particular for the view that psychoanalytic meaning, the kind of meaning the psychoanalyst attributes to, say, dreams is best described in terms of secondary and metaphorical applications of the language. These applications depend for their sense on the ordinary language, but are distinct from those ordinary uses by virtue of the way in which the use of the terms involved in these applications is extended to fit cases other than their usual ones. For example, we understand what it means to wear a cap for cricket or baseball. We are then in a position to say “X is wearing his thinking cap”. Here we extend the notion of wearing a cap. I wish to argue that Freud’s dream interpretations rather than being understood as the outcome of the application of a technique by an analyst for finding some hidden meaning or essence to dreams, are best described in terms of these kinds of extended applications of the ordinary language, which the Freudian analyst uses to get the patient to see an aspect of his or her behaviour. I shall, in arguing this, of course have to examine how compatible this is with Davidson’s view that metaphors have only literal meaning and as such are false. Davidson and Freud, in this respect, share the same literalist view of meaning. However Freud thinks that his dream interpretations are literally true, whereas Davidson is committed to saying that, if taken as metaphors, they are literally false.

Let us begin with the account Freud gives.

I

FREUD ON THE ESSENCE OF DREAMS

Psychoanalysis is founded on the premise that the neurotic symptoms of patients contain and conceal a hidden meaning. It was in attempting to uncover the hidden meaning of these symptoms that Freud discovered the importance of dreams. For

Freud noticed that when patients were asked about their symptoms, this induced dream recollection. That led Freud to conclude that dreams must have a meaning, a meaning obviously linked to the neurotic symptoms displayed by the patient, and in terms of which some sense could be made of those symptoms. Freud says in his

Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis:

It happened in the course of this treatment that patients, instead of bringing forward their symptoms, brought forward dreams. A suspicion arose that the dreams, too, had a sense¹.

On the basis of this finding, Freud developed the technique of dream interpretation. By getting patients to recall the manifest content of their dreams, that is to say, to report what they remembered of the dream, Freud believed he could uncover the latent content of people's dreams, which, for him, meant the unconscious infantile and sexual wishes that the dream disguised. Freud believed if he could uncover the disguised wishes in the dream, he could explain the meaning of the dream and, hence, could explain the dreamer's conscious, and possibly neurotic, behaviour. The dream, then, held some key, some message that might help to explain conscious life.

Freud, therefore took himself to be in need of a method by which somehow to make the latent content, manifest. In other words he had to find ways to ascertain and to get patients to remember or recognize the 'true' infantile or sexual wishes that they had disguised in their dreams. These dream disguises, Freud thought, could be uncovered by examining the dreamers' activities in terms of the notions of condensation, displacement, representation and secondary revision.

(i) Condensation

Condensation in dreams is a way of unifying disparate unconscious thoughts into single words, sentences or images. Freud illustrates this by referring to the way in

¹S. Freud, Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973), p.111.

which people, when making jokes or slips of the tongue, play on certain words or phrases in order to condense insults and sexual innuendoes. They don't simply say the insult. They disguise it, and the thoughts surrounding it, by a play of words that could have a meaning quite other than the one that is apparently intended. And that is, of course, related in Freud's account to what can make such jokes funny. In his book, Jokes and Their relation to the Unconscious, Freud gives numerous examples of condensation in jokes. (Unfortunately the jokes he gives are somewhat banal).

Mr and Mrs X live in fairly grand style. Some people think that the husband has earned a lot and so has been able to lay by a bit (sich etwas zuruckgelegt); others again think that the wife has lain back a bit (sich etwas zuruckgelegt) and so has been able to earn a lot¹.

Here we can see how the two phrases, 'lay by a bit' and 'lain back a bit', have been condensed. Thus, the joke is a play on the phrases, for in the two different cases, namely the husband's and the wife's, different connotations of the phrases are given, notably, in the second case, a sexual connotation. The same condensation occurs in dreams. For what is unconsciously thought in the dream is condensed into that which can be acceptably and consciously reported. Freud gives an example of dream condensation in which the condensed word has both a normal usage and yet a philological use which is linked to a whole host of other associations, and hence to other words that express the dreamer's "true" or unconscious thoughts. All these associations have been disguised by being condensed into a single word, a word that without analysis might simply be regarded as having the sense it does in normal usage.

She dreamt that she was with her husband at a peasant festivity and said: 'This will end in a general "Maistollmutz"'. In the dream she had a vague feeling that this was some kind of pudding made with maize - a sort of polenta. Analysis divided the word into 'Mais' (maize), 'toll' (mad), 'mannstoll', ('nymphomaniac' - literally 'mad for men') and Olmutz (a town in Moravia). All

¹S. Freud, Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious (London: Penguin Books, 1991), p.66.

these fragments were to be found to be the remnants of a conversation she had at table with her relatives. The following words lay behind 'Mais' (in addition to a reference to the recently opened Jubilee Exhibition): 'Meissen' (a Meissen (Dresden) porcelain figure representing a bird); 'Miss' (her relatives' English governess had just gone to Olmutz) and 'mies' (a Jewish slang term, used jokingly to mean 'disgusting'). A long chain of thoughts and associations led off from each syllable of this verbal hotchpotch¹.

It not only happens in dreams that many thoughts and associations are condensed into single words. One may also, according to Freud, condense several different people, who have various things in common, into a dream image of one person. Freud writes:

There is another way in which a 'collective figure' can be produced for purposes of dream interpretation, namely by uniting the actual features of two or more people into a single dream-image. It was the way the Dr. M of my dream was constructed. He bore the name of Dr. M, he spoke and acted like him: but his physical characteristics and his malady belonged to someone else, namely to my eldest brother. One single feature, his pale appearance, was doubly determined, since it was common to both of them in real life².

It is not only through tracing the common elements and associations in the collective figure that the analyst can find out what the dreamer is repressing, but it is also by finding out why certain elements have been omitted. Thus in the case of the above dream of the collective figure, as well as asking the dreamer why he condensed a common element of himself and his brother, namely the paleness of the skin and the same physical characteristics and malady, one has also to ask why the dreamer, apart from the pale skin, did not dream he had his own physical characteristics and his own malady.

(ii) Displacement

Displacement in dreams can be seen as the transformation of unconscious thoughts into visual dream images, images that appear in the dream as unconnected to the

¹S. Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams (London: Penguin Books, 1991), p.404.

²Ibid., p.400.

unconscious thoughts they represent. In The Interpretation of Dreams Freud gives us an example of how this displacement manifests itself. He says;

Once again the dream about my uncle (p.218ff), the fair beard which formed its centre-point seems to have had no connection in its meaning with my ambitious wishes which as we, saw, were the core of the dream-thoughts¹.

Thus, in dreams our unconscious thoughts get transferred into images that disguise the unacceptable nature of their content, so that, Freud says: “the dream-content no longer resembles the core of the dream thoughts and . . . the dream gives no more than a distortion of the dream-wish which exists in the unconscious²”. Due to such transference, one might think that the meaning of one’s dream to be quite the reverse of what it actually is. Freud gives an example of this in which he dreams of a woman making advances to him, while unconsciously his thought is of a desire for unconditional love.

In the foreground of the dream-content a prominent place is taken by a situation in which a woman seems to be making advances to me: while in the dream thoughts the chief emphasis is laid on the wish for once to enjoy unselfish love, love which “cost nothing”³.

Freud transfers his need for unconditional love onto an image that appears to satisfy his unconscious need. For the woman in the dream, in being the one making the advances, symbolizes unconditional giving. If this wish had not been uncovered, and therefore known by the dreamer, the dreamer might deceive himself into thinking that the dream was simply of a woman desiring him and not of his displaced need for unconditional love. However, the function of displacement is to censor dream

¹S. Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams, trans. J. Strachey (London: Penguin Books, 1991), p.415.

²S. Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams, p.417.

³Ibid., p.655.

thoughts by making images that disguise them. As Wollheim says, “displacement is peculiarly connected with the disguise that the dream wears¹”.

(iii) Representation

The various representations or symbols that dreamers use are yet another example of disguised wish fulfilments. In this instance dreamers use particular objects as representative of their unconscious wishes. Such objects may figure in the kind of displacement dream that Freud himself reports and this may further help the analyst to identify the displaced thoughts. For in displacement-dreams such objects might appear in the background of the dream, whereas in other dreams they might be all the dream consists of. In the latter instance, one can think of dreams just of a particular object or collection of objects with no story line or situation involved. In his Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis Freud gives a list of interpreted symbols that frequently appear in dreams.

Shoes and slippers are female genitals. Tables and wood have already been mentioned as puzzling but certainly female symbols. Ladders, steps and staircases, or more precisely, walking up them, are clear symbols of sexual intercourse. On reflection it will occur to us that the common element here is the rhythm of walking up them - perhaps, too, the increasing excitement and breathlessness the higher one climbs. We have earlier referred to landscapes as representing the female genitals. Hills and rocks are symbols of the male organ. Gardens are common symbols of the female genitals. Fruit stands, not for children, but for the breasts. Wild animals mean people in an excited state and, further, evil instincts and passions².

The objects pictured in the dream may have a physical form, similar to the unconscious object that is being repressed, as when a stove pipe might be said to have penile qualities. However, such resemblances more often tend only to be revealed in the dream interpretation. For, as we have said, the function of the dream itself is to censor unconscious thoughts. In the dream interpretation the analyst has to find out

¹R. Wollheim, Freud (London: Fontana,1971), p.70.

²S. Freud, Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, p.191-2.

which symbols disguise which wishes. To do this he will rely not only on his own knowledge of symbols, but also on what associations the dreamers themselves make between objects and unconscious thoughts. Dreamers, when reporting their dreams, will draw certain analogies, the significance of which they themselves will not realize until the analyst pieces them together to give the dream its overall sense. This is illustrated in Freud's The Interpretation of Dreams, in which he gives an example of a dream had by a 'young woman suffering from agoraphobia as a result of fears of seduction'. The dream report is as follows:

I was walking in the street in the summer, wearing a straw hat of peculiar shape: its middle-piece was bent upwards and its side-pieces hung downwards (the description became hesitant at this point) in such a way that one side was lower than the other. I was cheerful and in a self--confident frame of mind: and, as I passed a group of young officers, I thought: "None of you can do me any harm"¹.

Freud interprets the hat to be the male genitalia with the middle bit sticking up and the two side bits hanging down. He goes on to conjecture that since the dreamer's husband had, as he puts it, "fine genitals", she would not have to be afraid that the officers might seduce her, since she would not require anything from them.

Freud goes on to give other yet more bizarre interpretations of dream representations in which buildings, stairs and shafts represent male genitals, in which landscapes represent female genitals, and in which pears represent breasts. Freud, then, regards virtually all our dream representations as sexual.

(iv) Secondary Revision

This process occurs just before the dreamer wakes into conscious life. It is a process that involves critical judgement of the unconscious dream thoughts, judgment which is typically associated with conscious thought. Freud describes an amusing account by Havelock Ellis of how this process works during the stage of near-waking.

¹S Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams, p.478.

Sleeping consciousness we may even imagine as saying to itself in effect: "Here comes our master, Waking Consciousness, who attaches such mighty importance to reason and logic and so forth. Quick! gather things up, put them in order - any order will do, before he enters to take possession"¹.

This critical judgement involves a reorganization, ordering and rationalizing of the content of the dream in order to make it somewhat more palatable to conscious life. Freud thinks that this process explains why people often give coherent dream reports, documenting in graphic detail the sequence of events that took place. Such clear and concise narrations, it would seem, need no further interpretation as to their meaning. This is not so, according to Freud. He thinks that the coherent narrative is merely a rationalizing process or another form of censorship masking the true meaning of the dream. He says in his Interpretation of Dreams that:

Dreams, which are of such a kind, have been subjected to a far reaching revision by this psychical function that is akin to waking thought: they appear to have a meaning, but the meaning is as far removed as possible from their true significance².

Each of these dream processes involve, according to Freud, attempts to prevent unconscious material from becoming manifest to the dreamer, and hence preventing the dreamer from knowing the true meaning of the dream. However the meaning can be uncovered by the analyst because these disguises are also clues. The particular words, images and objects, although used by the dreamer in the dream as disguises, reveal particular connections to the unconscious thoughts for which they stand. Thus in order to find the meaning of the dream the analyst has to trace the associations that the dreamer has condensed, transferred or represented by particular words, images and objects.

¹Ibid., pp.643-4.

²S. Freud The Interpretation of Dreams, pp.630-1.

THE PROBLEM WITH FREUD'S BELIEF IN THE ESSENTIAL MEANING OF A DREAM

As we have seen, from the account he has given of various forms of disguise that the dream takes on, Freud wanted to prove not only that dreams had a meaning, but that all dreams were disguised wish-fulfillments. He says:

I fancy my theory would have been more certain of general acceptance if I had contented myself with maintaining that every dream had a meaning, which could be discovered by means of a certain process of interpretation: and that the interpretation having been completed the dream could be replaced by thoughts which would fall into place at an easily recognizable point in the waking mental life of the dreamer. I might have gone on to say that the meaning of the dream turned out to be as many different sorts as the processes of waking thought: that in one case it would be a fulfilled wish, in another a realized fear, or again a reflection persisting on into sleep, or an intention (as in the instance of Dora's dream), or a piece of creative thought during sleep and so on. Such a theory would no doubt have proved attractive from its very simplicity, and it might have been supported by a great many examples of dreams that had been satisfactorily analyzed in these pages. But instead of this I formulated a generalization according to which the meaning of the dream is limited to a single form, to the representation of wishes and by so doing I aroused a universal inclination to dissent¹.

Freud thought that one could identify these wishes by identifying certain features or properties that certain dreams had in common with each other. In sharing the same features they would, Freud conjectured, share the same meaning, namely, they would all represent a particular desire or wish. For example as we have seen, Freud took all dreams of climbing stairs to be dreams of sexual activity, the common features being between the rhythm and breathlessness of climbing stairs and the rhythm and breathlessness of sex. All dreams of pears or hills he took to be dreams of breasts, the common features being between the shape of the hill or pear and the shape

¹S. Freud 'Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality', The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works, James Strachey (ed. and trans.), London: Hogarth, 1953-66). Vol.7, p.68.

of breasts. Interestingly, it is difficult to see how some of Freud's dream objects do share the same properties as their supposed correlates. For example Freud says that all dreams of gardens are dreams of female genitals and that all things wooden represent females.

This leads one to the question why Freud should think that even when something exemplifies the same property as something else, say the breathlessness of stair climbing and the breathlessness associated with sexual activity, that the former is meaning-related to the latter? From the fact that the top hat and the phallus share the same shape, it does not follow that phalluses have any necessary meaning relation to top hats. Similarly why should all rhythm and all breathlessness be sexual. The sexual connection is the one that Freud simply makes. Wittgenstein, indeed, regards such interpretations by Freud not as demonstrating a necessary meaning relation, but, rather, as reflecting Freud's own preoccupation with sex.

The fact is that whenever one is preoccupied with something, with some trouble or with some problem which is a big thing in one's life - as one's sexuality might be, for instance, then no matter what you start from, the associations will lead finally and inevitably back to that same matter. Freud remarks on how, after the analysis of it has been given, the dream appears so very logical. And of course it does¹.

Rhythm and breathlessness fit differently into different circumstances. It is Freud who has chosen to take any form of rhythm and breathlessness as sexual. In so doing, he has not taken into account cases in which one may climb stairs without rhythm and breathlessness and, similarly, cases where one may engage in sexual activity without rhythm and breathlessness. In those instances then, both climbing stairs and having sex would not share the properties in the way that Freud thinks are essential to the existence of a meaning relation between dreams of climbing stairs and sexual activity. Freud simply takes the fact that two objects share a feature as evidence

¹L. Wittgenstein Lectures and Conversations, pp.50-1.

of a meaning relationship. This would lead to the bizarre conclusion that any dream object, just because it happens to share some property of a sexual organ or sexual activity, has to mean by necessity that one is dreaming of that sexual organ or activity.

What, however, establishes the necessity of that connection, if, as we have said, not all dreams of climbing stairs will be dreams of having sex, or share the properties sometimes associated with that activity? Freud has misunderstood what it is for something to have a meaning, if he thinks that this is established on the basis of certain dream words, objects or images having certain properties that guarantee their meaning, so that when in a dream we encounter an instance of stair climbing which has the properties of rhythm and breathlessness, it has to mean that the dreamer dreams of engaging in sexual activity.

It is wrongheaded to think the dream image gets its meaning simply by virtue of the fact that it shares properties with other activities. For how is Freud to know that, simply because someone reports a dream of climbing stairs in ways which involve rhythm and breathlessness, properties it shares with physical activity, that the dreamed rhythm and breathlessness are sexual?

There is nothing, then, about the shared properties that of itself tells us what the meaning of the dream is. We could, indeed, choose to interpret the dreamer's rhythm and breathlessness in other ways. We could say of a report of a dream of climbing stairs in rhythmically and breathlessly, that the dreamer was aware of being unfit, the dream being a reminder to do something about it.

That we can characterise it in various ways, suggests that there is nothing that counts as the meaning of the dream, some essential meaning that Freud thinks to be revealed by similarity of dream properties to properties of sexual objects and activities. Rather, unless more is done to establish the notion of the essential meaning of the dream, the dream can be variously characterised.

These various “interpretations”, of which Freud’s is one, can better be regarded, as we shall see, as secondary or metaphorical applications of the ordinary language. On that account Freud was not interpreting an already existing albeit hidden meaning but rather was applying the ordinary language in new and novel ways for purposes particular to psychoanalysis. Later we shall examine exactly what this involves. Before that, I want to look at Freud’s second mistake, namely thinking that finding the meaning of a dream is a matter of interpreting a dream language.

III

THE DREAM AS A LANGUAGE: THE PROBLEM OF CONCEIVING THE ATTRIBUTION OF MEANING TO A DREAM AS INTERPRETATION

Freud thought of dream interpretation as the translation of one sort of language into another, remarking that, “when we interpret a dream, we are simply translating a particular thought-content (the latent-dream thoughts) from the ‘language of the dreams’ into our waking speech”¹.

The dream, argues Wittgenstein, has all the appearances of a language, but the appearances of a language which no one seems to be able to understand and, hence, which no one can translate. In Lectures and Conversations, Wittgenstein says that “it seems in a way like writing, but it is not a writing which either I or anyone else would recognize or understand”².

¹S. Freud, “The Claims of Psychoanalysis”, The Complete Edition of the Psychological Works, vol.13, p.176.

²L. Wittgenstein, Lectures and Conversations, p.44.

In his Lectures and Conversations Wittgenstein speaks of the way in which the uninterpreted dream can give the impression of containing some message that needs to be understood, a message that we can't quite figure out. In this sense Wittgenstein can see why Freud might think that the dream was a language that needed translating. Wittgenstein says:

There seems to be something in dream images that has a certain resemblance to the signs of a language. As a series of marks on paper or on sand might have. There might be no mark which we recognize as a conventional sign in any alphabet we knew, and yet we might have a strong feeling that they must be a language of some sort: that they mean something. There is a cathedral in Moscow with five spires. On each of these there is a different sort of curving configuration. One gets the strong impression that these different shapes and arrangements must mean something¹.

However, although our dreams give us the impression of being a language in need of translation, Wittgenstein says that they cannot actually be so. For if the dream were a language that could be translated into the ordinary language, then it would be equally possible for the ordinary language to be translated into the dream language and since this is impossible (on Freud's account) then it is also impossible that there is a dream language that is in need of translation. Wittgenstein in Lectures and Conversations says:

Suppose you look on the dream as a kind of language. A way of saying something, or a way of symbolizing something. These might be regular, not necessarily alphabetical - it might be like Chinese, say. We might then find a way of translating this symbolism into the language of ordinary speech, ordinary thoughts. But then the translation ought to be possible both ways. It ought to be possible by employing the same techniques to translate ordinary thoughts into dream language. As Freud, recognizes, this is never done and cannot be done. So we might question whether dreaming is a way of thinking something, whether it is a language at all².

¹Ibid., p.45.

²Ibid., p.48.

The dream cannot be translated into the ordinary language in the way that French can be translated into English, because, unlike languages which we translate, the “dream language” does not exist independently of its translation. Hence it cannot be known independently of it. Thus the “language of dreams” can’t be known independently of the ordinary language in which such a translations are articulated. That it can’t be independently known, points to the impossibility of the dream itself being a language. Elder makes the point that:

When we consider the proposition that “dreams have a meaning”, we are too much inclined to think of dreams on the analogy of language (as Freud and others after him have done), to regard dreams as a kind of symbolism, and to think of the relation between dreams and their meaning as being like the relation between a word or a sentence and its meaning (or between two texts in different languages or two different “modes of expression”) But, in fact this analogy is - for the most part at least, false: it misleads us into thinking that we can describe the operations of the unconscious in purely linguistic terms, according to the same categories that with which we describe the effects of meaning in language; but what belongs to language was there from the beginning, whereas what belongs to the unconscious can only be found in the specific procedures through which it is interpreted¹.

Dreaming then, is not itself a language in need of translation, although dream reports and dream interpretations are made by using language. When we report our dreams and interpret our dreams we employ an already acquired language, a language whose meaning we do not need to interpret. Understanding the meaning of words and sentences of that language is not a matter of interpretation. What is given in the case of what is called “the interpretation of dreams” is not the meaning of an language unknown to the dreamer, but rather a characterization of those dreams that is articulated in a secondary or metaphorical language by the analyst, using what Elder calls “the specific procedures” of psychoanalysis. The analyst extends the ordinary use of language to give an account of the events and behaviour of the dreamer as he or she

¹Elder, *op.cit*, pp.75-76.

reports it. Further such an extension may be used to give an account of other people cited in the dream report.

The dream then has no meaning other than the one we find in it, though what we find is, as we shall see, not arbitrarily found, relying, as it does, on an pre-existing public and shared language. If we don't assign the dream a meaning, it doesn't have one. And, for the patient, the dream has no meaning other than the one that he or she sooner or later is brought to accept by the redescription, using secondary or metaphorical meanings, of the analyst. In other words there is no meaning of the dream independently of the "dream interpretation," which as we have said is a characterising extended application of the ordinary language. There is no ultimate correct interpretation of a dream waiting to be discovered. There is only the interpretation that the patient is ultimately willing to accept. This is the kind of view that Bouveresse attributes to Wittgenstein when he writes that:

As Wittgenstein says, it is the acknowledgement of the interpretation that determines and defines what we were looking for in our search for meaning (as when we suddenly find the word that tells us exactly what we wanted)¹.

Are we led to conclude from this that the "dream interpretation" is simply whatever the analyst chooses to impose and the dreamer chooses to accept. That would seem to lead to the view that the dream could mean anything. Whatever interpretation is given of the dream, it could equally well be interpreted to mean something else. And if a dream could mean anything, then the notion of its having a meaning at all becomes obscure. Does that not lead to a scepticism about the meaning of dreams.

In order to throw light on the error of thinking that accepting psychoanalytic explanations amounts to such a scepticism, I suggest that we look at a related

¹Bouveresse, op.cit., p.116.

discussion of meaning-scepticism. I refer to the form of scepticism about the notion of right rule-following attributed to Wittgenstein in Kripke's book Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language. There Kripke formulates a sceptical paradox, much like the one that seems to occur when we make the meaning of a dream relative to what the dreamer can be brought to accept. On Kripke's account the problem for Wittgenstein is that his account makes whatever seems right in following a rule, in fact right, so that any future application of the rule that seems right is right. But if any application that seems right, is right, we lose the notion of right and wrong that seems integral to the notion of rule-following. I wish to show that if we can prove that Kripke is wrong in his belief that there is a sceptical paradox in Wittgenstein's later discussion of rules and meaning, we need not fear scepticism in the related case of dream characterisation.

Kripke, then, argues that Wittgenstein arrives at a sceptical paradox about meaning, a paradox which he, Kripke, claims is the "central problem of the Philosophical Investigations". However, as we shall see, a careful reading, specifically of paragraph 201 of the Investigations, reveals that Wittgenstein himself thinks that the sceptical paradox and its solution arises from a misunderstanding of what is at stake. If, as I have said, we can show that Kripke is wrong about Wittgenstein's sceptical paradox, then we can show that similar suspicions that our account of the meaning of the dream as simply a matter of what seems right to the dreamer, are also unfounded. It does not have to follow that because there is nothing beyond what seems to be a correct characterisation of a dream, that there is no right and wrong about dream interpretation.

The Wittgensteinian account of the interpretation of dreams, we shall now show, does not licence a scepticism about the meaning of dreams. Accepting a dream interpretation is like accepting a description of one's behaviour and not, as Freud thought, penetrating through to a hidden meaning. This does not occasion any paradox

First, let us look briefly at what Kripke took Wittgenstein's "sceptical paradox" and "sceptical solution" to be. Kripke cites the first part of 201 of the Philosophical Investigations:

This was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule. The answer was: if everything can be made out to accord with the rule, then it can also be made out to conflict with it. And so there would be neither accord nor conflict.

If every action can be made out to accord with a rule, then this looks as if rules can be variously interpreted without check. Moreover, there is nothing about the rule that unambiguously tells me which way I ought to interpret it. Thus, there is no fact about the rule of addition that guarantees that I will carry on adding as I have hitherto done. I could, on seeing the addition sign, interpret it to mean "quus". The question, therefore, is what guarantees that I will continue to mean the same by "plus", by the addition sign, in every future instance of using it?

Kripke claims Wittgenstein denies that some private insight tells us how to go on. He denies, that is, a mentalist position, where justification for use occurs in some kind of mental experience. For he denies that we can follow rules privately. He denies also the verificationist's position, where the justification for saying the use is the same is that there is some fact of the matter, that makes it true that the use is the same.

Kripke argues that Wittgenstein's answer is that rules are fixed by their use. So if people have in the past used the addition sign to mean "plus" and not "quus", then they will so continue in all future cases of using the sign. In this sense Kripke says that Wittgenstein is like Hume, whose sceptical solution to problems about induction involves the notion that habit underlies our inference from past cases to present and future cases. Thus, if we have always used the addition sign to mean "plus", then we will be disposed to continue in future cases to mean this by the sign. Kripke calls this a dispositional account of meaning, an account, he thought, to be

found both in Hume¹ and in Ryle², although configured in slightly different ways. Hume's dispositional account one might say appeals more to habits of the mind and Ryle's more to habits of behaviour. Both, however, want to argue that meaning is fixed by the way people are disposed to act, and not by any fact about what is meant. In this sense then Kripke regards Wittgenstein's solution as a sceptical solution.

Kripke, then, likens Wittgenstein's community rule following to Hume's answer to questions as why the future will resemble the past. Kripke says that "of course I am suggesting that Wittgenstein's argument against private language has a structure similar to Hume's argument against private causation"³. Hume had asked the sceptical question: how can one know that what caused an event in the past will cause an event of the same type in the future? In other words, how can one infer from the past to the present and future? The sceptical answer is a dispositional one, that the mind tends to conjoin events in a way that conditions us to infer from the past to the present and future. Kripke sees this solution as similar to what he sees as Wittgenstein's solution to questions about going on in the same way in future cases of rule following. One will use a particular rule in a certain way in future cases because one has used it in a certain way in past cases. Presumably Hume's sceptical answer is sceptical because there is no fact of the matter that will determine what will follow certain events in future cases, and hence no reason to believe that this rather than that will follow. There only tendencies of the human mind or in Ryle's case tendencies of human behaviour to do this or that.

¹David Hume, Enquiries Concerning the Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals, ed. L.A Selby- Bigge (Oxford:Oxford University Press, 1962).

²Ryle, op.cit., pp. 116-153.

³S. Kripke, Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), p.68.

Wittgenstein argues, according to this account, that what guarantees that we continue to use a word in the same way, is the circumstances of use, in which people agree that the rule is being used correctly. Getting it right and getting it wrong, then are fixed by communal dispositions, and one can know whether one is getting it right or wrong by observing the behaviour of people in the community who employ such rules. Kripke then sees Wittgenstein's solution to the sceptical problem of how the same action can be seen both as according and not according with a rule as a sceptical one. He regards it as a sceptical solution because its being right is its merely being a matter of what people agree to in having a disposition to do, and not what is the case. Kripke says, therefore that:

What follows from these assertability conditions is not that the answer everyone gives to an addition problem, is by definition, the correct one, but rather the platitude that, if everyone agrees upon a certain answer, then no one will feel justified in calling the answer wrong¹.

Kripke thinks that Wittgenstein gives a sceptical solution to his apparent problems of rules being variously interpretable. Wittgenstein's solution, Kripke says, is the argument for community rule-following. The solution, in a nutshell, is this: although we can interpret rules variously, we do follow certain rules because they are agreed on by our community. Kripke argues that Wittgenstein's solution is a sceptical one because there is no justification for rule following other than that agreement. However, I wish to argue that as Wittgenstein has no sceptical problem, he will not be giving a sceptical solution.

Even thinking of Wittgenstein as a sceptic is a result of Kripke's assumption that a rule always has to be interpreted, it being unclear what makes any particular interpretation correct. That bears on my account of the interpretation of dreams, since it

¹Kripke, *op.cit.*, p.112.

might seem, on Wittgenstein's account, that it is unclear what makes a dream interpretation right, other than the patient's say-so.

The first thing to say is that one should not simply concentrate, as Kripke did, on the first paragraph of 201 of the Investigations. One has to read the whole section. McGinn makes this observation, too, when he says in his book, Wittgenstein on Meaning, that Kripke "fails to quote, or even heed, what immediately follows this¹". If one does take into consideration the rest of the paragraph, one finds Wittgenstein saying that the paradox arises from a misunderstanding, and hence that Kripke's way of thinking about rule-following is wrongheadedly based on the same misunderstanding. Thus it is not his own paradox to which Wittgenstein was referring in section 201 of the Investigations. This is evident from his use of the past tense in the assertion "this was our paradox". Wittgenstein wants to say, however, that the way of thinking that generated the apparent paradox rested on a misunderstanding. This is clear from the second paragraph of section 201 of the Philosophical Investigations where he says:

It can be seen that there is a misunderstanding here from the mere fact that in the course of our argument we give one interpretation after another, as if each one contented us a least for a moment, until we thought of yet another standing behind it. What this shews is that there is a way of grasping a rule which is not an interpretation, but which is exhibited in what we call 'obeying the rule' and 'going against it' in actual cases.

The misunderstanding arises from thinking that if people can obey and go against a rule, then rule following and such things as understanding speech episodes or dreams must be a matter of interpretation. Wittgenstein wants to make it quite clear, however, that rule-following, and such related activities as understanding the meaning of a word and using it, is not a matter of interpretation. He explicitly rejects the view which Kripke assigns to him, namely that the rules can be variously interpreted.

¹C. McGinn, Wittgenstein on Meaning (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984) p. 68.

Kripke's mistake is to run together the notion that rules can be variously interpreted, which is the sceptical worry, with Wittgenstein's assertion that there are cases in which people obey the rule and cases in which people go against the rule. For Kripke takes the possibility of "going against the rule" as indicating that the way to follow a rule is somehow always in doubt. But this is a wrongheaded way of looking at what going against the rule amounts to.

An example might be useful here in thinking about the wrongheadedness of Kripke's paradox. If I go against a rule by parking on double yellow lines, it is not as if I have a doubt about what the interpretation of the rule is. I simply take a certain attitude towards the rule, I refuse to obey it. But refusing to obey a particular rule must mean that I understand what the rule is. Of course there will be cases where people are unaware of the rules about yellow lines. However, when told the rule about yellow lines, it would be odd if they said "I've interpreted 'yellow' to mean 'fellow'", unless they were mentally ill or taking drugs. However, those cases make my case stronger. For we would not take the person who told us that yellow lines could be interpreted as fellow lines as indicating to us a possible interpretation of yellow lines. We would think either person was a trying to dodge the fine by feigning ignorance, or that he or she was mentally ill or a sceptical philosopher. The point is that there must be rules the application of which cannot be a matter of interpretation. I might think that receiving a parking ticket for parking on double yellow lines when I was attending to an old lady was unjust. But it is not as if I think that I could interpret the rule to mean something other than it did.

Wittgenstein does not think either that there is a general doubt about how we are to interpret the rules of use, or that, in some Humean way, we can quell this doubt by saying that the mind has a propensity to conjoin events together and therefore can infer from the past to the future. First, as we have said, Wittgenstein, does not think that, for example, the rule of addition could be variously interpreted. Second, he does

not have a Humean belief that the mind predisposes us to add rather than do something else. In other words, he does not believe that the mind stores past mental events and employs them in instances where we need to decide how to apply a rule in future cases. McGinn, indeed, remarks,

What we find, however, when we scour Wittgenstein's text, is a total lack of anything remotely resembling the sorts of considerations about dispositions advanced by Kripke¹.

Wittgenstein, rather, wants to reject this whole way of thinking, which amounts to the view that meaning is a matter of interpreting, translating or decoding something². Because meaning, for Wittgenstein, is not to be established on the basis of truth claims about an independently existing world that gives meaning to our utterances, nor on the basis of privately introspectible claims to know the truth, people can mistakenly think that he is a sceptic about meaning. However his view is that meaning is public. We share a public language and agree, without interpretation, in the language that we use. That fixes meaning rather than calling it into question. This does not imply that there are not sometimes possible interpretations of behaviour. But it does imply that meaning is not always a matter of interpretation.

Wittgenstein is not, then, a sceptic about meaning and does not believe that we are confronted with a welter of interpretations between which we have no rational way of choosing. The same goes for the understanding of dreams. Hence, when we say that the criterion for the correctness of a dream-description is ultimately the patient's

¹McGinn, *op cit.*, p.72.

²Wittgenstein's discussion on the mistake of meaning as interpretation is related to what he says about seeing-as. It is related to seeing-as because, in the same way that the visual image is forced on us in seeing aspects, so, too, are rules and meaning forced upon us. We don't interpret the meaning of our words anymore than we interpret the duck-aspect and the rabbit-aspect. We simply see it. Wittgenstein says of seeing-as in Philosophical Investigations, p.212: "Do I really see something different each time, or do I only interpret what I see in a different way? I am inclined to say the former. But why? To interpret is to think, to do something: seeing is a state".

acknowledgement that his or her dream meant what the analyst said it meant, we are not opening the door to the claim that the patient can make a dream mean anything he or she wants it to mean. In acknowledging the analyst's characterisation of his or her dream, it is not open to the analyst to offer any interpretation of that dream, nor the patient to choose any interpretation he or she feels fits its meaning. On that view there would be no reason to accept one explanation over and above any other. Rather, the patient is accepting a characterization of his or her behaviour that is articulated in metaphorical and secondary applications of the public language, applications that are rule governed and therefore whose meaning is not a matter subject to individual choice.

On this account of psychoanalysis, the patient does not come to think that a hat really means a phallus, by virtue of placing an optional interpretation on the dream-hat. That would open the way to a sceptical doubt as to whether other interpretations are possible. Rather, on a more Wittgensteinian understanding of dream "interpretation" one would think of the patient as accepting a new description of their behaviour.

That description, in the example of the hat and phallus, uses, as we shall show, language that is metaphorical or secondary in sense. Freud then, and not Wittgenstein, is revealed as the potential sceptic about meaning. It was he who thought that the patient could (with the implication that he or she might not) come to see that a hat could mean a phallus. This is obviously related to what we were saying earlier about the essence of meaning. For it raises questions about how that becomes the determinate meaning.

Freud's interpretations take the meaning of terms like "hat" and "phallus" for granted. It is this that enables Freud to make the kind of metaphorical connections that he does. For if one did not know how these terms were ordinarily used, how would one know how to make the metaphorical connection between them. Freud, then, had

not discovered a new language, which had to be translated (interpreted) by the analyst. We wouldn't know what that meant or how we should recognize it as a language. Freud had, rather, simply extended the ordinary language in imaginative ways to get people to see things about their life. It is to those applications of the possibilities of language that we now turn.

IV

THE DREAM AS AN UNCONSCIOUS PROCESS: THE PROBLEM OF MEANING CONCEIVED AS A HIDDEN PROCESS

Wittgenstein traces Freud's concern with finding the meaning or essence of the dream to the influence of 19th century dynamics on psychology. He says that:

Freud was influenced by the 19th century idea of dynamics - an idea which has influenced the whole treatment of psychology. He wanted to find some one explanation which would show what dreaming is. He wanted to find the essence of dreaming. And he would have rejected any suggestion that he might be partly right but not altogether so. If he was partly wrong, that would have meant for him that he was wrong altogether - that he had not found the essence of dreaming!

In the same way then that, according at least to nineteenth century mechanics, one could give an explanation for what caused things to move, Freud thought that he could give an explanation as to what caused us to dream what we did. The analogy between dynamics and psychology, as we have said previously, is an unhelpful one, because, in the case of psychology, the kind of explanations that are given, particularly in the case of dreams, do not refer to anything that can be directly or indirectly observed. We have no way of showing empirically that the analyst's interpretation of the dream is what the dreamer intended in his dream or by his report of the dream. There is, then, no mechanical process that we can observe causing us to dream the things we do. What is meant by the dream is not governed by an

¹L. Wittgenstein Lectures and Conversations, p.48.

unconscious process occurring prior to the dream interpretation. As we said in the last chapter, processes underlying such things as dreams do not give meaning to what results from their operations. We wrongly ascribe meaning to processes and this leads us to think that meaning itself is a process. That, as we shall, see is wrongheaded.

Thinking that the meaning of something, be it a word or a dream, is fixed by reference to some process existing prior to the use of the word or to the dream characterisation given in the analysis of the dream, led Freud to think that there is an essence to meaning and hence, since dreams are meaningful, to think there to be an essence to dreams. He assumes that the meaning of everything one says or does in one's dreams is determined by reference to the unconscious in advance of one's dream report, analysis being devoted to finding that meaning. However, it seems, rather, that what is to be understood by the dream is brought out, not by reference to something occurring during sleep, but in the dream report and its subsequent characterization. Nothing apart from that determines the meaning of my dream and there is no ultimate meaning for the dream independent of that characterisation. There is only the characterization that I, with the help of the analyst, come to assign to it.

In his book, Dreaming, Norman Malcolm argues that one does not reason, judge and evaluate whilst asleep. It is only on waking and while awake that one does. Thus he argues dreaming is not an experience or state that goes on while we are unconscious (though there doubtless are physical processes that do go on and without which dreaming would not occur). "Dreaming" is the term we learn to apply to cases in which, on waking, we give certain reports. Hence, if we want to understand dreaming, then we should look at how the term is used in making such reports. This is why, in the Philosophical Investigations, Wittgenstein remarks:

People who on waking tell us certain incidents (that they have been in such-and-such places, etc). Then we teach them the expression 'I dreamt', which precedes the narrative. Afterwards I sometimes ask them 'did you dream anything last night?' and am answered yes or no,

sometimes with an account of a dream, sometimes not. That is a language game¹.

The child then learns the language of dreaming and comes to think of what he or she reports as something that went on whilst she or he was asleep. Thus our language misleads us into thinking that the dream is an inner process. Malcolm says:

We are strongly inclined to think of dreaming as an inward state or process of the soul, and to suppose that each of us arrives at the concept of dreaming through taking note of the process in himself. But this idea gives rise to insoluble problems².

In thinking of the dream as an inward process we are going to face the empirical problems of establishing that such processes go on. How are we to find out if the inner states of different people are the same, and if people mean the same thing by “dreaming”? How do we test whether peoples’ dream reports correspond to what goes on inside them when they are asleep? Dream reports are not based on memory. For how could we find out if a person was remembering a dream correctly? Such a thing does not seem to make sense, and forces us to concede that dreams do not happen while we are asleep, although the use of the language of dreaming misleads us to think that they do.

It is important to note that when Wittgenstein talks about the influence on dynamics on psychology, he hints that Freud might have been partly right about the essence to dreams. What Wittgenstein would see as partly right about the notion of there being an essence of dreams was that, when given a Freudian interpretation of one’s dreams, one would feel as if this interpretation somehow captured the essence or the meaning of that dream. Here we might be said to “experience the meaning of the dream”. This must not be confused, however, with the assertion that this meaning is

¹L.Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, p.184.

²N.Malcolm, Dreaming (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959), p.54.

itself some sort of process or experience. To bring this out I shall look at the notion of “experiencing the meaning”, of a word and related notions such as the notion of searching for the meaning. These can be seen as akin to “experiencing the meaning of the dream”. I shall first look at the general temptation to be led astray by certain sorts of experiences, for example, the experience of suddenly finding the word one is looking for, into positing processes which are the mechanisms of meaning. Then I shall show how Freud succumbs to that temptation.

Freud had conceived the acknowledgement of the meaning of the dream as confirmation of the occurrence an unconscious process. However, one does not agree to a process, nor does one make it the case that a process has occurred by agreeing to that it has. A process goes on independently of one’s agreement that it does. What is established by one’s agreeing to it, for example that there is present a case of dream condensation, is as we shall see, an agreement to what has been characterised by a secondary application of the language, and, in the case of dream representation, what is established by one’s agreement to what the analyst suggests, is not the existence of a process, but an agreement to what is characterised by a metaphorical application of the language.

Even if some process were always to be going on while the person who subsequently reports a dream was asleep, one cannot infer from this that such a process explains what a person understands when he or she talks of ‘experiencing the meaning of the dream’. For, as Wittgenstein says in the Philosophical Investigations, “meaning it is not a process which accompanies a word. For no process could have the consequences of meaning¹”.

As we had said in the previous chapter, processes are not normative. They don’t intend or wish things. This was Freud’s category mistake. For he had assumed

¹L. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, p. 218.

that non-human processes, namely the processes of the unconscious, could causally bring about human wishes, and hence could explain human behaviour. However as Wittgenstein says, no process could have this consequence. Thus, it is a mistake to think that processes, such as those that could occur while we are asleep, can tell us the meaning of our waking dream reports.

The temptation, to which Wittgenstein thought many philosophers of language had succumbed, and one to which, I think, Freud himself fell afoul, was to think meaning itself to be a process, so that to talk about the meaning of one's dream it to refer to such a process. One can be led to this view by trying to explain the feeling one has when one understands a word, a sentence or an explanation. Wittgenstein describes this feeling of comprehension as similar to the feeling we get when finding a solution. He says:

Now I could imagine that someone seeing the unfolded picture might exclaim, " Yes, that's the solution, that's what I dreamed, minus the gaps and distortions." This would then be the solution precisely by virtue of his acknowledging it as such. It's like searching for a word when you are writing and then saying: "That's it, that expresses what I intended !"- Your acceptance certifies the word as having been found and hence as being the one you were looking for. (In this instance we could really say: we don't know what we are looking for until we have found it - which is like what Russell says about wishing)¹.

As we have said, there is a tendency to think that this experience of comprehension is some kind of internal decoding process. Wittgenstein identifies a range of cases in relation to experiencing the meaning of words which can, when philosophizing, lead us into such confusions about meaning. He talks of searching for words, using expressions like, "it's on the tip of my tongue", finding expressions that fit, finding expressions that don't fit, saying the same word at the same time as someone else. Wittgenstein thinks that we are liable to be misled in philosophy by the expression "it's on the tip of my tongue", because it can lead us to think that what we

¹L.Wittgenstein, Culture and Value, p.68.

want to say is stored inside us just waiting to be retrieved. We think that getting the meaning right, is a simple matter of remembering, hence of checking one's mental inventory. This looks extremely difficult to establish, since we have no way of testing whether what a person says correlates with an inner process. And how would reference to an inner process tell me that the word stored is the one that I want to say. How can it tell me in advance in advance that it is going to be the right one.

Suppose we are trying to think of the word to describe someone's behaviour. When we think, "the word is on the tip of my tongue", we should not mislead ourselves into thinking that something is going on while we wait for the expression to be found, rather like waiting for one's cash from a cash machine. The time lapse can be explained simply in terms of not yet having grasped how one wants to describe the behaviour, so that the search for the expression is like a refinement, a matter of getting the description of behaviour more accurate. Wittgenstein says of this case:

"The word is on the tip of my tongue." What is going on in my consciousness? That is not the point at all. Whatever did go on was not what was meant by that expression. It is of more interest what went on in my behaviour.- "The word is on the tip of my tongue" tells you: the word which belongs has escaped me, but I hope to find it soon. For the rest of the verbal expression does no more than certain wordless behaviour¹.

The expression "the word is on the tip of my tongue", when we philosophize, can mislead us into thinking that meaning is a process that is going on somewhere. William James seems to have succumbed to this confusion when he reflected philosophically on what it is to search for a word. One feels that although the word is not yet found, one knows the word and thus the word must be there. It cannot but be this word. Wittgenstein expressed James' sense of the peculiarity of this situation thus: "what a remarkable experience! The word is not there yet, and yet in a certain

¹L. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, p.219.

sense is there, - or something is there, which cannot grow into anything but this word¹".

These examples of "experiencing meaning", and the philosophical confusion that results from them, namely, thinking that such experiences are processes, can now be applied directly to the kinds of problems that Freud encountered when talking about the meaning of a dream. For one of the most prominent features of Freud's work is his stress on the necessity for the patient's confirmation of the dream interpretation and hence of his or her agreement to the meaning assigned to the dream, a meaning, Freud must have been tempted to think, which must already have been there in advance of the agreement. This, again, leads him to think that meaning is some thing a process, underlying the dream, and there in advance of the agreement. For one thinks that one is agreeing to something that has already gone on inside one. Whereas one's agreement is not a sign that a process has been retrieved, but is assent to a characterization of one's behaviour.

V

PSYCHOANALYTIC MEANING AS A SECONDARY AND METAPHORICAL APPLICATION OF OUR ORDINARY LANGUAGE

Wittgenstein, as we have said, acknowledges that we do think of words and phrases as having certain atmospheres. They have this not because some occult process is going on inside us which requires translation by an analyst if it is to be understood, but, rather, as we shall see, because in certain cases, including psychoanalytic description, explanation and treatment, we extend the range and application of our ordinary language, often by the use of metaphor. Thus we attach special significance to certain words and phrases. When this happens, we are not

¹L. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, p.219.

interpreting those words or phrases so as to bring out some hidden meaning. Rather, we are interpreting behaviour in ways that exploit the metaphorical possibilities of our language.

For example, if I'm looking for a word to describe how I am feeling, and I say I feel blue, and that seems to fit just how I feel, it is not as if I suddenly understand the meaning of "blue", or need a special interpretation of that word. I know what "blue" means. I don't have to have an experience of comprehension in every instance of its use to understand why it fits here. But I do have to have an understanding of its secondary application, and this can make me think of feeling certain uses of the term "blue" as having an atmosphere. As we shall see, in the psychoanalytic context what is important is understanding the kinds of applications of this sort being made both by analyst and by patient. That we come to agree with the dream characterisation is as, we shall see, related to the ingenuity of the use of secondary sense and metaphor in such characterisations.

I wish to suggest that one can explain the experience of meaning, for example, of dreams or behaviour suddenly making sense, in terms of the secondary use of language in psychoanalytic interpretation. Through this one can experience the dawning of an aspect which is akin to experiencing the meaning of a word and hence experiencing the meaning of the dream.

The secondary sense of the language is dependent upon an already acquired language, which Wittgenstein refers to as the primary sense. Understanding the secondary sense, then, is not a matter of interpreting or decoding meaning, for as we have seen in the discussion of Kripke, this is not what understanding a language involves. It is a matter of applying the ordinary language in different contexts to bring about new, novel and imaginative ways of characterizing behaviour. For example by drawing attention in slips of tongue or what is compacted in dream condensation, the analyst can get the patient to see an application of words in a new context. Indeed, in

these cases Freud brings to our attention the use by the dreamer or patient of particular words, words to which Freud gives new and often uncanny applications. For example as we saw in the case of dream condensation the repetition of the word 'maistullmutz', which is thought to be a kind of pudding,^g takes on a whole string of associations. However, in order for Freud to give the word the connotations he gives it, he and his patient must already be able to use the word in its ordinary sense. Thus there are two senses of a word, one dependent on the other. Wittgenstein calls these "primary" and "secondary" senses. He writes: "here one might speak of a "primary" and "secondary" sense of a word. It is only if the word has the primary sense for you that you can use it in the secondary one¹".

The word 'maistullmutz' does not change its meaning. It is still a word for a kind of peasant pudding. What does change is the connotation and the significance that is given by the dream analysis. Thus one uses this word in a new context to make a point. Wittgenstein illustrates this in his example of talk of Wednesday as fat and Tuesday as lean. For there he shows that the words "fat" and "lean" do not take on some quite different sense when used to characterise the days of the week. Nor do "Wednesday" and "Tuesday", when spoken of in this way, suddenly come to have some other, unrelated, meaning. The words used remain words for days of the week and certain sorts of properties, but take on new associations, associations that we may see or may not see depending on the quality of the association and also on our imaginative capacities. So, although they are still words for days of the week, the use of secondary language gives us a new way of looking at the days of the week.

Given the two ideas "fat" and "lean", would you be rather inclined to say that Wednesday was fat and Tuesday lean, or vice versa ? (I incline decisively towards the former.)

Now have "fat" and "lean" some different meaning from their usual one ?
- They have a different use.- So ought I really to have used different words ? Certainly not that. I want to use these words (with their familiar

¹L. Wittgenstein Philosophical Investigations, p.216.

meanings) here. - Now, I say nothing about the causes of this phenomenon. They might be associations from my childhood. But that is a hypothesis. Whatever the explanation,- the inclination is there¹.

Wittgenstein thinks that secondary usage differs from metaphorical usage. The difference is one that I think is hard to establish, and one which exponents of Wittgenstein tend either to ignore or fudge. However it is important that we see the difference so that we can see the difference between the secondary uses, for example in Freud's analyses of word condensations, and, on the other hand, his metaphorical uses, for example in his analyses of dream representations.

In the Philosophical Investigations Wittgenstein says:

The secondary sense is not a "metaphorical" sense. If I say "For me the vowel 'e' is yellow" I do not mean: "yellow" in a metaphorical sense, - for I could not express what I want to say in any other way than by the idea "yellow"².

Wittgenstein, I conjecture, does not think that when one uses the language in a secondary sense, one is being brought to see something as something else. The vowel "e" is not seen as being yellow. However, in the case of metaphor, for example, when saying "John is a lamb", we are being brought to understand that John can be seen as a lamb, because he shares certain features, properties or qualities with lambs, namely, their gentleness, sweetness and mildness. We can't say this of the vowel. It does not have properties in common with yellow. Thus, getting someone to see the vowel "e" as yellow is not to say the vowel "e" actually is yellow. Rather it is a way of getting someone to see a new expressive possibility. In the case of Wittgenstein's Tuesday as lean and Wednesday as fat, it is said that at school he had a teacher on Tuesday who was lean, and a teacher on Wednesday who was fat. Thus he made an association between the day of the week and the size of the teacher, one might say, as a way of

¹Ibid., p.216.

²Ibid., p.216.

summing up his impressions of those days. In Wittgenstein's case there was no sameness in kind between Wednesday and fatness but, rather, there were only Wittgenstein's associations. For he had possibly come to associate Wednesdays with fatness because he was taught by a fat teacher on Wednesdays. This is not meant to suggest that someone who had not been taught by a fat teacher on Wednesdays or a lean one on Tuesdays could not understand the secondary applications that Wittgenstein made. For as Alexander Bird has pointed out to me, understanding secondary meaning is not dependent on individual contingencies, in this case those of Wittgenstein's school days. We might think of this secondary sense as an economy of words. This one might see as similar to Freud's condensation, where one compresses the thoughts one has into single phrases or expressions.

In the case of metaphor, it seems, there has to be a sameness between, say, in our example, John and the lamb, a sameness that is not required in the secondary sense, where there is not a sameness between the vowel "e" and the colour yellow in the way in which there is a sameness between the gentleness of John and the gentleness of a lamb. The sameness in the case of metaphor is related to the way in which the language works. For ordinarily we talk of the gentleness of lambs. Thus to see John as like a lamb is simply a further application of an ordinary use. Both secondary sense and metaphor are, however, parasitic upon an understanding of the ordinary language. In secondary sense one has to know what "Wednesday" means in order to think of it as fat, and in metaphor one has to know that lambs are thought of as gentle in order to apply lamblikeness to people. This is not meant to suggest that one's understanding of Wednesday has to be, as it were, before the mind before one is able to think of it secondarily as fat. Rather it means that one is already familiar with its use and sense in the ordinary language.

The same goes for the terms Freud uses. He applies terms he already knows in new ways. For example, in the case of his dream representations, Freud has to know

what top hats are, namely of a certain shape, in order to confer those qualities they have onto something else, in this case onto phalluses.

VI

DAVIDSON ON 'WHAT METAPHORS MEAN'

In his article "What Metaphors Mean," Davidson adopts what looks, on first glance, to be a similar view to the above, namely, that metaphors depend on ordinary meanings. To understand metaphors one has to understand their literal meaning. However, he takes the meaning of a metaphor to be its literal meaning and therefore argues that metaphors are false.

The relevance of that to the present discussion is that it would seem, given the view I have ascribed to him, that Davidson would have to reject the metaphors Freud, on my account, uses in his analytic descriptions as simply false, an odd conclusion, given that in his paper, 'Paradoxes of Irrationality', Davidson seeks to defend the rationality of those explanations. Of course he may reject my claim that Freud's explanations are metaphorical. However, if he did think that the kinds of claims made by Freud were metaphorical, he would, given his view that the meaning of a metaphor is its (false) literal meaning, have to say that the kinds of claims Freud makes, for example, are simply false.

Since I wish to argue both that psychoanalytic descriptions do invoke metaphors, and that they do not give false accounts of the phenomena they help us to understand, Davidson's views seem at odds with mine. I wish therefore to explore this further.

It is clear from what Davidson says in the third paragraph of his paper that he believes any meaning metaphors to have to be literal meaning:

This paper is concerned with what metaphors mean, and its thesis is that metaphors mean what the words in their most literal interpretation mean and nothing more¹.

Davidson goes on to claim that there are no meanings other than literal meanings, although he thinks that many subscribe to a commonly held view that there are kinds of meanings other than literal meanings. He says:

The central mistake against which I shall be inveighing is the idea that a metaphor has, in addition to its literal sense or meaning another sense or meaning. This idea is common to many who have written about metaphor: it is found in the works of literary critics like Richards, Empson and Winters; philosophers from Aristotle to Max Black; psychologists from Freud to earlier Skinner and later linguists from Plato to Uriel Weinreich and George Lakoff².

Davidson thinks that it is wrong to take metaphor as saying something special. There is nothing that a metaphor says besides what the actual words used in it mean.

Davidson takes a no nonsense approach to metaphor. He says there is nothing surprising about the likeness which we are brought to attend to in metaphor.

However, in being given a striking metaphor, such as “Tolstoy was a great moralizing infant”, we are tempted by the strikingness of a new thought to think that there is a special meaning that can be arrived at by finding out what peculiar property an adult Tolstoy and an infant would share. The attempt then is to find an additional meaning to the class of things adult and the class of things infant that would give us that special meaning supposedly attaching to “Tolstoy was a great moralizing infant”. According to Davidson there is no such special class or meaning to which Tolstoy and infant would correspond.

To bring out his point further, in the course of dealing with what would be a Fregean style suggestion that in metaphor words have various fields of application, he

¹Davidson, ‘What Metaphors Mean’, p.245.

²Ibid., p.246. None of these people is quoted or footnoted by Davidson, so we only have his word for it that indeed this was their view.

gets us to imagine that we are travelling with our friend from Saturn through space to his home. From the spaceship we look back and say, looking at the earth, “we are leaving the floor behind”. In this instance, we are being metaphorical. However, Davidson says it would make no difference to the chap from Saturn which way the meaning was taken. For even though the word “floor” is being used metaphorically, it does not affect the literal meaning. Davidson’s point here, then, against the Fregean view of metaphor, which invokes a special sense of “floor”, is that the meaning of the word is unchanged, for “floor” still means “floor” even in its metaphorical use. There is then no special sense of “floor”, according to Davidson, which can tell us anything about the world over and above what the literal use tells us.

Davidson states that the point of his argument has been to show that metaphors can be explained in terms of their literal meanings. Metaphors are taken either to be true or false and do not have a special meaning.

Davidson emphatically states that metaphors don’t tell us anything that we don’t already know. He says, therefore, that “metaphor does not lead us to notice what might not otherwise be noticed!”.

Similes he takes, for the most part, to be true, and metaphors, for the most part, to be false. In similes we are saying that, for example, a person is like someone or something, but in metaphor we are saying that the person is someone or something, something that they cannot literally be. Thus Juliet can be the like the sun but cannot be the sun. Thus we use a simile when we know that, taken metaphorically, what we say would be false, and we use a metaphor when we know that it is false, but want to say something in a different way. Davidson says of this case

¹Ibid., p.257.

We say Mr S is like a pig because we know he isn't one. If we had used a metaphor and said he was a pig this would not be because we changed our mind about the facts but because we chose to get the idea across a different way¹.

Davidson criticizes Max Black for subscribing to the view that a metaphor does not have a literal paraphrase. For Black, a metaphor has a special cognitive content that enlightens in the way that a literal paraphrase cannot. The metaphor brings out certain features and not others in the way that the literal paraphrase does not. Thus, Black argues, where this enlightenment is lacking, there is a loss in cognitive content. Davidson challenges the notion that metaphors have special cognitive content. He argues that if metaphors did have this special cognitive content, then there would no be such difficulty, as there is, in getting clear about what metaphors mean. Presumably, he thinks that if we had some cognitive experience on being told the metaphor, then we should know its meaning and not be confused about whether what has been said is different to what has been meant.

Davidson wishes to give up of the notion that metaphors have a special cognitive content or message over and above what is conveyed by their literal meaning. Rather he thinks that we should focus instead on the effect that metaphors have on us. Hence the distinction he makes between the meaning and the use of a word. In other words, we should focus on the way metaphors get us to see what they literally say.

VII

DAVIDSON, METAPHOR AND FREUD

Let us now ask about the bearing of Davidson's understanding of metaphors on my interpretation of Freud's metaphorical and secondary uses of terms in dream interpretations.

¹Ibid., p.257.

Davidson thinks we confuse a feeling that metaphor is distinctive from the ordinary usage in the way that it enlightens us, with thinking that metaphor has a special sort of meaning. What is special to metaphor, however, is the mode of articulation not the meaning. The language used in metaphor is special in that it can enable the patient to feel that he or she has suddenly understood some aspect of her or his life or behaviour. This feeling of comprehension, as we have said, should not be thought of as what the meaning is, but, rather, should be thought of as an appreciation of the point that the metaphor is making. The metaphor does not, then, offer a new meaning, but rather offers a characterization of behaviour which applies ordinary usage in different ways, ways that enable people to see a point. There is indeed something special about metaphor. It is different from ordinary usage, but that difference is not a difference in meaning but in emphasis.

On Davidson's account, what is different in metaphor is the way in which we apply our ordinary words in new and novel ways. For what changes is not meaning but our application of meaning. Thus ordinarily we talk about hats as having certain qualities. When being metaphorical we attribute those qualities to other things to illustrate something and hence perhaps to say something special that just couldn't ordinarily be said.

Davidson wants, and I think quite rightly, to attack the view that there is not a special class of meaning into which metaphors fall. So there is not then a sort of meaning which is peculiar to the metaphor "Tolstoy was a moralizing infant" and which denotes a class into which the adult Tolstoy and an infant fall. There is no such class. But it does not follow, as Davidson sometimes suggests, that the likenesses brought out by metaphor are not surprising simply because they could be articulated in non-metaphorical language. He writes:

Ordinary similarity depends on groupings established by the ordinary meanings of words. Such similarity is natural and unsurprising to the extent that familiar ways of grouping objects are tied to usual meanings of usual words¹.

Davidson rightly wants to say that metaphor cannot be understood in terms of the ambiguity of meaning, where one word has two different meanings. But when he points out that a word has a use as well as a meaning, although he is trying to do justice to the thought that “floor” always means “floor”, this does not help us understand why Dante said “the small round floor that makes us passionate” when talking about the earth. He does not do justice to the way meaning can be extended. It seems no good simply saying “floor” means “floor” in the Dante quotation. For Dante wants to say something more than this. Dante extends the word “floor” to mean “earth”, because that way he can convey something that he could not by saying “the small round earth that makes us passionate”. Similarly Freud sought to extend the range of connotations of our ordinary word “hat” in order to try to convey something about our sexual lives.

Thus Davidson misses the point by saying “floor” simply means “floor”. In metaphor, the use of the word “floor” takes on new and interesting connotations. Davidson, it seems, in worrying about ambiguity of meaning, reacts by attempting to confine meaning to definite objects, which I shall suggest is wrongheaded. To think that when a person uses a word in a metaphor they have to mean the object that the word denotes is to miss the point of metaphor. One must look at the way the word is being used and applied and not at something called the ‘meaning of the word’. In order to understand metaphor we have to understand both the way terms are ordinarily used, and the way that ordinary concepts are extended from their normal use. We can’t understand one without the other.

¹Ibid., p.248.

For all its correct points, the weakness of Davidson's account of metaphor begins, I wish to suggest, with his view about meaning, namely that it is "literal" and "tells us something about the world". Black too is guilty of using the term "literal meaning". The way Davidson uses the notion leads to a certain view about language, namely that it is truth-conditional, that words and sentences correspond either to things or events in the world or they don't. However when we speak, we do not simply refer to things or events in the world, unless perhaps to make a philosophical point. Thus it would seem odd if people did go round simply stating the obvious: "tables are tables". On that view people would never actually say anything, because they would be too busy identifying what objects were.

Davidson criticizes Black for thinking that metaphors have a special cognitive content and hence can be distinguished from ordinary uses of terms with their literal meaning. If by "cognitive content" Black means simply that which is conveyed by the metaphor, then I think that his view would be plausible. However in articulating his view Black relies on the distinction Davidson makes between literal and non-literal meaning, a distinction with which I feel unhappy. However it does not distort too much of what Black is trying to say to see his term "literal use" as replaceable by "primary" or "ordinary" use. In doing this one can then see the value of his understanding of metaphor. The difference between Black and Davidson, is that Davidson thinks that all uses of the language are literal uses, whereas Black thinks that there are literal uses and, related, metaphorical uses.

In literal use says Black there are certain words that commit the speaker to believing certain things. For example in using the word "wolf", one believes that one is referring to something hairy, fierce, carnivorous and so on. However, in the case of metaphor, this wolf-system, as Black calls it, can be used to describe something that is not a wolf. Hence, in metaphor, one can use these ideas about wolves to talk about non-wolves, namely to talk about the characteristics people have. Using this wolf-

language enables us to emphasize certain things and suppress others. Thus I can say she was as fierce as a wolf. Black says that “the wolf-metaphor suppresses some details, emphasizes others - in short, organizes our view of man!”.

Black gives various examples of how in metaphor we use systems of ideas that are normally associated with literal uses and apply them in new ranges of cases. In doing this, we can say something that we couldn't otherwise have said or brought to someone's attention. Thus the vocabulary normally associated with chess, when applied to a battle, gives us new aspects from which to view battles. Black likens this to seeing something through a screen, so that the screen alters what we see. Presumably what we see will depend on the screen we have. In this sense then Black regards metaphors as filters that focus the attention on particular things. He says:

Suppose I am set the task of describing a battle in words drawn as largely as possible from the vocabulary of chess. These latter terms determine a system of implications which will proceed to control my description of the battle. The enforced choice of the chess vocabulary will lead in some aspects of the battle to be emphasized, others to be neglected and all to be organized in a way that would cause much more strain in other modes of description. The chess vocabulary filters and transforms: it not only selects, it brings forward aspects of the battle that might not be seen at all through another².

Davidson wants to know how, given his view that metaphors have a distinctive cognitive content that ordinary uses don't have, Black is going to account for metaphors that become part of the ordinary, literal language. For, on Black's view, there is something lacking in the ordinary, literal case that is not lacking in the metaphorical one. He says, for example, that “the set of literal statements so obtained will not have the same power to inform and enlighten as the original³”.

¹M. Black, Models and Metaphors (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1962), p.41.

²Ibid., pp.41-2.

³Ibid., p.46.

If a metaphor were to become part of the ordinary, literal language would it then lose something? Black does not address this problem directly, but one might say that the answer would be in the form of another question: How would a metaphorical use become an ordinary, literal use? One might say that there are metaphorical uses that are more common than others so that people become more familiar with them. However does that familiarity mean that such metaphors actually become ordinary, literal uses? Not necessarily, for we want to maintain that, for example, people who regularly use the metaphor, “he was full of hot air”, want to express something different from the ordinary literal “he talked for rather a long time”. In the metaphorical case, one is using the notion of over-inflation to describe a person talking for a long time, and in the other case one simply said the person talked for a long time. On the other hand, it may be true to say that certain metaphors get so well used that people no longer see their distinctiveness and treat them no differently to ordinary uses of language.

Some metaphors that become part of the ordinary, literal language are often referred to as “dead” metaphors. However I don’t think that this has to mean either that all metaphors are indistinguishable from ordinary, literal uses or that those metaphorical uses that have died can’t be brought back to life. Old ones can be revived, so that what we once took for granted can be seen in a whole new dimension. We can try and bring out the elements in the metaphors that have been taken for granted and perhaps see their importance and use. By doing this we may also find new ways of looking at things that we had overlooked. Thus, I think there is still support for Black’s argument that metaphor is distinctive and differs from the ordinary language in the way it informs and enlightens. This does not have to entail that the ordinary language does not enlighten and inform, but we must be careful to note the different extension that is made of the ordinary language in the case of metaphor.

Davidson wants to conclude that what we are brought to see in metaphor is often beyond words because there is an infinity of things in a metaphor that cannot be captured by propositions. Hence in metaphor we are not brought, as he puts it to, “an exhaustive catalogue of what has been attended to”. Metaphor is not then, he thinks, like a case of seeing-as, where one is brought to see something as something else, for given that metaphors are false then there is no one thing or fact that is being expressed by them, such as the fact that the duck can be seen as the rabbit. The attempt to find a message in a metaphor is argues Davidson, wrongheaded, for there is nothing that the metaphor says.

I would agree that “hat” does not, in a metaphorical use stand to the phallus as the duck, in the case of seeing an aspect, stands to the rabbit. For in the duck-rabbit case the concepts force themselves on us whereas in the metaphorical case we are being brought to think of the hat as the phallus. That, in opposition to Davidson, is what I wish to stress about Freud’s metaphors. If they work they work by extending literal senses. They cannot be reduced to literal senses. That metaphor does not force a direct visual ‘seeing as’ does not mean that the metaphor does not say anything. For example when Romeo says that Juliet is the sun, there is some point he’s making, namely that Juliet brings light to his life as the sun brings light.

VIII

FREUD’S METAPHORS AS LITERALLY TRUE

What underlies Freud’s approach to dream interpretation is the view that metaphors, are, in Davidson’s sense, literally true. For, Freud took his dream interpretations to be revealing facts about our mental life, albeit disguised in a metaphorical form. Wittgenstein, however, thought that metaphors could be confusing when taken literally, when employed as Freud employs them, as demonstrative of

certain states or processes. For metaphors such as “I want to know what’s in or on his mind” are used in the ordinary language unproblematically to mean “I want to know what’s he thinking”. When we take such statements literally we think that they are indicative of some thing, object or entity, namely the mind or the unconscious, in which things happen. Freud also wants us to believe that metaphorical comparisons of hats to phalluses demonstrate an unconscious state of desire.

Wittgenstein in paragraph 356 of the Investigations gives an example of how taking metaphors literally can be misleading. He says : ‘For isn’t it a misleading metaphor to say: “My eyes give me the information that there is a chair over there” Here we are mistakenly led to think that eyes tell us what chairs are. Similarly Freud’s metaphors lead us to think that, for example, climbing stairs in a dream can tell us about an unconscious state of mind.

I wish to suggest that the point is not whether metaphorical statements correspond to real objects or events as Freud and Davidson would have it, but whether they are apt in articulating some aspect of life that we do not usually regard in that manner, so that through new applications and uses of the language I can be brought to see things not previously clear to me.

Such applications are often made in political satire. The most vivid examples of this can be seen in the pages of Private Eye or enjoyed on the television programme, “Have I Got News for You”. The same is true in the psychoanalytic case. One can apply the language to bring patients to see themselves in a certain way. Freud, for example, by using the language of sex to talk about gardens, hats, tables, words, can get dreamers to see sexual aspects of their life that they had not considered before.

This is not to suggest that the dream interpretation reveals facts about unconscious desires located in some occult place, as Freud had thought. Rather, it gets one to see how one could understand and characterise one’s dreams in the terms that Freud provides. It may well be that the metaphor we are provided with is a poor one,

in which case we may not see the point it is making at all, or on the other hand we may not have the imaginative capacity to see the point that is being, metaphorically, made.

Wittgenstein calls this lack of imaginative capacity “aspect-blindness”. He and others have called it “meaning-blindness”. Wittgenstein associates aspect-blindness with a lack of imagination as opposed to a lack of meaning. For people who are blind to aspects of their own behaviour are not lacking in a language in which meanings are understood. They simply lack the capacity to see analogously or metaphorically. In the Philosophical Investigations, Wittgenstein says that “Aspect-blindness will be akin to the lack of the ‘musical ear’¹”.

Wittgenstein explains aspect-blindness in terms of what would be lacking if we didn't feel that words and notes had an ‘atmosphere’. Again, here, we must not get confused with thinking that this atmosphere is a process going on somewhere inside us. It is, rather, related to the significance we place on things such as notes, objects and words. People often give words special sounding associations, often by the way they say the word, perhaps in a funny accent or tone. Pet names or nicknames often take on these bizarre associations. Nicknames can often be related to an aspect of the character of the person to whom the nickname has been assigned. Thus someone who couldn't see the point of the nickname could not see the aspect of the character that was being drawn out, and thus might be said to be aspect-blind. Of course an analogy might be a poor analogy or it might be a cruel analogy, and often these two tend to go together. This view counters Davidson's claim that there are no metaphors that don't work and the further claim that there are no unfunny jokes. In “What Metaphors Mean” he says that”

¹Ibid., p.214.

There are no unsuccessful metaphors, just as there are no unfunny jokes. There are tasteless metaphors, but these are turns that nevertheless have brought something off, even if it were not worth bringing off or could have been brought off better¹.

One is inclined to say that if the metaphor were, to use Davidson's words, "tasteless, not worth bringing off, and could have been brought off better", then it was not a successful metaphor.

There are indeed unsuccessful metaphors, as there are unsuccessful writers, poets and artists. (And by "unsuccessful" one does not mean that these people don't earn lots of money). "Unsuccessful" here means that they did not convey either what they hoped to convey, or simply did not convey anything, because they really had nothing to say. An example of an unsuccessful metaphor can be seen in Norman Nicholson's poem, "Egremont Castle" where he says. "The winter sunlight slowly falls/ Like soapsuds down the castle walls ". Here I can't see what the writer is trying to say. Contrast this with a successful metaphor such as the one Churchill used when referring to Mussolini, he spoke of Mussolini as "that utensil". Here we can see what Churchill wants to achieve, namely to get one to see that Mussolini is nothing more than an implement or tool, that he is used by everyone, that he is more like a mechanical device than a person in his own right.

Freud uses a number of successful metaphors, although they are perhaps not as straightforward as Churchill's. One is given first the dreamt object, for example the hat, and then the interpretation according to which its dream occurrence signifies a phallus. Thus one has said that, dreams of hats are metaphorically dreams of phalluses, or dreams of stairs are metaphorically dreams of sexual activity. Freud's metaphors are convincing because he cleverly projects associative links between objects that share the same or some of the same features. As we have said, that the

¹Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation, p.245.

objects often share the same features does not give rise to any necessary relation in meaning between the objects. The success of the metaphorical association is related to Freud's ingenuity in using the language to get us to see the point he is making. His dream interpretations are not short metaphors. One cannot understand one of his metaphors in isolation from the others. Thus if one wants to understand why, in another example of Freud's, the keys of the piano are stairs, then one has already to know that stairs represent the sexual act, because of the identity between the breathlessness and rhythm of climbing stairs and the breathlessness and rhythm of sexual activity. Thus in knowing this system of metaphors one is able to work out in the dream that the neglecting of the piano lessons was an avoidance of climbing the stairs which was an avoidance sexual activity. Freud writes:

One of my patients, a man whose sexual abstinence was imposed on him by a severe neurosis, and whose (unconscious) phantasies were fixed upon his mother, had repeated dreams of going upstairs in her company. I once remarked to him that a moderate amount of masturbation would probably do him less harm than his compulsive self-restraint, and this provokes the following dream: His piano-teacher reproached him for neglecting his piano-playing, and for not practicing Moscheles' "Etudes" and Clementi's "Gradus ad Parnassum". By way of comment he pointed out that "Gradus" are also "steps": and that the keyboard itself is a staircase, since it contains scales (ladders). It is fair to say that there is no group of ideas that is incapable of representing sexual facts and wishes¹.

Whether he did intend in his dream, by neglecting his piano lessons, to avoid sexual activity, is not something, as we have said, that can be established by empirical examination of some process occurring during sleep. We can only know what the dreamer reports on waking and what he agrees to by way of characterisations of what he reports. That agreement won't confirm that something indeed went on that corresponds to the characterisation, but it will confirm that the dreamer thinks that this is a good way of characterizing his dream report and hence his behaviour in relation to

¹S. Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams, p.491.

that report. For Freud will take certain biographical details from a patient, in the above case that he was abstaining from sex, and then he will find a way of drawing out that element by using various objects that appeared in the dream report as projections.

Thus the patient will come to see what he or she ordinarily knows, namely in this case that they are abstaining from sex, in a new way, and one that possibly helps them to come to terms with that knowledge.

Could we say then that a person who did not agree to the characterization of his or her dream reports offered in Freud's metaphors was aspect-blind? One could say that a person may be blind to the aspects that Freud is trying to draw out, perhaps because the kind of explanations that Freud gives, namely sexual explanations don't concern them. For as Wittgenstein said in his Lectures and Conversations, if there is something that preoccupies you, for example sex, then you will see everything in terms of it, and thus Freud's explanations will seem logical to you. In this sense you will be seeing aspects that perhaps someone who isn't preoccupied with sex for example won't see. Wittgenstein says:

The fact is whenever you are preoccupied with something, with some trouble or some problem which is a big thing in you life- as sex is, for instance- then no matter what you start from, the association will lead finally and inevitably back to the same theme. Freud remarks on how, after the analysis of it, the dream appears so very logical. And of course it does¹.

But is it not the case that the metaphor is supposed to get us to see things that we had never seen in a certain light before. Thus certain aspects of our dreams get emphasized by the dream analysis and others get left out. Thus we are, if you like, led to see the associations regardless of whether we had a preoccupation with sex. The question, then, that we are left is this: if we see the associations are we justified in accepting Freudian interpretation as the correct interpretation of our dream report? It is

¹L. Wittgenstein, Lectures and Conversations, pp.50-1.

that question of justification to which I shall now turn to in my final chapter. Although I have attempted to show that connecting the acceptability of dream reports and, more generally, psychoanalytic explanations, to the patient's acknowledgement, does not, on my view, entail a scepticism about meaning, some may still doubt whether Wittgenstein's view that the correct explanation is the one that the patient accepts is epistemologically sound. I wish in my next chapter to discuss whether it is.

CHAPTER FIVE

REALISM AND THE PATIENT'S ACCEPTANCE

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will examine some further epistemological implications of Wittgenstein's view that a correct psychoanalytic explanation is the one to which the patient agrees. That this was indeed Wittgenstein's view is shown in the notes of his lectures given in Cambridge between 1932-35. He says:

The psychoanalytic way of finding out why a person laughs is analogous to an aesthetic analysis. For the correctness of an aesthetic investigation must be the agreement of the person to whom the analysis is given¹.

Such a view might lead people, as it has done in the moral and the aesthetic case, to think of Wittgenstein as some sort of subjectivist or relativist about values. In other words, when Wittgenstein says that a psychoanalytic explanation is correct if the patient agrees to it, it may look as if he is therefore unable to make objective claims about what is right and wrong. On that kind of a view patients could be agreeing to anything and that would look like a dubious kind of foundation for psychoanalytic practice. However, as I shall show, what a patient accepts involves judgments about what is good, bad, healthy or ill, judgments that are made, understood and confirmed or disconfirmed within the psychoanalytic context itself. In order to show that this is the case, I first examine more generally what in value theory making a moral, psychological or ethical judgment amounts to. I shall focus on two main schools within value theory, notably non-cognitivism and realism. Although these are usually

¹Wittgenstein, Cambridge Lectures, 1932-1935, pp.39-40.

understood as being concerned with the ethical, I show these positions to have their counterparts in psychology and hence in psychoanalysis. Thus, one kind of realist position in ethics, “external realism”, in which facts in terms of which judgments are deemed to be true or false exist independently of the person judging them to be so, can be understood as the counterpart of the kind of position that Freud holds in his psychoanalytic writings. For Freud thought that psychological facts, for example, about psychological mechanisms, obtain independently of the judgements of persons of whom they were thought to be true. The non-cognitivist position, according to which value judgments are expressions of attitudes, has its counterparts in the kind of positions that existential psychoanalyst thinkers, such as Sartre and Laing, would hold.

In making these comparisons, I don't wish to suggest that there is an impossibility of being a realist about morals but a non-cognitivist about psychoanalysis or being a non-cognitivist about morals but a cognitivist about psychoanalysis. In other words one could hold the view that there are moral facts but no psychoanalytic facts or one could hold the view that there are psychoanalytic facts but no moral facts. Thus there are variations on what one might be a realist or non-cognitivist about. It may look as if on my account being a realist, for example, means being both a realist about morals and psychoanalysis. However, I simply wish to use the positions I have labelled “realism” and “non-cognitivism”, to illuminate some conceptual misunderstandings to be found in the positions of those who discuss Freudian psychoanalysis, most notably Freud himself. For these positions that are used in moral philosophy can be seen to bring out problems found in views held on Freudian psychoanalysis. I shall then argue, along with thinkers such as Sabina Lovibond and Peter Winch, that what is needed is a way between external realism and non-cognitivism, and I argue for the existence of such a way by examining the view that in order to understand what it is to hold a belief to be true, one must look at the

way the word 'true' operates in various language games. In the light of this, I shall argue that agreements by patients to psychoanalytic explanations are not, as the externalist realist or Freudian might think, agreements to statements about independently determinable observable states of affairs, to statements about psychological facts, whose truth is ascertainable independently of the acknowledgment on the part of the person of whom the explanation is said to be true, or of the practices within which the attribution of truth is made.

I try to show that this intermediate position does not entail either relativism, subjectivism or non-cognitivism about moral or psychological beliefs. Existential psychiatry seems to me to imply a form of non-cognitivism in which explanations are thought to be psychoanalytically justifiable in so far as they are held by the patient to be so. That would amount to saying that the simple fact of the patient's agreement to the psychoanalytic explanation about their behaviour justifies that explanation. However, I shall argue, against existential psychoanalysts, that agreements to psychoanalytic explanations are not simply attitudes that the patient might or might not take up. Rather, I wish to argue that the patient's agreement has to be justified within his or her life, as it is lived, publicly, within various practices and forms of life that are assessable not only by the patient but also by others. Thus, even if a patient has accepted an explanation, that acceptance alone is not enough. It will have to be judged according to the criteria of various practices and lived out in various ways in the subsequent life of the patient. This is not, as we shall see, to make any claim that the explanation that the patient justifiably accepts is the ultimate, incorrigible explanation of the patient's behaviour, for, as I hope to show, there can be no such thing. Rather, this is the explanation that is, at present, taken as the 'right reason'. Of course the patient may later come to see that this explanation was mistaken. On the other hand they may continue to take that explanation as if it were the ultimate explanation. But, the fact that the patient takes it to be the ultimate explanation does not logically entail

that it is an ultimate explanation. That as we shall see is one version of the mistake made by relativists¹.

That the patient has the possibility of accepting psychoanalytic explanations as correct is, I shall argue, inextricably linked to the existence of rules of a psychoanalytic “language game”, rules which require the belief that psychoanalysis can tell us certain things that we couldn’t otherwise know. Without these rule-governed practices and the beliefs entailed by them, we could not even be in the position to accept that a psychoanalytic explanation might be correct. Thus understanding what it is for a psychoanalytic explanation to be correct is itself related to the practice of psychoanalysis which makes it possible for people to believe that there are ‘correct’ explanations of behaviour. And the practice of psychoanalysis itself is dependent upon the ordinary language in which we describe and evaluate human motivations and behaviour. On my account, unlike the account given by a non-cognitivist, a person agrees (when the agreement is sincere) to an explanation, not because he or she happens to feel like it, but rather because, first, he or she participates in a practice in which explanations of this sort can be rightly or wrongly assented to and, second, because, by virtue of this participation, she or he can understand and so can use psychoanalytic concepts intelligibly.

Now I turn to those positions, which are set in opposition in moral theory, and which have their counterparts in psychology, namely moral realism and non-cognitivism.

¹The discussion of Fairbanks in Chapter 3 is also relevant to this point

MORAL REALISM

For the moral realist there is no general distinction to be made between facts and values. There are simply facts, and statements about them are true or false, be they statements about scientific, moral, psychological or aesthetic facts. The moral realist argues, against the non-cognitivist, to whom we will come in due course, that our experience of the world includes experiences of the value features of the world and that this enables us to say true and false things, about beauty or goodness, for example. One can then, according to the moral realist, see whether something is good or beautiful simply by observing the way the world is, for the statements we make about values are then, true or false in so far as they correspond to certain facts in the world.

That the moral (or any other) realist believes there to be true and false statements about the facts about the world does not entail that he or she thinks that there is always agreement as to what those facts are. However, this failure of agreement does not change what the facts of the matter are or make true and false statements about them impossible. This failure of agreement about what is true is compatible with a belief in the possibility of arriving at the truth. The realist sees the disagreement about what the truth is, as arising because of the difficulty of ascertaining it. Indeed, it may be that the reason why some people cannot obtain access to the truth and disagree about what the truth is, is not because there is no truth independently of them to be had, but because that they do not concentrate on what is there independently of what they think or believe to be there. That is a central thought of moral realism. Thus, McNaughton remarks:

Moral value is presented to us as something independent of our beliefs or feelings about it; something which may require careful thought or attention to be discovered. There is a presumption, therefore, that there is a moral reality to which we can be genuinely sensitive¹.

The moral realist conceives of moral facts and, more generally, “value facts”, as no different from any other kind of fact. Freud seems also to hold this view with respect to the psychic facts that underpin his psychoanalytic explanations. Thus, as we saw in Chapter Three, he thought that there were real entities, such as the unconscious and its various processes, to which psychological statements referred. In an equally realist spirit he writes:

It is strange how little respect you have at bottom for a psychical fact! Imagine that someone had undertaken the chemical analysis of a certain substance and had arrived at a particular weight for one component of it - so and so many milligrams. Certain inferences could be drawn from this weight. Now do you suppose that it would ever occur to the chemist to criticize those inferences on the ground that the isolated substance might equally well have had some other weight? Everyone will bow down before the fact that this was the weight and none other and will confidently draw further inferences from it. But when you are faced with the psychical fact that a particular thing occurred to the mind of the person questioned, you will not allow the fact's validity: Something else might have occurred to him! You nourish the illusion of there being such a thing as psychical freedom, and you will not give it up. I am sorry to say I disagree with you categorically over this².

The moral realist, then, wants to claim that there are real entities, to which moral statements refer, and in terms of which the truth or falsity of those statements is ascertained. Freud's psychological realism is of a piece with this.

Freud wanted to maintain that psychoanalysis is scientific, that psychological facts are not a special kind of facts, but were the same in kind as, and could be known by the same empirical methods as, scientific facts. It seemed to Freud that to deny this would be to agree with the non-cognitivist that value statements or statements about

¹D. McNaughton, Moral Vision (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), p.40.

²S. Freud, Introductory Lectures On Psychoanalysis, p.77.

healthy and unhealthy behaviour were a matter of how people interpreted what they took the facts to be. For Freud, such an interpretivist approach would call into question the scientific status and the fundamental tenets of psychoanalysis, such as the reality of the unconscious or the importance of sexuality in understanding repression.

There are, however, acute difficulties with moral realism and with any psychological realism that is its counterpart.

First questions will have to be answered about what goodness, repression, libido the unconscious, look like, about how they can be located, about what properties they have, and so on. If this cannot be done the realist has no basis for the claim that such terms as “goodness” and “the unconscious” refer to real entities or that statements about them can be seen to correspond to facts about them. Things become tricky, though, if one has to say what kinds of (“queer” Mackie says¹) things moral or psychological facts are. In Chapter Three we saw that this created a problem for Freud when he attempted to say that there are substantive psychological entities, such as the unconscious, the id, the ego and so on, about which statements of fact could be made. It does not help to say that there are different kinds of entities involved in different kinds of facts. This would force the realist to accept that there is a distinction between moral and/or psychological facts and non-moral facts, thus reintroducing the sort of fact/value distinction that realism seemed committed to denying.

Suppose, as seems likely, that a realist could not answer questions about where the entities referred to by terms like “goodness” and “the unconscious” are located. Could he or she then claim that moral and/or psychological utterances about

¹ J.L. Mackie, Ethics, Inventing Right and Wrong (London: Penguin Books, 1977), writes (p.38) that: “even more important, however, and certainly more generally applicable, is the argument from queerness. This has two parts, one metaphysical, the other epistemological. If there were objective values, then they would be entities or qualities or relations of a very strange sort, utterly different from anything else in the universe. Correspondingly if we were not aware of them, it would have to be by some special faculty of moral perception or intuition, utterly different from our ordinary ways of knowing everything else”.

such things as goodness or fixation can still be true or false, without, however, those utterances being determined as true or false by reference to facts about entities? I shall explore that possibility further when I investigate the kind of realism attributed to Wittgenstein by writers such as Lovibond and Winch.

One version of that possibility is, however, unappealing. That version would be to make the possibility of truth and falsity central to realism and then to fix truth or falsity in terms of facts about majority opinions. In other words the truth about the phenomenon of fixation will be whatever some majority of people take fixation to be. In taking this position one appears to avoid the pitfalls of making truth and falsity matters of individual opinion and one preserves the realist intuition that there has to be a difference between what is true and what any particular individual cares to say is true.

Such an attempt to bring about a new realism is likely to be attacked both by the non-cognitivist, who, as we shall see has little time for the belief that moral utterances are to be understood in terms of their truth value, and by a realist, on the grounds that the new strategy weakens the realist resolve to say that there are, so to speak, independent facts, by virtue of which truth and falsity are not dependent upon the opinions of speakers, whatever the extent of their agreement.

The problems for a realist account of ethics and psychoanalysis do not, however, end with problems about how and where the entities that are to be the referents of realist ethical and psychoanalytic statements are located. A further question is how realists, including the “new realists” who refer to majority opinion, are going to explain moral and or psychological action. How do they explain the connection or bridge the gap between knowing that something is the case, for example, knowing that one has a fixation with one’s faeces, to acting on that knowledge in order to stop being fixated.

Let us introduce some terminology. Let us call an “externalist” realist one who takes a correct explanation to be one that is justified by the observation of some state of affairs that is thought to obtain independently of the beliefs of persons. On that account, a person might simply observe the facts of the case. However, since their desires may or may not conform to the facts, their actions then, may not be affected at all by what they acknowledge to be true or false. This was strikingly the case with Freud’s psychoanalytic explanations. For many of his patient’s resisted his explanations. Yet Freud did not take this as an indication that the facts about the patient’s neuroses did not obtain. Freud writes thus of a case of resistance on the part of one of his patients: he says;

The patient indeed behaved in a very unco-operative way when, after telling me her story, she was asked for her further thoughts, ideas and memories. She said that nothing occurred to her, that she had told me everything already, and after two sessions the experiment with me had in fact broken off because she had announced that she already felt well and that she was sure the pathological idea would not come back. She only said this, of course from resistance and from dread of the continuation of the analysis. Nevertheless, during these two sessions she let fall a few remarks which allowed of, and indeed necessitated a particular interpretation; and this interpretation threw clear light on the genesis of the delusion of her jealousy¹.

Further one might argue that even those patients who did not resist Freud’s explanations and believed them to be true, still might not act on the knowledge about themselves that Freud had given them. However, this would not have been taken by Freud as an example of the explanation being false or the facts not obtaining, but would have further confirmed his explanation. For although the person accepted the explanation “consciously”, perhaps in order to please the analyst, she or he unconsciously repressed the true content of this information, perhaps because it was of a painful nature. This in turn meant that they were not able act on the knowledge that they unconsciously possessed. All this serves to show that Freud thought the

¹S. Freud, Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, pp. 290-291.

psychoanalytic explanations to be true independently of the beliefs and judgments of those of whom the explanations were true. For Freud thought that the beliefs and judgements that patients consciously held prevented them from seeing the truth about themselves.

External realists, as so defined, can refer to the facts of the matter, even the value facts-of-the-matter, but it remains obscure on that account what connects an apprehension of the facts with being moved to action by their recognition. Cognising a fact, say that something is blue, or that one is fixated, seems to be one thing, being moved to do something in the light of that knowledge seems to be another. Thus McNaughton says of the moral external realist:

Externalist realism, by contrast, allows that the question of what courses of action are morally desirable does not depend on what desires the agent may have. Someone who has no concern for human welfare may still recognize that inflicting unnecessary suffering on other is morally wrong. But that recognition is held not to be in itself sufficient to give him a reason to desist from causing such suffering. If he lacks the appropriate desires then he has no reason to act in accordance with moral requirements - they are not seen as authoritative¹.

Freud seems to conform to this construction of the externalist realist model. In his psychoanalysis, his patient's desires were often in direct opposition to the truth. Thus Freud himself had to supply motivating belief-desires to get both them and him to see the truth. This can be seen in the way Freud used certain words or ideas to prompt patients to make the relevant associations which would then lead them to locate where, for example, the repression lay. He remarked, "I need a motive in addition before I resolve in favour of it and furthermore a force to propel me along the path²". Hence there will be, on Freud's account of the matter, a problem about motivation on the part of the patient. If psychological states are as the external realist conceives them,

¹D. Mc Naughton, Moral Vision, pp.48-9.

²Ibid., p.73.

it is unclear how the simple recognition of those states will motivate the patient, on recognising them, to remedial behaviour.

These difficulties with external moral realism might lead us to think of the possibility, of what we might call an “internalist” realist, one who maintains, contrary to the externalist realist, that in order to explain moral action beliefs about what is true and false must be able to motivate our actions. The internalist realist differs from the non-cognitivist, who, as we shall see, thinks of moral utterances as the expression of desires, in that he or she thinks that beliefs are not simply blind, causally efficacious, desires, but are cognitive states which supply motivating reasons for action. What motivates me to act, on this account, are the beliefs I have about what is true and false about the world. The externalist realist, and indeed anyone who maintains a rigid fact/value distinction, differs here in that, for him or her, the belief that something is true cannot of itself motivate one to act.

Thus, whereas, for the internalist realist, what motivates one is what one believes, where that is separable from what one desires, the externalist denies that believing, or even knowing, that something is morally wrong can give us a motivating reason for acting morally. So, the internalist realist thinks that our belief that something is morally wrong can give us reasons that motivate us to act morally.

The internalist realist takes beliefs, for example, the belief that one is repressed, not as desires but as cognitive states, in other words states of knowledge or awareness, which are nonetheless motivating. Freud, in that sense, was not an internalist realist. On his view one did not consciously and rationally know what was true of one’s condition and therefore act according to one’s knowledge. The truth was ascertainable independently of the conscious beliefs or desires that one had.

This was in some ways the peculiarity of Freud’s theory. For the patient did not know his or her own motivations, although his or her unconscious did. It was one’s conscious beliefs that prevented one from knowing that one was repressed.

Thus conscious beliefs on Freud's account, act as a censor and not, as the internalist realist would have it a guide to appropriate action. This is evidenced, too, in Freud's analysis of dreams. For what the patient consciously reports to the analyst about her or his dream is not what, according to the analyst, that dream was really about. In other words our conscious beliefs are no guide to the truth about what the dream means. According to Freud, the conscious beliefs one held obscured the truth about oneself from oneself. If conscious beliefs did inform the patient as to how to act healthily and did motivate him or her to appropriate action, the patient would not require an analyst. One's beliefs were no more helpful than one's desires in getting the patient to act healthily¹.

A NOTE ON PHYSICALISM

Physicalism may pose a problem for moral and psychological realists in that, if the world, on a physicalist view, is to be explained in evaluatively neutral purely physical terms, the problem arises as to how the non-physical, evaluative properties, which the moral and psychological realist take to be in the world, are to be explained. As we saw in Chapter Three, philosophers, such as Thomas Nagel, take Freud to be a physicalist, arguing that the kind of psychological properties to which Freud refers are themselves

¹In his article, "Psycho-Analysis and Ethics", Morris Ginsberg has argued the opposite of what I have claimed about Freud. Ginsberg claims that, for Freud, desires are what enable persons to make the judgments they do. This is correct in so far as a patient's desires may lead him or her to make any number of judgments. However, such judgments were, according to Freud, irrational judgments, in that they did not lead the patient to act healthily. (Ginsberg himself says that "value judgments are ultimately determined by desires and are in fact illusory in character"). Freud took it that the patient's own desires did not lead the patient to know and act on what was true. For these very desires prevented them from making the appropriate judgments and hence from taking the appropriate actions.

in the end physical processes¹. However, as I showed in Chapter Three, Freud himself thought that psychological properties were distinct from physical ones, although both could be known by the same methods. One way round the problem would be to say that, although all the objects in the world are physical objects, not all their properties are physical properties. In one sense, then, we might say that non-physical processes are dependent on physical ones, although their moral and psychological import cannot be explained in terms of them. For example, brain processes may cause certain states of awareness, but those states of awareness, about, for example, what is right and wrong, can't be understood as simply physical processes. The moral philosopher or philosophical psychologist needs to explain their evaluative import. However that response seems to mar the realist's central claim that there is no distinction to be made between facts and values. For how, on the realist's account, are there going to be moral facts, if they are not observable in the way that other facts, namely physical facts, are.

Freud, unlike the "modest" physicalist, thought that psychological facts were not reducible to physical facts. This much is clear from his essay "The Unconscious" when he says that "every endeavour to think of ideas are stored up in nerve cells and of excitations as passing along nerve-fibres has completely miscarried²". Further, it was his view that it was psychological ideas that caused physical behaviour and not physical behaviour that caused psychological ideas. Freud wanted to move away from the notion that psychological properties, such as repression, were in the end just brain

¹ In his essay in R. Wollheim and J. Hopkins, Philosophical Essays on Freud, Thomas Nagel says that "Freud continued to be convinced that the physical apparatus which he was investigating and describing in mentalistic terms was in its true nature a physical system- though little was known about neurophysiology to permit anyone to think about psychology in physical terms".

² S. Freud, Collected Papers p.107.

process, a notion that his predecessors had promulgated as the explanation for mental illness. Thus, he wanted a view in which psychological properties were distinct from physical properties but could nevertheless be known in the same way. The question then remains, as it does for the “modest” physicalist, how, if they are different kinds of things, it is possible to observe psychological facts in the same way as one observes physical facts.

I turn now to non-cognitivism.

II

NON-COGNITIVE INTERPRETATIVISM

The non-cognitivist wants to claim that the force of moral utterances is different for different people. They say this because they believe moral language to be evaluative and evaluative language not to be a factual language but one that is simply expressive. The value-realists, of course, deny this. In order to support their claims that moral or psychological utterances are either true or false, the value-realist sometimes appeals to such things as observations of facts. Thus if someone is sceptical about whether, for example, it really is a beautiful sunset, I can take him outside and show him.

Presumably Freud would appeal to observations of obsessive behaviour, for example obsessive tidiness in order to demonstrate that someone was damagingly obsessive.

Non-cognitivists, however, think that we can't observe moral or psychological properties in this way. For when we say that things are good, beautiful, healthy or ill then we are giving vent to the dispositions of our minds and are not referring to properties of the world. Thus the non-cognitivist says the sunset is beautiful because that's the reaction it evokes, not because that's the way it is. The realist says the sunset is beautiful not because that's the reaction it evokes, but rather because it is that way. Freud, too, would want to say, with the realist, that we don't

just express a reaction when we refer to the obsessive tidier as “anal retentive”. Anal retention is a psychological fact resulting from events in the patient’s childhood and which can be observed in compulsive tidying behaviour.

A clear case of an extreme non-cognitivism, which will serve as a point of departure in discussing both its relation to psychology and its more general problems, is to be found in Ayer’s Language, Truth and Logic. There Ayer argues that our moral expressions are simply expressions of feeling. Moral statements, in being expressions of feeling, cannot, Ayer thinks, be in anyway verified as true or false statements, because they have no factual content. For example if one says, “Killing is wrong”, this would amount simply to saying “Killing! Boo!” or to saying “ouch”. The parallel in the psychoanalytic case would be the patient whose continual hand washing is caused by a childhood fixation with holding back faeces. This would amount to saying, ‘Yuck, Dirt’. The expression of horror or disgust is not, Ayer thinks, something that can be true or false. It is simply an expression. He says:

If I now generalise my previous statement and say, “Stealing money is wrong”, I produce a sentence which has no factual meaning - that is, expresses no proposition which can be either true or false. It is as if I had written “Stealing money!!!” - where the shape and thickness of the exclamation marks show, by a suitable convention, that a special sort of moral disapproval is the feeling which is being expressed. It is clear that there is nothing said here which can be true or false. Another may disagree with me about the wrongness of stealing. In that sense he may not have the same feelings about stealing as I have, and he may quarrel with me on account of moral sentiments. but he cannot, strictly speaking, contradict me. For in saying that a certain type of action is wrong, I am not making a factual statement, not even a statement about my own state of mind. I am merely expressing certain moral sentiments. And the man who is ostensibly contradicting me is merely expressing his moral sentiments. So there is plainly no sense in asking which of us is in the right. For neither of us is asserting a genuine proposition¹.

¹A.J.Ayer, Language, Truth and Logic (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1971), pp. 142-143. It seems that certain forms of non-cognitivism should be distinguished from certain forms of relativism and subjectivism which are concerned with issues of truth and falsity, in that they make moral statements factual reports on feelings of the person issuing them. However, as we shall see when I discuss the work of Lovibond and Winch, there is something dubious in arguing that truth and falsity can only be

Morality on such a view, is not a matter of how the world is, but a matter of how one feels that it is. Moral attitudes, and psychological attitudes, are unlike factual beliefs about the world in that they are simply expressive of the desires, interests, attitudes and reasons of the person who holds them. Morality and or psychology in being expressive evaluations become matters of non-rationally decidable disputation and not of factual knowledge. On the realist's account, disputes can be settled by appeal to the facts, which are thought to obtain independently of those who judge what they take the facts to be. For the non-cognitivist, there are no such facts and differences will remain because people have different attitudes as to what they take to be correct.

The distinction Ayer and, and as we shall see, Sartre appear to make between factual statements and the simply expressive utterances by means of which we express our valuations, was one that the early Wittgenstein made in his Tractatus, though in a later section we will see how error arises when his earlier views are confused with later ones. In the Tractatus, he asserted that there were things about the physical world that could be articulated, namely facts in the form of propositions and things that could not be articulated propositionally namely values that took the form of psychological, ethical and religious attitudes. The world he thought was made up of facts not values. Factual propositions therefore articulated phenomenal properties of the world, whereas value utterances, in not articulating what was in the world attempted to articulate what lay beyond the world. The world, he thought was independent of values, and the values one held, be they ethical, religious or psychological, could not alter the way the world is. They could only affect one's attitude towards that world. This is why

known in the first person.

Wittgenstein says in the Tractatus that “the world of the happy man is a different one from that of the unhappy man¹”. Here by “world”, Wittgenstein means the psychological world, not the world referred to in factual propositions. One might think of the idea like this. “I can’t change the fact that its raining but I can change my miserable attitude towards the rain”. Similarly I can’t prove that there is a God, but thinking that there is makes the world look different to me. There is nothing that I can do to change the way the world is, for “The world is independent of my will²”, but I can change my attitudes towards that world.

Unlike moral realists, the Wittgenstein of the Tractatus thinks that there are no moral facts, only the moral attitudes that individuals take towards the world. His Tractarian view of ethics would, presumably, sit uneasily with the views of those moral realists who object to the notion that what is ethical is relative to and simply expressive of the beliefs, attitudes, desires and preferences of individuals. For, on that view, that partiality could lead to an acceptance of unjust or unfounded beliefs. Similarly in the psychoanalytic case it could lead to simply accepting any belief, however apparently absurd, that the patient is inclined to express, for example the belief that he should go and jump off a high tower block.

The non-cognitivist, then, typically identifies an explanation with what the individual takes it to be. On this view, also, truth and falsity could not be established by any “objective” observation, because observations will, and this is the force of Wittgenstein’s remark, be coloured by the attitudes individuals hold. And, on the non-cognitivist account, if a person believes that his or her excessive hand washing is caused by an infantile fixation, this is not because certain psychological facts about

¹L. Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico Philosophicus, section 6.43.

²Ibid., sec. 6.373.

their infancy have been brought to their attention which establish this as the correct explanation, but because this is the view they feel inclined to express.

Non-cognitivists can claim, however, that, they, unlike externalist and internalist moral realists, can explain moral and or psychological action. For they can explain what motivates us to act. What motivates us to act are the desires we have, for on this view desires are the sole motivators of our actions. As we saw earlier, the internalist realist had trouble in going from what is the case, for example, knowing that one is fixated, to acting on that knowledge in order to stop being fixated. Also, for the externalist realist, nothing can guarantee that we will act on the truth, even if we have certain beliefs and desires, for it is our beliefs and desires that the externalist realist thinks obscure our identifying the truth. For the internalist realist, the truth may not conform with one's desires, so although one may know what as a matter of fact the right thing to do is, one may not act on what one knows, because it is not what one desires.

For the non-cognitivist, what one desires will motivate one to act. So that the patient, in believing himself to be fixated and desiring not to be fixated, will be motivated to act in a way that will stop the fixation. Without the desire to want to stop being fixated, why would one be motivated to act to stop the fixation? Thus one is able to give reasons for why a person acts, namely in terms of beliefs and desires. Hume, for example, thought that without the appropriate combination of beliefs and desires one could not be motivated to act. For example, desiring to want to stop the fixation alone will not be sufficient to stop the fixation. One also needs to have the belief that fixations are the sorts of things that can be cured and, in addition, some beliefs about how to go about it. Similarly, simply having the belief that fixations are the sort of things that can be cured is not sufficient to motivate me to act, if I don't have any desire to want to stop the fixation. On the non-cognitivist view, then, moral actions, and the actions falling under psychology, cannot be explained solely in terms of

cognition, that is to say, solely in terms of beliefs about what one ought to do, as the internalist realist would have. Freud, indeed, clearly did think that a patient must believe, both that he or she are for example repressed or anal retentive, and believe that he or she ought not to be in order to be cured. However that seems at odds with his view that one's conscious beliefs are independent from one's judgement about what is true about one's psychological condition. This seems to be a problem with the externalist realist position in general, namely, that beliefs and desires are separate from what the truth is, which of course leads to all the problems raised about how, for example, the truth about the causes of one's behaviour can be known or ascertained. In relation to Freud this seems to stem from a problem, raised in Chapter Three, about how the mind, being essentially unconscious, can have knowledge of itself.

As we have said when talking about the views of A.J. Ayer, non-cognitivists do not think that moral statements such as "abortion is wrong" or, in our psychoanalytic case, "excessive hand washing is caused by anal fixation", make assertions about the world that can be tested for their truth or falsity. Rather they regard such utterances as expressions of feelings, desires, preferences, orders and so on. Thus when one says "abortion is wrong", one is expressing one's disapproval of abortion, not stating a fact about it. Similarly if one says "excessive hand washing is caused by anal fixation", one may be expressing one's disgust with dirt or exposing one's inclination to be taken in by barmy explanations, but one is not stating a psychological fact about oneself. To make moral and or psychological statements is to express attitudes, usually favourable or unfavourable. Thus there is a difference between the descriptive language, which is used to state facts, to say what a thing is like, and the expressive-evaluative language, which is used to express how one feels.

One of the important claims that non-cognitivism makes is that facts alone won't entail evaluative conclusions. Thus, on their view, the realist who relies only on facts cannot tell us anything about the moral or psychological case. In other words, if I

say Robin lives in Devon, has blue eyes and gives to charity, I am not making an evaluative claim about Robin, only telling you certain facts about him. Beliefs alone, then, are not sufficient to motivate action, whereas a combination of beliefs and desires can be. For example, I am not compelled to act to avoid Robin simply on knowing that he has blue eyes, although if I evaluate the facts in a certain way I can arrive at such an evaluative conclusion, upon which I then act. There is nothing, though, on this view, about the facts that commits me to any particular moral or psychological attitudes. I might act so as not to avoid Robin because he has blue eyes. However, nothing about the facts logically entails that I must act one way or the other. Similarly in the psychoanalytic case, the analyst may have factual details about a patient: where he lives, what his marital status is, what his age and occupation are. However, the non-cognitivist argues, one is not logically compelled to draw specific evaluative psychological conclusions from these facts. One may make such evaluations, but they will be related to one's own desires, preferences, dislikes and so on. So, for example, if I say "the age of the patient leads me to suppose that he is going through a miserable mid-life crisis" then, according to the non-cognitivist, I am making an evaluation on the basis of my own preferences. The misery of mid-life crises are not logically entailed by the fact of age or on the fact of the existence of mid-life crises. Rather, that person X is going through a miserable mid life crisis is an evaluation I make. MacNaughton puts the point thus:

The claim that there is a fact-value gap turns out to be the reflection, in terms of logic, of the claim that accepting a set of beliefs does not commit one to taking up any particular attitude¹.

Non-cognitivism can thus be seen as an admission of the fact that moral disputes cannot be settled simply by wheeling out the facts. On this view, since facts don't entail moral attitudes, moral disagreements won't be resolved by finding more

¹MacNaughton, Moral Vision, p.29.

and more evidence. How then are such disputes to be resolved, if on the non-cognitivist's view there is no moral and or psychological truths? It looks, from what we have said of the non-cognitivist's position, that because moral and or psychological utterances are simply attitudes, that they have no truth value. Thus one moral and or psychological attitude is no more correct than another. If this is so, such disputes can't be resolved.

However even more worrying than that is the more fundamental problem as to whether conflicting attitudes can even be understood as genuine disagreements. Talk of "genuine" disagreement suggests that each party hold the other's belief as false and that each party holds a notion of what is true. However, for the non-cognitivist, people are not in disagreement over the truth of such things as moral utterances, because for them there is no such thing as a true or false moral utterance.

One non-cognitivist reply is to say there is indeed a difference between disagreeing about beliefs and disagreeing about attitudes. For example, if one person believes that a player was off side and another person believes that player was not, then this is a disagreement about what is the case. However if one person takes the attitude that bars in France ought to close after a certain time to keep English football hooligans from acting violently, and another thinks that the bars in France ought to be free to open and close as they choose, regardless of the behaviour of football hooligans, then there is a disagreement about what ought to be done, about what attitude should be taken, and not about what the facts of the matter are. The fact of the matter is that English football hooligans are acting violently. However, our evaluation of that fact, namely what we ought to do to stop them is another kind of question which involves a different kind of disagreement from factual disagreement.

Take now a psychoanalytic case. Suppose one analyst believed that the patient had been abused in childhood and the other did not. This is, then, if we can agree on the term "abuse", a disagreement about what is the case. However, if one analyst took

the view that patients with amnesia should be given drugs to recover memory, and another took the view that patients should never be given drugs, not even to help them recover memory, then this might be a disagreement in attitude towards patients.

From this a sceptical question arises for non-cognitivists. For how can a non-cognitivist justify his or her moral or psychological attitudes if there is nothing that determines which attitude they ought to take. On that view, presumably, I could take up any attitude toward what I ought to do. I could want to be moral, or to want to be healthy, or I can want to be immoral, or to want to be ill. This seems an odd position to take.

The reply the non-cognitivist might give is that there are limits on the kind of attitudes one ought to take. Attitudes must be made internally consistent with one another. In other words one applies like moral evaluations to like cases. Thus one should not change one's moral attitude about the cruelty of fox hunting just because it was a friend who was fox hunting. Similarly an analyst should not change her or his opinion that a patient was schizophrenic because the patient was a friend of his family. Thus, even for a non-cognitivist, if two actions are the same in all the relevant respects, namely killing foxes for pleasure or behaving schizophrenically, then the evaluation of the actions can't be different in each case. The non-cognitivist, then, adopts the test of consistency.

One criticism of this, of course, is that it is not always easy to determine consistency and inconsistency. There could be cases which appeared to be the same but were not. For example, a person on a fox hunt with a moral conscience might have killed a fox that was in a trap to put it out of its misery, or a person may appear to have the same symptoms as schizophrenia but may simply be going through a mild depression. Similarly, a person who stole money to save his family from starvation might be assessed differently from a person who embezzled money to get rich. The limitation on what one's evaluations ought consistently to be then become blurred.

Thus it might appear that there is inconsistency rather than consistency in what one ought to do in like situations. Quite apart from this it is unclear how a non-cognitivist would deal with someone who happened to like inconsistency.

By making the argument for consistency the non-cognitivist was concerned to remove scepticism about how one ought to act thereby enabling one to have some kind of guideline for action across cases. It may turn out that this is not possible on his or her view.

By arguing that there are no directly observable moral and or psychological properties the non-cognitivist might be seen to avoid the problem the realist had in having to answer questions about how such properties were to be detected. The non-cognitivist wants to suggest that things such as happiness and repression for example, cannot be observed by the senses, for what is observed will be coloured by the kind of psychological and or moral attitudes that are held by the perceiver. Moreover, on this view, a person's repression will not be identifiable in the way that Freud thought it was, namely as having certain observable behavioural manifestations. The non-cognitivist wants to say that unlike scientific properties of the world, which could be identified uniformly by the senses, moral and psychological properties are not contained among the observable features of the physical world. They are an expression of our experiences of that world, and our experiences of the world, as Hume points out in his Treatise of Human Nature go beyond observable facts. As we have said, evaluations are not given by the physical world but by us, by our experiences, by our attitudes, interests and desires. Hume says;

Take any action allowed to be vicious; wilful murder, for instance. Examine it in all lights and see if you can find that matter of fact . . . which you call vice. In whichever way you take it, you only find certain passions, motives, volitions and thoughts. . . . The vice entirely escapes you, as long as you consider the object. You can never find it

till you turn your reflection into your own breast, and find a sentiment of disapprobation, which arises in you, towards that action¹.

III

THE NON-COGNITIVIST DEBATE: ITS RELATION TO EXISTENTIAL PSYCHOANALYSIS

In thinking that, unlike scientific facts, no observation of moral facts to be possible, non-cognitivists, such as Hume and Ayer, took the view that there couldn't be moral facts. There are only the moral attitudes we express about the world. The view has its counterpart in psychology, in the view that there are no psychological facts only psychological attitudes that we hold about the world. This view is espoused in existential psychoanalysis, which developed largely out of Sartre's existentialism. Existential analysis argues against the view, taken by Freudian psychoanalysis, that human beings are formed into the persons they are by unconscious influences in their infancy and childhood, and argues instead that there is no such thing as a human nature formed out of certain psychological influences. There are only the free choices made by human beings. As Mary Warnock says in her Existentialism:

But the view that men are caused by their visions of the future rather than by any features of the past, although it does arise directly out of the theory of consciousness which is fundamental to Being and Nothingness, seems to take on an anti-Freudian doctrine².

Here Warnock is referring to the section in Sartre's Being and Nothingness, Part Four, Chapter Two, entitled "Existential Psychoanalysis" in which he argues that there are no psychological properties that people possess. There are only the

¹David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, ed. P.Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 468-9.

²M. Warnock, Existentialism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 120.

psychological attitudes that people take up in their lived relation with others and the world. Sartre says, for example:

This is not the childish quest of a “because”, which allows no further “why?” It is on the contrary a demand based on a preontological comprehension of human reality and on a related refusal to consider man as capable of being analyzed and reduced to original givens, to determined desires (or “drives”), supported by the subject as properties by an object¹.

Sartre does not believe that psychological properties can be empirically discovered, for persons are not a totality of desires and drives in the way that Freud had thought. Freudian analysis, whereby one reorganizes such desires and drives, is not possible. On Sartre’s view, then, the given is not a set of psychological attributes, but is one’s freedom, one’s freedom to take any psychological attitude towards the world one likes, which may even include choosing not to choose to be free. For on this view, although the world offers constraints, one is free to choose how to perceive those constraints. He discusses the various attitudes that one can take up towards the world as different ways of being in the world. The healthy mode of being, Sartre thought, was being for-itself, in which a person takes up the responsibility of their power of free choice. He writes:

The for-itself is a being such that in its being, its being is in question in the form of a project of being. To the for-itself, being means to make known to oneself what one is by means of a possibility appearing as value. Possibility and value belong to the being of the for-itself².

The unhealthy mode of being, Sartre thought, was a being in-itself or a being for-others, modes of being in which one denies one’s own freedom and in which one allows oneself to be an object or a thing. In his book The Divided Self, the psychiatrist

¹J-P. Sartre, Being and Nothingness (London: Methuen, 1969), p. 561.

²Ibid., p. 565.

R.D. Laing has referred to this mode of being in his description of schizophrenic patient's¹. Sartre says that the in-itself is that which the for-itself nihilates in taking up its projects. The in-itself is the mode of being lived out as a bodily existence. Sartre argues that being in-itself is the mode of being that we most desire, because in that mode we can attempt to deny that we are responsible for our choices. He says that "thus human reality is the desire of being in-itself²".

This desire, Sartre thought was an example of bad faith, a denial of one's possibilities. Accepting a Freudian explanation, according to which one's behaviour was thought to be caused by psychological factors in one's childhood, was, for Sartre, an example of denying one's freedom. Warnock articulates Sartre's view about accepting Freud's explanations in the following way:

If we are honest, and not corrupted or seduced by the comforting doctrines of Freud, we will recognize that nothing has formed our 'character', such as it is, except our own free choice³.

Although Sartre took being for itself as the ideal, he recognized that it was rarely attained because of the conflictual relation that we have with others. For we want to be a subject in the eyes of the other, that is, to be recognised as selves by others. However we can only ever be a subject for ourselves and an object to another. Our need to want to be a subject for the other and not an object for the other leads, Sartre thinks, to our existing as beings for-others and not as beings for-ourselves. Being for-others, as we have said, Sartre thought to be a denial of freedom and responsibility. It is that conflictual relation that the existential psychoanalyst attempts

¹R.D. Laing, The Divided Self, (London: Penguin Books, 1959). For further details of Laing's work and the philosophical problems that it entails see my paper "The Embodied Schizophrenic", given in 1996 at the First International Conference on Philosophy and Mental Health, Malaga, Spain, attached as an appendix.

²Ibid., pp. 565-6.

³Warnock, op. cit., p. 120.

to explore with the patient. Thus, the existential analyst is not observing distinct psychic entities or facts, such as repression and libido, as substantive objects, established independently of the patient beliefs and desires. Rather, the existential analyst is looking at how the patient's beliefs and desires emerge as unconditioned attitudes, in other words as human choices. This kind of analyst, then, is interested in the patient's relation to his or her own freedom, a freedom which is nothing to do with the truth about the world but is to do with the patient's own construction of its mode of being. Thus what a patient takes, for example, repression to be, will be related to what attitude they take towards being free. If they accept the Freudian explanation, then, Sartre thinks they will be denying responsibility for who they are. He writes, therefore, that "existential psychoanalysis recognizes nothing before the original upsurge of human freedom¹". Thus what one takes to be morally "correct", or what one takes as psychoanalytically "true", arises not from facts about the world or persons but from individuals' perceptions of persons and the world. This position is arguably a form of non-cognitivism, it is as dubious as we shall now show that position to be.

IV

PROBLEMS WITH NON-COGNITIVISM

There are awkward problems for non-cognitivism.

First, in the moral case, the non-cognitivist's argument might be appear to make it impossible to condemn what seem clearly immoral acts. For example I see a person inflicting pain or cruelty on another and condemn this as wrong. On the non-cognitivist view others simply don't feel this, so that for them there is nothing wrong

¹ Being and Nothingness, p. 569.

with the action. Those who find that unpalatable will have a strong motive to seek a defence of some form of moral realism.

Second, whatever the case with morality, as far as psychoanalysis goes, the notion of illness and cure, which are not value-neutral terms, would make no sense if one thought that the notions of illness and cure to be solely a matter of individual interpretation and not phenomena, the existence of which depends on more than what this or that individual happens to think.

Third, the non-cognitivist, in making a distinction between scientific facts and moral/psychological values makes the presupposition that scientific properties can be uniformly identified by the senses and an exhaustive list of the world's physical contents can be given. This would seem far from the case. The non-cognitivist then can be seen to overplay, as my Chapter One suggests, the extent to which scientific and other facts are simply a matter of observation. This as we shall see is also Winch's view.

Fourth, much of non-cognitivism rests on a denial of the observability of value properties or psychological descriptions and the claim that realists do not give any adequate account of this notion and the role that perception or intuition plays in it. The realist, however, can reply that he or she does not want to make perceptions of moral and psychological properties to be a special case of visual perception, on a par with seeing a property such as colour, but rather wants to say that there are things that we can claim to observe as, when we claim to see something as the infliction of pain in the case of the person inflicting pain or behaviour expressive of obsessive tidiness.

Although the realist can seek to justify an assertion that someone is, say, behaving obsessively by pointing to behaviour, this does not entail that other people will always see that which is being pointed to. The moral realist, then, is asking that we pay more attention to particular features of the world which, if observed, can be seen to justify certain truth claims and beliefs.

That kind of realism seems to cohere very well with Freud's view. He thought that psychological properties were observable in behaviour, but only by careful psychoanalytic scrutiny. In other words, one had to be trained to pick out various features in behaviour, to know types of personality, stages and degrees of illness. Thus, in the way that a doctor could identify a fractured limb, so, too, Freud thought an analyst could identify, for example, a case of neurosis or paranoia.

So, we have said, the realist acknowledges that people can misperceive the truth, and acknowledges that there can be disagreements. However the realist does not have to say that the disagreement undermines the possibility of there being something true or of our arriving at a knowledge that it is true. Rather the realist might rather say that it is a matter of training people to see the truth.

Here aesthetics is instructive. For example, a person can be brought to see the features in a work of art, the patterns and harmonies in a piece of music, say. Similarly in psychoanalysis a person can be brought to see, for example, that their obsessive tidiness is linked with their infantile fixation with faeces, where that is linked to certain stories about infantile desires. In the moral and or psychological case a person can come to see that there was an element in his moral understanding of a situation that he or she had previously overlooked.

The non-cognitivist wants to object to the notion that disputes or disagreements can be settled by appeal to a kind of "show and tell", where a person insists that there is something that can be seen, and where not to have seen it is to have missed out on the truth. This would be to object to Freud's conception of psychoanalysis, where a person's not seeing the truth is symptomatic of the truth, because it is precisely the truth that they are resisting and thus missing out from seeing.

Those who are inclined to non-cognitivism may feel that this is a form of dogmatism. Doubtless some realists do dogmatically claim to have seen the light and

do insist that others should simply accept their claims. However, that “realist” belief, the belief that people should of necessity see what the realist sees, may have more to do with the personality of the particular realist than to do with the position of realism itself. For as we have said there is nothing in the realist’s position that requires people accept something as being the case just because someone else, however dogmatically or vigorously, asserts it to be so. This is because a realist (and certainly what I have called an “external” realist) is required to believe that whether or not something is true is independent of the beliefs of this or that particular individual. McNaughton puts it thus:

Moral truth is not easily attainable. Mistakes are common and there is ample scope for passion and prejudice to cloud moral vision. The realist should therefore have a proper sense of his own fallibility and acknowledge the possibility that his opponent may be in the right. Improving our moral perception should be the result of dialogue and co-operative effort. No party in ethics has a monopoly on dogmatism: the existence of dogmatic realists is not the fault of realism¹.

V

WITTGENSTEIN AS A MORAL REALIST

External realism, in the form in which I attributed it to Freud, has problems in accounting for moral and other motivation. For on that view what is true, is true independently of what one might judge to be true. If this is so, what reason has one for acting on what one knows to be true if, it is not something that one desires to be true. Its alternative, non-cognitivism explains how we are moved to action, but is committed to denying that statements which are not value-neutral can be true, and so to denying that non value-neutral claims of psychoanalysis can be true. What we need, is a way between these two alternatives and I now wish to sketch the outlines of such a way by discussing certain remarks on Wittgenstein’s account of values as they are developed in the work of Sabina Lovibond and Peter Winch.

¹*Ibid.*, p 60.

In her book, Realism and Imagination in Ethics, Sabina Lovibond has argued that Wittgenstein wishes to maintain a form of moral realism, not of the foundational empiricist variety that I have outlined in speaking of “external realism”, but a form that is underpinned by our activities as they are carried out in accordance with the rules of our language games. This view, I think, is applicable in understanding both the claim that psychoanalytic statements can be true and the claim that patients can be justified in accepting particular psychoanalytic explanations. Before showing how her view is applicable to psychoanalysis, it is important to understand why she thinks that Wittgenstein has provided us with a different kind of realism, one that enables us to avoid the pitfalls of externalist realism and non-cognitivism when talking about moral and psychological beliefs. Later I will examine the claims of critics of Lovibond, such as Cora Diamond, who have argued that Wittgenstein was not advocating such a form of realism.

Lovibond argues that Wittgenstein pinpoints the problem with external realism. The problem is the same problem that the non-cognitivist has with it, namely its empiricism.

Empirical realist’s make the claim that what is true is true independently of human beings, which amounts to saying that what is true is true independently of the way that human beings use the terms “true” and “false”. Wittgenstein’s aim, here, was to avoid thinking that we can thus talk about truth without examining the methods of justification or the procedures of arbitration in which we articulate what the truth is. The non-cognitivist in rejecting empiricism does not fare any better. For what he or she puts in its place is the counter-intuitive view that there can be no truth in value matters. What, therefore, is needed is a position which recognises that our assessing moral and psychological beliefs as true or false is dependent on human life and practices, but in such a way as does not dispense with the notion of the authority that truth has. The point, then, is to see what forms of authority are to be found in human

practices that justify persons in saying that their beliefs are true Wittgenstein says “Not empiricism yet realism in philosophy, this is the hardest thing¹”. Lovibond indicates why this is so difficult. She says;

What is difficult is to pursue the twofold aim of showing, on the one hand that it does not make sense to look for a source of authority external to human practice which would certify as true (e.g.) those propositions that we call true; while on the other hand, resisting the proffered alternative to our former, metaphysically contaminated use of those concepts - an alternative which would consist simply in jettisoning the concepts in question and replacing them by others².

Lovibond argues that the kind of realism that is being proposed is not as she puts it ‘hard’, but is ‘natural and obvious’³. It is natural and obvious because, unlike empiricist realism, it accounts for forms of human expression, including words such as “true”, which have evolved naturally within forms of life, themselves. However, such expression, which is for Wittgenstein linguistic, (although does not always have to be verbal), is not, as the non-cognitivist would have it, simply expression for expression’s sake. Rather our expressions can be shown to be authoritative by the fact that within forms of life there are various criteria that can be used to ascertain what is true or false with respect to different kinds of utterances.

For example, if when playing chess one attempted to move one’s bishop otherwise than diagonally, then one’s opponent would have the authority, given the rules of the game, to say that one had made a wrong move. On the view I wish to take, being justified in making a move in chess comes from one’s mastery of the technique of playing chess, in other words from one’s knowing and applying the

¹L. Wittgenstein, Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics VI, ed. Von Wright, R Rhees and G.E.M Anscombe, 3rd edn. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978), sec 23.

²S. Lovibond, Realism and Imagination in Ethics (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), p. 45.

³Ibid., p.45.

rules. This enables us to say what is a right or wrong move. This is not to suggest that everyone will play in the same way, for individuals will bring out different aspects of playing the game which will be related perhaps to other activities that they are involved in. Hence there are very technical players, spontaneous players, quiet players and noisy players. And, as we shall see, what goes for chess, the existence of internal rules for right and wrong, also goes for morality and psychoanalytic explanation.

This version of realism, then, differs from 'hard' empiricist realism in that it sees authority as coming not from "the true condition" of the world "external" to us, but as coming from within various practices, practices in which we express, in the form of rules, what we take the use of the term "truth" and so truth to be. Its difference from non-cognitivism is that it does not see judgments as simply expressive of states of mind.

The mistakes of both the two opposing parties, the empirical realist and the non-cognitivist come from mistakes about language. In the case of the empiricist realist, he or she thinks that moral and or psychological utterances are true or false only in so far as they correspond or do not correspond to independently existing states of affairs. The value non-cognitivist thinks that moral and or psychological utterances are justified in virtue of their being expressive of individual thoughts or states of mind. The Wittgensteinian position here argues that both these positions misunderstand the way in which the word "true" is used in moral and psychological contexts

Thus the external realist begins with the notion that to say that "p" is true is to state something. The mistake, then, is to think that such statements can only be verified by their correspondence to "external" objects or states of affairs called "facts". But what then is meant by saying that a statement is "fact-stating"?

One cannot simply "point to facts", because facts are not objects, and if facts are not objects then they can't be verified by pointing. Thus, when we say that it is a fact that men between the ages of 18-25 commit most crimes, we are not saying that

this statement can be verified by pointing to some object, a fact, namely all males aged between 18-25.

Further, simple pointing cannot tell us about the ways in which people might agree or disagree about whether what is being pointed to does indeed establish a fact. To understand that, we should have to examine the different ways in which people agree or disagree as to what establishes something as a fact. For criminologists may find that males between the ages of 18-25 commit more violent crime, but not necessarily more crime in general. Again, the statement may be overly general in not accounting for the range of different types of crime. For there may be corporate or white collar crimes such as fraud or tax evasion that are not included in one's statement about 'most crimes'. There may be crimes of passion in which people are pardoned from sentencing and, thus, their crimes not recognized as crimes. There may be war crimes that are said, by some, to be just because they were carried out in defence of a nation. There may also be other unrecorded crimes. To examine, then, whether one was justified in saying that such a statement were true one would have to examine the various ways in which the concept of crime was being understood. And to see in what way statements were being verified as true one would have to look at the methods of justification used within various language games and forms of life. We will then find that not all statements will be verified in the same way. For example, the way statements in mathematics are verified will be different from the way statements about crime will be verified.

On the other hand, the non-cognitivist's mistake, on Lovibond's account, is to think that moral and or psychological utterances are expressive of private thoughts, beliefs and sensations, thus making truth unknowable. On this view thought is prior to language, and language is simply the articulation of that prior thought. Wittgenstein, however wants to argue that language is thought. Thought is not contained in some mysterious realm inside us which conveys meaningfulness to language, enabling us to

say what our thoughts are. On that view expression is a matter of using a public language, and is therefore checkable. Lovibond says:

The expressivist theorist, then, denies, the logical priority of thought over language in which it is made manifest. It is for this reason that he cannot accept the instrumental conception of language, which posits a relation between two logically distinct entities: thought (which is in our mind) and language (by means of which we make our thoughts accessible to one another)¹.

Given this denial, then, it looks difficult for non-cognitivists such as Hume for example, to justify their moral and or psychological statements, if they are statements about private states of mind or thought processes. For how could one justify the statement “excessive hand washing is caused by childhood fixations about holding back faeces” as expressive of a logically private state of mind. How would such a thing be possible? For we can’t look inside even our own heads while we are speaking and see this state of mind. Therefore we cannot say that our utterances are justified by the occurrence of processes inside our heads. Wittgenstein says in the Philosophical Investigations that “if God had looked into our minds, he would not have been able to see there whom we were speaking of”².

Moral and psychological non-cognitivists want to argue that moral and psychological utterances, unlike scientific statements, could not be justified by observation. Yet some of them claim that they can be justified by reference of our own mental processes. However, if the individual alone has knowledge of such processes, what grounds has he or she for saying that such processes exist, and, hence, what grounds has she or he for saying that these processes constitute grounds for knowledge. The non-cognitivist view, then, amounts to a scepticism about truth. If truth can only be ‘known’ in the first person, then truth cannot be known at all. The

¹Ibid., p.29.

²Philosophical Investigations, p.217.

upshot, then, is that we need to argue that our moral and or psychological utterances can't be justified by appeal to metaphysical entities such as internal mental states. They can, however, be justified if we look at the way the moral and psychological language is publicly used. Even the solipsist constructs his solipsism within a public system of ideas. If this were not the case, we should not understand him when he said that one could not know other minds but only one's own. The terms "true" and "false" are not established and understood by solitary individuals. They are established according to various different criteria in various different communal forms of life and are for the most part not in doubt.

In On Certainty Wittgenstein argues that for doubt to be possible at all there must first be knowledge. In other words, there could be no doubt if certain things were not believed or accepted. Wittgenstein says in paragraph 115 of On Certainty, "if you tried to doubt everything, you would not get as far as doubting anything. The game of doubting itself presupposes certainty". Similarly in paragraph 160 of that work, he says; "The child learns by believing the adult. Doubt comes after belief".

Lovibond now asks the question, "Do we know 'what it would be like' for everyone to be wrong about a question of morality?"¹. Doubting all moral and psychological beliefs would be nonsensical. For doubt itself, as it arises in practices, depends upon certain things being believed within those practices. For without certain things being believed, we should not be able to make or understand judgements about whether such beliefs are justifiable.

The question then arises in what way our judgements about such beliefs are justifiable. I shall argue that their justifiability comes out of their intelligibility within forms of life, which is not to say that what is true is simply true in virtue of the fact that it thought to be so within a form of life. For as we have said the mere holding of a

¹Lovibond, op. cit., p.77.

judgement is not sufficient to justify it. Rather, within the forms of lives themselves there are various procedures and methods by means of which one is able to test whether a judgement is sound. In the form of life which has been called “the art world”, I could, for example, make the judgement that Van Gogh is a better painter than Cezanne by using various aesthetic criteria, such as the vibrancy of the colour, the placement of figures, and the imagination and psychological penetration of the artist. Similarly in psychoanalysis I could judge that a patient was acting in a certain way towards their mother, for example, by employing psychoanalytic criteria such as transference of guilt and repression of feelings.

The fact that such criteria are what, in various forms of life, are used to justify judgements does not have to imply that the various forms of life are sectioned off from one another and thereby immune from any other source of criticism. In that they overlap with one another, and primarily because they involve a common language, forms of life can and do contain what is needed in order to contest their claims and methods of justification.

Practices are, then, not incommensurable. If there were not such overlap there would be problems in understanding people in other forms of life, forms of life which we don't actively inhabit. For example the doctor would be unable to understand the talk of the art critic and the art critic would be unable to understand the talk of the doctor. However, the two can understand each other to the extent that they share a common language. Here we only have to think of some of the terms that different language games share to see that it is possible for those involved in different language games to understand each other and understand what it would be for certain beliefs to be justified or not within those games as the case may be. For example, the word “elegant” is used to describe paintings, proofs, clothes and noses. That such a term is common to many language games makes it possible for those who operate within these different language games to understand each other. We could then get a person

who was not involved in aesthetics, for example, to see that a painting was elegant because that was a description that they understood as they had used it in other contexts, for example, to talk about clothes, noses, proofs and so on. The content, of course, differs, but the form of description, namely what is thought of as elegant, enables a person to start to see what judging something as elegant in a painting would amount to.

Similarly we might get a patient to see a point about their behaviour by using terms that are familiar to them from other practices, for example those used in religious contexts. Freud does this when he introduces the concept of God the Father to explain our psychological need for authority. Moral concepts such as loving one's neighbour, compassion, honesty, charity can also be used when getting someone to see moral situations from a religious perspective.

In this connection, Lovibond makes the point that her version of Wittgenstein's moral realism, one in which judgements are related to practices, does not have to entail a form of ideological conservatism in which those practices or forms of life are dogmatically believed and unchallenged. Moral realism as she constructs it, entails a conservatism, but a conservatism with a small "c", in which opposition to existing forms of life themselves rest on some notion of consensus. Therefore Wittgenstein's moral realism unlike ideological conservatism, allows room for there to be alternative forms of life. Lovibond cites a passage from Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations which supports the view taken here that Wittgenstein's moral realism is not a form of dogmatism or ideological conservatism. She says:

The existing multiplicity of linguistic forms, he writes, "is not something fixed, given once for all; but new types of language, new language games, as we may say, come into existence, and others

become obsolete and get forgotten” (Philosophical Investigations sec. 23)¹.

Our language games, are always open to criticism. Thus Lovibond remarks that “by acknowledging that we could do something other than what we actually do, we acknowledge the openness of our actual practices to a form of critical scrutiny”².

Alternative forms of life do not, then, exist in isolation from other forms of life but emerge in relation to them as forms of criticism. However, if, for example, I reject socialism as false, then what I am saying when I say that it is false, has to be understood in terms of the political background against which those socialist principles have their meaning. For it is only by understanding what it would be to say that socialist principles are true, that one can understand someone holding that they are false. Similarly a patient who takes a set of Freud’s psychoanalytic beliefs about unconscious repression, transference of guilt and so on to be false, would have to understand how in the practice of psychoanalysis terms such as transference and unconscious were being used.

There could not be alternative forms of life, if there were nothing for them to be alternative to. Thus new forms of life themselves emerge out of common activities and common ways of talking. There is no external vantage point independent of our systems of ideas and ways of life from which to pronounce what is true and false. Wittgenstein in On Certainty says;

But I did not get my picture of the world by satisfying myself of its correctness; nor did I have it because I am satisfied of its correctness. No; it is the inherited background against which I distinguish between what is true and false³.

¹Lovibond, op. cit., p.118.

²Ibid., p.118.

³L. Wittgenstein, On Certainty, p.226.

Of course then the question arises how are we able to judge between competing forms of life or competing systems of ideas, a matter to which I shall return in discussing Winch. Lovibond puts the problem thus:

These reflections carry us into the terrain of critical social theory, and may arouse curiosity as to how our idea of the immanent criticism of a form of life relates to the Wittgensteinian insistence that philosophy is itself neutral as between forms - that it 'leaves everything as it is' Students of Wittgenstein, after all, have long been familiar with the claim that alternative belief systems - whether they succeed one another in time, or exist simultaneously in different places - do not lend themselves to evaluative comparison in terms of truth, rationality or moral worth¹.

What counts as justification will be governed by the way people operate with the notion of "justification" within various practices. Disagreements about what is true and false will also be governed by the way people act within various practices. When these practices are operative, what is taken as true and false, then, is not as we have said 'fixed once and for all' but is fluid and open to change. For what at one time may be taken as a particularly central belief of a community can at a later time be rejected as false. The same can be said of psychoanalysis. At a particular time psychoanalysts might have thought it to be true that continual hand washing was caused by childhood fixation with holding back faeces. Later they might come to think that the hand washing phenomena was better explained in terms of the effects of a modern society that had attempted to scientize the world by clinical procedures.

The claim that one mode of explanation is better than another will be unjustified if the concepts used in the articulation of that claim have not been mastered. For where the concepts and rules are not competently mastered by a critic, the players of that game or the players of other games will be able to argue that the claim is not justified. For example a person is not justified in claiming to be a teacher simply in virtue of having that title. The title has to be justified by what he or she does in

¹Lovibond, *op. cit.*, p.137.

practice. Similarly, if someone said that he or she were a philosopher, and yet could not articulate concepts within that practice, then one would not think of him or her as a philosopher.

VI

AN OBJECTION TO CONCEIVING WITTGENSTEIN AS A VALUE REALIST

In The Realistic Spirit and in “Wittgenstein, Mathematics, and Ethics”, Cora Diamond has argued against Lovibond’s view that Wittgenstein was a moral realist. In The Realistic Spirit she argues that when Wittgenstein says, ‘not empiricism and yet realism in philosophy, that is the hardest thing’ he is attempting to dissolve the realist debate because of the impossibility of finding the kind of certainty that the realist claims can be found. The quest for such certainty is then thought to be fruitless. When Wittgenstein says ‘the hardest thing’, Diamond takes him to mean that not only empiricism but also realism is an impossibility in philosophy. Diamond expresses it thus:

Realism in philosophy, the hardest thing, is open-eyedly giving up the quest for such an elucidation, the demand that a philosophical account of what I mean make clear how it is fixed, out of all the possible continuations, out of some real semantic space, which I mean. Open-eyedly: that is, not just stopping, but with an understanding of the quest as dependent on fantasy¹.

She goes on to explain how for Wittgenstein realism is a form of philosophical idling. In other words, realist explanations don’t provide us with what they claim to provide because what they claim to provide, namely facts about reality which provide us with certainty, can’t be found. This makes problems, also, for my version of psychological realism, however, problems that in the end I think are resolvable.

¹Cora Diamond, The Realistic Spirit (Massachusetts, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1995), p.69.

Diamond thinks of realism as the view in which judgments are made on the basis of true or false facts about the world. (That realism as we shall see is certainly not the kind that Lovibond and I are after when we argue that Wittgenstein is a realist). The thought that there are such facts, about which true or false judgments can be made is, for Diamond, a fantasy or chimera. The attempt made, then, by the empiricist realist to ground reality on observation of such facts is fruitless. We have to look, she thinks, beyond what is simply perceived.

Diamond gives numerous examples of cases of moral situations in which observation is not enough to enable people to know what the moral significance of a situation is. She cites parables and stories where the importance of what is being said is not that which is seen as really and observably there in the realist's sense. So in these cases, visual seeing is not believing. Diamond cites the narrative of The Little Flowers of St. Francis to make her point. She says;

We are told that in an ecstasy Brother Pacificus saw the soul of his brother ascend direct to heaven at the moment it left his body. We are told that is what he saw, but we are not told at all what it was like to see such a thing. In fact we do not have any idea what he saw and how he knew that it was his brother's soul. But in the context of the narrative, that is not something that is felt as an omission¹.

Diamond, further argues that Lovibond mischaracterizes Wittgenstein in thinking that our moral language is realist in that it is possible to refer to moral categories or properties. That is, she takes Lovibond to be arguing for a view in which moral terms like duty, love and honesty are fixed and appropriately employed in the ordinary language in moral contexts. However, moral experience, Diamond thinks, goes beyond the narrow range of moral predicates that Lovibond describes. Diamond makes this point in her article, "Wittgenstein, Mathematics and Ethics" when she says:

What we should learn from Wittgenstein is that there is no a fortiori. We need to look: what would it be like to have a language in which

¹Diamond, op. cit., p.51.

moral predicates had no, or virtually no, use? Would people not care about the things we care about? How much of our moral thought is actually dependent on such predicates?¹.

Diamond wants to challenge Lovibond's view that realism is true in that there are publicly accepted moral categories which are given and accepted within various forms of life. Diamond thinks there is more to moral life than this. There are numerous cases in which people within various forms of life don't use "appropriate" predicates. There are not then, on Diamond's view, realms of discourse which are bound by appropriate terms. That, she thinks, counts against moral realism. For example, discourse about manners does not have to entail using predicates about manners. She says:

Manners, it might be said, is certainly a subject of some discourse, just as plants are the subject of botany. And yet thought about manners need not make use of 'rude', 'polite', 'discourteous', 'snub', and so on. Think of some Proustian description of people not acknowledging acquaintance with each other, as an example of people not acknowledging acquaintance with each other, as an example which might lack manners - predicates².

Diamond argues further, to extend her criticism of the observational model of moral realism, that Lovibond is some kind of intuitionist about morals. She interprets Lovibond to be saying that when we see a person, who is for example, joyful or sad, we can, given our moral concepts, intuit what moral properties they possess. Diamond articulates Lovibond's position thus; "being able to give a moral description of reality will then be nothing but being able to use one's ordinary senses together with a mastery of moral concepts³".

¹Cora Diamond, "Wittgenstein, Mathematics and Ethics" in H. Sluga and D. G. Stern (eds.), The Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.242.

²Ibid., p.246.

³The Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein, p.250.

The situation, Diamond argues, is more complex because there are cases in which we see but do not have moral knowledge of the situation. Diamond, therefore, makes the distinction between our seeing something and being able to know whether what we see is a particular kind of moral action. For example eyewitnesses who saw an incident in which a person shielded the President from flying bullets described what they saw as heroic. However, it may have been the case that the so-called “hero”, who could not have been killed because he was wearing a bullet proof vest, knew that by acting as a human shield he would be esteemed in the eyes of the President and would be promoted and given a financial reward. The motivation for acting is not, then, something that one can visually see and then apply our moral concepts to.

Diamond claims that Lovibond’s characterization of the general form of language is like that of the Tractatus, in which statements are true or false in virtue of their correspondence with facts. She says “The Tractatus approach to ethics is shaped by a very general conception of language, in that respect it resembles Sabina Lovibond’s”¹. However, Diamond, too, seems sympathetic to a Tractarian view of ethics when she says, “And so I am trying to undercut any idea that the Tractatus view of ethics is the mere result of philosophical confusion”². Diamond’s allegiance to the Tractarian view of ethics can be seen, too, in the way in which she gives preference to the view that moral knowledge is not something that can be had by direct observation and described by moral categories. For it is her view that moral situations do not, of necessity, articulate particular moral categories, for there are numerous situations in which people’s moral understanding goes beyond applying moral predicates. Rather, she argues, we should attempt to understand particular moral situations. She gives an

¹Ibid., p.254.

²Ibid., p.251.

example of such moral understanding by citing Laura Ingalls Wilder's, "The Long Winter". She says:

No doubt an adult, reading the book to a child, might comment "Weren't they brave!" But the relevance of the book to moral education does not depend on such comments. A child reading the book might be fully aware of its moral force without needing moral predicates any more than Mrs Wilder needs them¹.

This view she takes to be consistent with Wittgenstein's dissolving of empirical realism and inconsistent with Lovibond's view that there are moral categories that ground our moral understanding. Diamond thinks that Lovibond's view, in being committed to a kind of fact-stating language, subscribes to the very form of empirical realism that Wittgenstein is attempting to circumvent.

There are three things to be said here.

First I wish to argue that Lovibond is right in taking Wittgenstein's quotation "not empiricism yet realism" to mean what it says, namely that moral realism, and, for me, psychological realism, is possible because justifications can be given not simply by empirical methods of observation but through the way we use the terms "true" and "false" in a grammar that grounds our moral understanding but does not fix it "once and for all". What Wittgenstein puts at the end of his quotation in Wittgenstein's Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics would support this view. At the end of the quotation, 'Not empiricism and yet realism in philosophy, that is the hardest thing'. Wittgenstein puts "(Against Ramsey)". This is significant in thinking that Wittgenstein was a realist. For he was arguing against Ramsey, who took propositions to be expressive of rules that conformed with one's experience. Thus when Wittgenstein says "not empiricism yet realism" he is arguing against the view that rules are correct or incorrect in being corroborated by individual (empirical)

¹Ibid., p.243.

experiences. This much is clear from a passage that precedes his other remark, where he says:

Is the main thing not this: that, in calculating, the main weight would be placed on whether one has calculated right or wrong, quite prescindingly from the psychological condition etc. of the person who is doing the calculation¹.

Second, I think that Diamond is mistaken when she thinks of moral or psychological realism as requiring immutable categories. For Lovibond, as we have seen, does not think of language games as “fixed once and for all”. Neither does she think that the moral language, in making use of such moral terms as “honest”, “true”, “compassionate”, simply denotes internal objects that can be introspected or external objects that can be empirically observed. Rather, on her view, the moral language itself expresses our moral concerns and, given that this language has to be agreed upon by others to be understood, moral language, too, depends upon agreement in practices. However such agreements are not written in stone but, as we have seen, are that which enables the possibility of disagreement. Hence Lovibond’s view does not have to entail that moral categories are immutable, and, thus, Lovibond’s view may not be as far from Diamond’s own view as the latter thinks.

Third, Diamond may have moved away from empirical moral realism, but she may have given too much room to moral scepticism. For on her view moral understanding is rather unspecifiable and unarticulable. This can be seen in her leanings towards a Tractarian view of ethics, whereby nothing can be said or agreed upon in an ethical situation because such situations go beyond the moral categories that we want to apply when making judgements about what is right and wrong.

I do not, then, think that Diamond is right that in rejecting empirical realism, one has to reject realism. The Wittgensteinian form of realism does not have to deny

¹L. Wittgenstein, Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1956), p.325.

the possibility of situations in which our descriptions fail us, or situations in which we develop new rules or moral categories. But it cannot amount to the claim that there are no shared moral or psychological terms which are used and understood by people in moral or psychological situations. If this were the case it would not be possible to talk about moral or psychological situations at all. For as Lovibond rightly says; “Do we know what it would be like’ for everyone to be wrong about a question of morality?¹”.

VII

ANOTHER OBJECTION TO WITTGENSTEIN AS A VALUE REALIST

Duncan Richter seems to take a similar line to Diamond, and a line that I think in some respects is the result of erroneously reading Wittgenstein’s earlier Tractarian view of ethics into his later work. Richter’s line of argument would appear to deem it out of the question to extract any form of moral realism from Wittgenstein’s work,. For in his “Nothing to be said: Wittgenstein and Wittgensteinian Ethics”, Richter asserts that Wittgenstein never had anything to say throughout his philosophical career on ethics (where we shall be taking that broadly to mean “values”, as indeed Wittgenstein in the Tractatus took it.) To think that he had an ethical view at all, Richter says, is nonsensical, given that he thought nothing could be said about ethics. Richter writes:

The suggestion is that Wittgensteinian moral philosophy is an impossibility, a contradiction in terms. I will argue that at least in terms of his attitude towards ethics, Wittgenstein’s thinking changed little during his career².

¹Lovibond, op. cit., p.77.

²Duncan Richter, “Nothing to be Said: Wittgenstein and Wittgensteinian Ethics” The Southern Journal of Philosophy, XXXIV (1996), p.243.

I think that Richter is falling foul of a common misunderstanding concerning Wittgenstein's later work. It is often thought that, because Wittgenstein continues to think that moral values are not established by empirical methods, he is thereby committed to a subjectivist Tractarian view of ethics according to which one cannot say anything right or wrong in moral discourse. (Although one has some kind of first person knowledge of one's attitudes).

As I have already said, however Wittgenstein, in his later work rejects, the view that something can be known only in the first person. It follows from this, then, that he would reject the idea that moral knowledge could be had only in the first person. If, for Wittgenstein, knowledge is public, then it follows that moral and psychological knowledge is public, and if moral and psychological knowledge is public then people would be able to discourse about it, and if they were discoursing about it then something would be being said in it and could be said about it. This is not to suggest that there is one thing out there called moral knowledge or psychological knowledge which we all possess. On the contrary there is a whole range of different kinds of things that people call "moral knowledge" and these differences will emerge from various forms of life.

Richter is right when he says 'Ethics for Wittgenstein is not a subject'¹. I think it's fair to say that Wittgenstein was not doing formal ethics. For Wittgenstein had a broader notion of what the ethical was, which may be better understood by thinking of it in terms of coming to see oneself under new and different descriptions. One might talk about what he was doing more in terms of the notion of a moral psychology.

¹Ibid., p.251.

VIII

RELATIVISM

I wish, then, to dispute the claim that Wittgenstein thought that moral and or psychological values could not be articulated and discussed. It is that misunderstanding that has led some to think of Wittgenstein as a subjectivist or relativist about values. Here some arguments to be found in the work of Winch, become relevant in the application of lessons learned from Wittgensteinian moral realism to psychoanalysis.

The moral relativist, in thinking that what a person says is true because it is true for him or her, believes beliefs are justified, and so true, simply by the fact that beliefs are held. In other words that abortion is wrong is true because that's what I think. The slogan goes, "what's true for me is true for me and what's true for them is true for them".

This kind of Protagorean relativism, namely the view that 'Man is the measure of all things' is a view that has been mistakenly assigned to Wittgenstein and those who take a Wittgensteinian approach to values, for example, philosophers such as Winch. However, anyone who has even a limited grasp of Wittgenstein's later work, will know that he explicitly denies that there could be a private language in which something can only be known in the first person. In denying this, Wittgenstein would be denying the move that the relativist tries to make, namely the move to saying that something is true for a person simply because he or she thinks it is.

The immediate relevance of this to the present project is that this misconstrual may be one that people might reach on the basis of a flawed understanding of Wittgenstein's comment that the correct psychoanalytic explanation is the one that the patient agrees to. They may take him to be saying that whatever the patient accepts as true is true for the patient.

However Wittgenstein also thought that justification for our beliefs comes not from 'inaccessible' thought processes that are, in being inaccessible, immune from criticism. He thinks that justification for such beliefs comes from our operating in accordance with various methods and procedures which we are able to use as standards of assessment about what is right or wrong. Such criteria for what counts as right or wrong emerge within the shared practices and forms of life that we inhabit. On this view then, contrary to the relativist slogan, 'anything goes', one has to be precise about exactly what, within various and different forms of life, does and does not go. Justifications for the beliefs we hold are given by following practices within the forms of life in which those beliefs are held. Thus to understand what it means to say, for example, that the doctrine of the Trinity is true, or, similarly, to say it's true that I unconsciously hated my father, one has to look at the way the term 'true' operates in psychoanalytic or religious contexts.

It is important for the purposes of this thesis to show why the relativist's position is mistaken, because in doing so we can show that psychoanalytic explanations are not justified as being true simply on the basis of an individual patient's say so, which was the implication of the existential psychiatrist's position. But the point is to show that psychoanalytic explanations are, however, justified within the practice of psychoanalysis itself, a practice which employs ways of talking about human action and motivation. Thus I shall argue that psychoanalytic justification amounts, in part, to being able to apply psychoanalytic concepts intelligibly to oneself and others. This applies to both analyst's and patients. (Analyst's have themselves to undergo analysis before being able to apply such concepts to others.) I shall approach this, my final conclusion, by way of some arguments to be found in Winch.

Winch argues that the relativist's position is self-refuting if he or she argues that beliefs can only be known in the first person. For if beliefs can only be known in the first person, if one can only say "true for me", then one can't say of another

person, when they say ‘ I believe that p’ that they are equally right about the truth of p. Thus the relativist can’t make her central claim that what a person says is right just because she says it is. One can only say in one’s own case that one knows that one believes that p is true. One can’t go from saying that a person believes p to saying that p is true for that person. So Winch, in , ‘Trying to Make Sense’, says, advisedly, that “as a matter of fact, I should prefer not to make the initial move from ‘A believes that p is true’ to ‘p is true for A1’”.

In addition to this, moral relativism, Winch argues, tends to draw on the distinction between facts on the one hand and values on the other. Thus the relativist appeals to the notion that unlike scientific facts there can be no moral facts, in other words, nothing in the world to which our moral utterances correspond. Winch has reservations about such a distinction and argues, as I have done in Chapter One, that scientific facts cannot be characterised adequately on the basis of such a simplistic distinction. He argues, further, as we saw above, that a correspondence theory, cannot tell us about what determines what is right and wrong, for what is right and wrong will vary across contexts. Thus to state that something is true or false does not tell us how truth or falsity is established in particular cases. The correspondence theory, then, oversimplifies the complexities of our applications of the terms “true” and “false”. Winch remarks:

And the gulf between the simplicity of the formula and the complexity of the conditions of its application becomes even more daunting if we bethink ourselves of what goes into, say determining the truth of the Darwinian Theory of Evolution or of a theory of the origin of the solar system².

¹P. Winch, Trying to Make Sense (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), p. 183.

²Ibid., p.185.

Winch wants to argue that we apply the terms “true” and “false” not only in science but also when making moral judgments. However we cannot understand these applications, he thinks, simply by “examining the facts” for examining the facts will only get us so far and may not help us where there are complex ethical disagreements. Such disagreements are no more prevalent in ethics than they are, Winch says, elsewhere. That there is such disagreement does not, Winch thinks, have to lead to relativistic conclusions, namely that such disagreements are irresolvable. Rather he prefers not to talk in general terms of solutions, because ethical issues cannot be understood uniformly. There are ethical disagreements that arise with people who share the same culture, and disagreements that arise with those of different cultures. For example, we can’t apply something like a Kantian principle of duty in all cases across all cultures, because duty may be understood in different ways. Similarly it may not be possible as Winch says in The Idea of a Social Science, to apply Freud’s concept of neuroses, as explicable in terms of certain kinds of familial relations, to every culture, for familial relations may differ across cultures.

A psychoanalyst who wished to give an account of the aetiology of neuroses amongst say, the Trobriand Islanders, could not just apply without further reflection the concepts developed by Freud for situations arising in our own society. He would have first to investigate such things as the idea of fatherhood amongst the islanders and take into account any relevant respects in which their idea differed from that current in his own society¹.

How then, given these differences, is it possible to make judgements between, to take Winch’s example, the asceticism of Gandhi and the humanism of Orwell? Are we left in the position of saying neither is right or can we say that one is right and the other is wrong? For example can we say that Gandhi’s asceticism is wrong, in that it leads to a detachment from the human world and contributes nothing

¹Peter Winch, The Idea of a Social Science and its Relation to Philosophy (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958), p.90.

to the material problems that humans face? Or can we say that Orwell's humanism is wrong, in that it allows personal entanglements to override issues of justice? Winch argues that such an approach to the question is natural but misconceived. He argues that "there is no ground whatsoever a priori for expecting the emergence of some position free of difficulties which everyone would be able to accept"¹.

Does this make him a relativist? I think not. For he wants to say that there is a difference between a person who articulates and lives out his position intelligibly and a person who does not. Thus we can take him as saying that a person is justified in holding a belief to be true, if his or her belief is coherent and intelligible. This coherence and intelligibility will show itself in the belief holder's lived relations. This is not to suggest a decision procedure for moral disagreement. It is, however, to suggest that we do have ways of assessing moral situations in terms of the way people live out their beliefs. We are not then in the position of the relativist who says nothing can be said in the situation of moral disagreement. For as we said earlier there is the possibility that we can be brought to see things by others because of the overlap of our forms of life.

The following might be an example of how we evaluate a moral situation. We ask, "Is Mother Theresa justified in saying that the meek shall inherit the earth?" People argue that she is justified, because she lives the life of a poor person. She clothes feeds and shelters poor people, and leads them to believe that they will be saved by God. Others argue, that however well meaning Mother Theresa's belief that the meek shall inherit the earth might be, it is not a justified belief, because it perpetuates poverty by accepting poverty as God-given. Such a view then does not challenge for example the unequal disparity of wealth within the caste system. Rather it sees poverty as a gift from God.

¹Ibid., p.189.

We are not going to arrive at solutions a priori about what is true and false in these sorts of cases. But we do have ways of discussing and assessing moral situations on the basis of the coherence of people's arguments and the way that they live them out.

Winch is further concerned that we examine what it would mean to say for example, the meek shall inherit the earth, before saying such a view is either true or false. For example if I wanted to find out whether goddess worship was a justifiable form of religious worship, I should have to examine both the living practice and the history of that practice. I can't simply say it is true or false. Saying that tells me nothing of how the belief system operates. When one has come to understand how a belief operates, then one is in a position to begin to judge whether one wants to say that such beliefs are justifiable or not. The relativist in contrast is indifferent to understanding how the beliefs of others operate. For she or he has already decided that such beliefs can't be judged, and if they can't be judged, then they don't need to be understood by them either. Paradoxically, it is the relativist's indifference that is more likely to lead to cultural insensitivity, and their acceptance without comment of whatever others feel like doing may be an acceptance of injustice. However, if one understands the beliefs involved one is at least in the position of being able to discuss the matter. Winch says:

To understand all need not be to forgive all: it may lead to an increase in indignation. But if we do not understand, we are no position to know what we are getting indignant about or as the case may be, what forgiving¹.

¹Ibid., pp.192-3.

THE APPLICATION TO PSYCHOANALYSIS

To understand, therefore, what in the psychoanalytic context justifies a patient in believing that a psychoanalytic description of him or her to be true, for example, that he or she has an unconscious fixation, we shall in the first instance have to look at the way the terms 'unconscious' and 'fixation' are used in that context and whether they have been understood by the patient.

Freud had been mistaken in thinking that the psychological terms used by the analyst corresponded to facts or essential features of the psyche that were hidden from the patient but nevertheless observable in behaviour to the trained eye of the analyst. Freud thought of himself as a scientist discovering facts. However, as Wittgenstein points out in Lectures and Conversations, what he does is to provide the patient with new descriptions of their behaviour that they can be persuaded to accept. Wittgenstein says that "if you are led by psycho-analysis to say that really you thought so and so or that really your motive was so and so, this is not a matter of discovery, but of persuasion¹".

Justification for accepting psychoanalytic explanations, then, amounts to being persuaded to see the relevance that such concepts have in understanding one's behaviour, which presupposes being able to apply such terms to oneself and others. For one's ability to use such terms illustrates that one is in the position to justifiably accept their intelligibility and their application to oneself. One may of course refuse to accept the intelligibility of such concepts, and, hence, one may not accept the application of such descriptions to oneself or others. However if one rejects something as unintelligible, one has to give grounds for such a rejection, and it may turn out that

¹L. Wittgenstein, Lectures and Conversations, p.27.

the grounds given are not sufficient for making the claim that such concepts are unintelligible.

The case of calling into question all psychoanalytic concepts, has to be distinguished from the case in which a person contests particular aspects of the analyst's application of the concepts. For example, I may see, and show by my behaviour, that an analyst was right in thinking that I was unconsciously fixated but wrong in thinking that I was transferring my own feelings of guilt onto my mother. In this case I am not doubting the nature of the psychoanalytic game but rather disagreeing about the application of a particular psychoanalytic description, a matter that itself is open to debate within the practice itself as a whole. In that situation I would not be rejecting the concept of transference of guilt, but I might be rejecting the application of the concept to me.

Rejecting all psychoanalytic concepts, can't amount to saying that there are no such concepts as for example repression or transference. This would be like saying because I don't like football that there is no such concept as off-side. Similarly the fact that a person does not like psychoanalysis does not entail that there is no such concept as repression or transference. Part of what justifies psychoanalytic explanation is the existence of the practice of psychoanalysis. Lovibond said of morality, "Do we know 'what it would be like' for everyone to be wrong about a question of morality?¹". This can be to applied psychoanalysis. For it would not make sense to have a psychoanalytic practice in which all psychoanalytic concepts were thought false.

New psychoanalytic concepts can, of course, replace old ones, but the new concepts will be understood in relation to the old. For example, if an analyst argues that hysteria is not caused by sexual abuse but by childhood bereavement, then their understanding of what they take the new cause to be is being understood in the context

¹Lovibond, op.cit., p.77.

of what was taken as having been the cause of this behaviour in the past. The point, then, is that the reasons that are given for psychoanalytic explanations, and their subsequent changes, have to be understood in relation to that form of life itself, and also in relation to those forms of life with which it overlaps, such as science, art and morality. Thus there may be a whole host of reasons why people think that childhood bereavement, rather than sexual abuse, is the cause of hysteria. However, those reasons will be internal to the practice itself. For example, the analyst may have treated many patients with hysteria who have been bereaved in childhood, and treated many patient's who had been sexually abused who were not hysterics. The analyst may have other theoretical reasons that led him to pinpoint this as the cause. These reasonings, then, are part of what it means to be in a such a practice.

The other part of what makes psychoanalysis the practice it is are that its reasons are accepted not only by analysts but by patients. However such agreements are not justified simply by them being agreed to by patients. This, as we saw, was the relativist's mistake and the mistake of the existential psychiatrist. For them an explanation was taken as true because that was how the patient saw the truth. This would be a dubious assumption upon which to base a practice. For a patient could believe, for example, that God had told her or him that he or she should jump from a high building. If one's response to this was, "well, that's what they take the truth to be", then one would worry about the ethical nature of the practice and, indeed, what the practice was doing at all. And what criteria would there be for it saying that patients were indeed right in their judgments, if only they could know them? How could the existential psychiatrist argue that because p holds x to be true, x is true, if x were only something that p can know. No practice could survive on such scepticism.

On my realist account what a patient accepts is not true or false simply in virtue of the fact that he or she accepts it, but rather the patient has to understand what it means within the psychoanalytic practice to accept such an explanation as true.

Further the patient has to come to see him or herself under descriptions used by that practice, that is if they wish to have psychoanalytic help.

Wittgenstein said in his Philosophical Investigations that agreement is not agreement in opinions but in forms of life.

“So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false?”- It is what human beings say that is true and false; and they agree in the language they use. That is not agreement in opinions but in form of life¹.

This remark has an application to my present discussion. For the patient can come to see the truth of a psychoanalytic explanation by being brought by the analyst to see how the various psychoanalytic concepts operate in relation to his or her particular case. In this sense psychoanalysis is analogous to both the moral and aesthetic cases, in which a person is brought to see things under descriptions which are used within those practices. That will not be a matter of holding an opinion. This seeing is not, as Lovibond has said, consistently with Wittgenstein, a form of empirical observation, where moral, psychological or aesthetic terms correspond to, fix or denote particular objects or facts. Rather it is the acceptance of descriptions which are used within psychoanalytic practice as standards, methods, and norms of expression by which to assess human motivation and behaviour. This is not to deny that there are cases in which we don't agree about the acceptability of the descriptions. But as I have said, disagreements arise in relation to practices, in which certain things are accepted. In order to judge whether a description or explanation is or is not acceptable, one has to examine the reasons that were given within that practice according to the criteria of that practice. For without understanding those criteria one would not be in a position to agree on judgements. This view allows considerable room for criticism of psychoanalytic concepts, however, only from a position of

¹L. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, sec. 241.

knowledge about them. This does not imply digesting a glossary of psychoanalytic terms but requires an understanding of the form of life itself.

The point is, as Winch has suggested in the moral case, not to think of psychoanalytic explanations as solutions that will be true or false a priori, but rather to think of them as being justified as being true if they are lived out intelligently. In other words, if a person has understood for example the concepts of transference, fixation, and applied them in practice in the way that the analyst has shown them, to their own life and situation, then they can be said to be justified in saying that such explanations are true. This does not have to suggest that these are ultimate explanations. For as Wittgenstein says in Culture and Value

In a way having oneself psychoanalysed is like eating from the tree of knowledge. The new knowledge acquired sets us (new) ethical problems but contributes nothing to their solution¹.

¹L. Wittgenstein, Culture and Value, p.34.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have attempted to make clear how the central thoughts of the later Wittgenstein can illuminate both the philosophical wrongheadedness and the philosophical value and importance of Freud's psychoanalysis. I have sought to show the confusions that arise from Freud's view that everything is hidden, notably the unconscious mechanisms that cause us to behave the way we do. I have argued along with Wittgenstein, to use his own phrase, that "nothing is hidden" and that a better understanding of psychoanalysis would be one based on that which is open to view, namely our ways of talking and acting. Thus, for example, we can do better justice to the insights of Freudian psychoanalysis if we come to understand the unconscious not as a hidden reservoir where our thoughts and desires reside, but as a way of talking about our inability to see things about ourselves, things that others, such as analysts, might see as staring us in the face. Wittgenstein says in section 129 of his

Philosophical Investigations:

The aspects of things that are most important to us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity. (One is unable to notice something- because it is always before one's eyes). The real foundations of his inquiry do not strike a man at all. Unless that fact has at some time struck him.- And this means: we fail to be struck by what, once seen, is most striking and powerful.

The analyst, then, has to get us to see what it is that we are unable to see about ourselves. Thus what is "hidden" is not hidden in the sense of being hidden behind the scenes but is precisely that which is in fact familiar to us, but so familiar that we overlook it. Wittgenstein, indeed, saw the role of the philosopher as analogous to the role of the therapist, for the philosopher attempts to show someone the way out of a philosophical dilemma, by showing that the answer to that dilemma is there waiting to be seen. Similarly, the analyst tries to show someone the way out of a dilemma in his or her life by getting them to see that possible solutions are there but need to be brought

out by various methods. As we saw Freud employs secondary and metaphorical uses of the ordinary language to get us to see aspects of ourselves that did not strike us before. In this respect Wittgenstein compared psychoanalysis to art, which also employs various methods to get us to see what is there in new ways. Wittgenstein himself was, indeed, so impressed by the way that psychoanalysis could reveal aspects of ourselves to us that he himself, in his later philosophical period, thought of becoming a psychiatrist. Ray Monk in his book, Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius, documents this when he talks of a passage of Wittgenstein's philosophy, noted by Rush Rhees¹, in which Wittgenstein doubts about continuing as a philosopher and expresses an interest in becoming a psychiatrist. Monk says:

The passage is redolent of Wittgenstein's doubts about his own status as a philosopher, his weariness of "seeing queer problems" and his desire to start playing the game rather than scrutinizing its rules. His thoughts turned again to the idea of training as a doctor. Drury was at that time preparing for his first MB examination at Dublin, and Wittgenstein wrote asking him to make inquiries about the possibility of his entering the medical school there, his training presumably to be paid for by Keynes. He suggested to Drury that the two of them might practice together as psychiatrists. Wittgenstein felt that he might have a special talent for this branch of medicine, and was particularly interested in psychoanalysis. That year he sent Drury, as a birthday present, Freud's Interpretation of Dreams, telling Drury that when he first read it he said to himself: "Here at last is a psychologist who has something to say"².

One of the most important distinctions that Wittgenstein makes in relation to the task of understanding Freud's psychoanalysis, is that between reasons and causes. For it is clear from Wittgenstein's Lectures and Conversations that Wittgenstein thought Freud to have confused reasons and causes. Freud had thought he was getting

¹ L. Wittgenstein, "The Language of Sense Data and Private Experience- 1 (Notes taken by Rush Rhees of Wittgenstein's Lectures, 1939)" Philosophical Investigations, VII, 1 (Jan. 1984), pp.1-45.

²Ray Monk, Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius (London: Jonathan Cape, 1990), p.356.

patients to agree to causal explanations of their behaviour. However, as Wittgenstein points out, he was getting patients to agree to possible reasons for their behaviour. One couldn't, argued Wittgenstein, regard something as a cause merely because it was agreed to, for causes happen independently of one's agreement. That something is a reason, is, however, dependent on one's understanding and assent. Hence, what it is for something to be a reason is related to being persuaded to see one's behaviour under particular descriptions. This method of psychoanalytic persuasion, which had been named 'the talking cure' was what, as we have said, most impressed Wittgenstein about Freud's psychoanalysis, and it was what in many respects redeemed Freud, in Wittgenstein's eyes, from his philosophical confusions and scientific pretensions.

That is not to say, as the first and last chapters of this thesis show, that Freudian psychoanalysis is simply a matter of talking for talking sake. It is, however, to say that the practice of psychoanalysis reveals a grammar which articulates methods and procedures of justification that enable us to talk of psychoanalytic explanations being true or false. I conclude then that psychoanalysis would be better served by philosophy if it was understood in the terms following Wittgenstein that I have outlined.

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