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WAYS OF KNOWING

An Examination of Freud's Psychoanalytical Theory as a Language

by

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1999

CITY UNIVERSITY

There were more than a thousand distinct cultures, a thousand mutually-unintelligible languages, a thousand ways of knowing. How can one compare the facets of this knowledge to the possession of gold? How could we have squandered such wisdom in that search?

B Lopez The Rediscovery of North America.

Language lies at the root of personal and national identity and to tamper with it is either poetry or treason.

T Eagleton The moustache that roared.

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Contents

Introduction	i
Chapter 1 The development of psychodynamic thought	1
Chapter 2 The status of psychodynamic concepts	16
Chapter 3 Can psychodynamic theories be established reliably ?	43
Chapter 4 Causes, reasons and covering laws	82
Chapter 5 Other explanatory models	102
Chapter 6 Meaning, language and reference	133
Chapter 7 Language and psychic reality	153
Chapter 8 Language in clinical practice and metapsychology	169
Chapter 9 Freud's theory as language	195
Chapter 10 Conclusions	245
Appendix 1 Why did Freud give up the seduction theory ?	255
Appendix 2 Psychoanalytical theories and therapy	276
Bibliography	281

Introduction

This thesis has been written from the point of view of a practising psychoanalytical psychotherapist trained originally in the Freudian classical tradition although now of a more independent orientation and with experience in both institutional and private practice. With that experience I have been increasingly concerned about the difficulty of providing a confident foundation for both the theory and the practice. In this thesis I propose that Freud's metapsychology *considered as a language* could provide that foundation. While I shall be confining my argument and discussion primarily to Freud's formulations as set out in the Standard Edition of his work I note that just as it is sometimes said that all philosophy since Plato has been a series of footnotes to his ideas it might be equally true that since Freud all subsequent theories have been footnotes to his basic theory. Sandler *et al* (1977:4) assert that an overall grasp of Freud's concepts is necessary for the understanding of modern developments since they all make use of them. So by extension the same argument about their status as languages might apply to subsequent theories.

Since the basic concepts of psychoanalysis began to be developed by Breuer & Freud (1893) many subsequent variations have grown from them with the intention of explaining more adequately why the process of talking should have a therapeutic effect. Two kinds of psychoanalytical theories about the human mind have been produced, clinical and metapsychological. The former provides explanations relevant to the clinical situation with the object of understanding the therapeutic action of the session. The latter attempts to provide a conceptual framework for the ideas derived

from clinical practice. Both may be thought of as ways of finding a mode of expression through language of formerly inexpressible matters, or as Spence (1987) puts it 'to put the unspeakable and unthinkable into words', as might be expected for theories which are founded upon what may be derived from the conversation between the analyst and analysand. The metapsychological theory thus offers a framework for clinical practice within which particular kinds of verbalization become possible. Freud's theory, focusing on issues of sexuality and instinctual development, enabled verbalizations of a kind that may have been impossible before. Because of the medical implications of the symptoms from which relief may be sought and perhaps also because of the medical origins of the therapy in 19th Century Vienna attempts were made to establish the credentials of the theories within the medico-scientific concepts of the day. Freud himself developed over a period of almost a half-century an impressive theoretical structure on those foundations, which despite the variations which have subsequently developed, remains as a substantial basis for most of them. Concepts such as the libido; the ego and the id; the mechanisms of defence; repression; primary and secondary processes; transference and counter-transference; unconscious and conscious processes: the castration and oedipal complexes, and other concepts continue to provide many of the fundamental elements of modern psychoanalytic and psychodynamic practice and thought. Despite some of the novelties which have been introduced in the new theoretical varieties, none has approached the majestic sweep of the original theories as spelled out in the twenty-four volumes of the Standard Edition of Freud's writings. So it is on this mass of material that I propose to focus in this thesis, together with the critical comments that have been made about its epistemological basis, with the intention of trying to find an alternative for its undermined scientific status.

The concentration of the efforts to demonstrate the scientific credibility of the theories has been primarily focused upon those first established by Freud. The experimental material has been collected by Fisher & Greenberg (1983) and Kline (1981).

Others such as Cioffi (1970), Eysenck (1973), Grünbaum (1984), Macmillan (1992 & 1997) and Sulloway (1979 & 1992) have discussed the nature and scientificity of the theories. I consider these arguments and show that there is little agreement that the theories as created by Freud can be established as valid by scientific criteria, even by some of those within the psychoanalytic community eg Holt 1989, Schafer 1976, Spence 1982 & 1987 and others. Nevertheless, many analysts continue to claim a scientific status for them, and deal with the controversy by referring to 'our science' as if this will somehow exempt psychoanalysis from having to conform to established scientific criteria. Most of these studies have concentrated on the comparison with the empirical sciences whose paradigm is physics. It has been claimed that a fairer comparison might be with the social sciences. The idea of such an alternative scientific method modelled on social science was suggested by Tuckett (1994) but was not elaborated by him. The criteria for those sciences are less precise than for the natural sciences, of which medicine is one, and they are on the whole concerned with a different realm of explanation than is relevant to individual psychology. It is interesting that some of Freud's ideas have found acceptance in the social sciences as a source of insight into social issues and as a social critique and the psychoanalytic project seems to have found greater favour there than in the medical world where it began. However these applications are not relevant to this discussion which is concerned with establishing how concepts developed from clinical practice with individual patients and analysands can be elaborated into a general theory of sufficient credibility to be applicable to a non-patient population. The scientific or empirical validity by epidemiological study of the alternatives to and derivatives from Freud's original ideas have not been undertaken and they have on the whole relied upon coherence theories of truth for which no such tests are required (Hanley 1990; Richards 1992). There have been some tests of the therapeutic effectiveness of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy with results that tend to show that it is no more, and usually no less, effective than other methods of treating conditions whose nature seems to be psychological rather than organic (Roth & Fonagy 1996). Nevertheless

contributions to journals by practitioners continue to rely upon clinical case studies as a way of offering evidence of the validity of the methods and theories. Few, apart from Freud and Breuer themselves, seem to have considered the question of why talking of itself should relieve conditions which may often present themselves as physical symptoms. The different theories propose quite different answers to questions about why psychodynamic therapies (a term used to cover all the various therapies which have been derived from the classical psychoanalytic theories of Freud) work but all seem to be concerned with assumptions about the interaction of the mental and physical aspects of life (sometimes referred to as the mind/body problem, or the 'psyche-soma continuum'); about the nature of human psychological development and its interaction with the social environment; about the nature of psychic reality; and about the nature of the evidence required to establish the hypotheses being proposed.

The differences between these theories seem resolvable neither by an appeal to the evidence, even if there was agreement about what that 'evidence' might be, nor by an appeal to some shared methodology which would assist the reconciliation of differences. The Controversial Discussions at the British Institute of Psychoanalysis in the 1940's and the attempt to explore the nature of a psychoanalytical fact in 1994 showed (International Journal of Psychoanalysis 1994 V75 Parts 5 & 6; King & Steiner 1991; Wallerstein 1992) both demonstrated how difficult it is to achieve such agreement. Although all the theories are derived from the same process of listening to the free associations of the patient and of ascribing unconscious meanings and sources to them, those ascribed meanings seem to differ widely according to the theoretical stances of the therapists rather than to differences in the patients. It has been noted that these differences may be defended with passionate intensity (Eisold 1994) which may suggest that something more than a disinterested appeal to truth is being made.

It has been argued that psychoanalysis is essentially based upon observations; in Freud's day on observations of patients on the couch, and additionally since then upon observation of infants. All observers claim that such observations confirm the theories to which they adhere. It has to be asked 'which theory?'. It was evident in the Controversial Discussions that the difficulty being encountered was that each claimed that their observations of patients on the couch supported their particular theory and not the theory of their antagonists. The same may be true of child observation where The Anna Freud Centre finds support for *its* theories and the Tavistock Centre finds support for *its different* theories. Since, as Tuckett (1994) claims, facts can only be understood when set within a theory this is hardly surprising, but in that case the theory which structures the observations can hardly claim confirmation from them. What might be determining would be the possibility of making predictions about what might be discovered in future observations. This might put the theories on a par with other observational studies such as astronomy where the theories may lead, or not, to undiscovered star constellations. In the case of psychoanalysis no such predictions have been made and Freud (1920:167) himself remarked that only retrodiction was possible in psychoanalysis. This issue is more fully considered in Chapter 2. If there is disagreement about the 'evidence' which emerges from the same observational methods and these disagreements cannot be resolved by the usual processes used in the scientific world to ascertain the truth, whether those of Freud's day or by contemporaneous methods, then how may they be understood? Is it possible to decide that one of the competing theories is more valid than any of the others, and would it be possible to do so in a way that could be accepted by all the adherents to the paradigm? The history of psychodynamic theories seems to demonstrate the reverse and as theories develop greater differences emerge and competing schools proliferate rather like the multiplication of religious beliefs. All make an appeal to the truth, relying for their truthfulness on coherence tests rather than upon correspondence with an independently existing reality, but none has been able to establish an extrinsic way to demonstrate the

unique truth-condition, which is claimed for each of the competing theories, to those within the psychotherapeutic community, still less to those outside it. An advantage of thinking of Freud's and other theories as languages rather than as statements about independently existing 'facts' is that they could all be considered as offering valuable ways of thinking about mental events. It could also be recognized that the metapsychological language being used had created the phenomenon under study.

Other proposals have been made with the intention of avoiding the sterile arguments about the reconciliation of psychoanalysis with scientific explanations in one form or another. One alternative that has been suggested is that psychoanalytical concepts may have the same validity as the study of history. Plausible as this analogy may seem in the light of modern thought about the relation between historical accounts and the facts of history, the lack of an independently existing 'chronicle' for psychoanalytical facts makes the comparison less than compelling. Memories cannot be regarded in that way as Freud himself recognized and so cannot offer the independently existing fundamental record from which all historical studies must begin. It may be that the proliferating hypotheses and differences could themselves be seen as evidence for quite other hypotheses about the nature of psychoanalytical theories and the effectiveness of the talking cure than have so far been considered.

Another alternative is the comparison with hermeneutics. These theories promote the idea that the meaning of any utterance or text may be various and cannot be confined to a single interpretation. This has particular relevance to the clinical work of interpretation of unconscious meanings and then to the metapsychology which provides a context for them. Postmodern theories also affirm the possibility of multiple meanings for any text, to which the free associations of patients in clinical sessions may be compared. Hermeneutic theories also emphasize the significance of language as central to human experience. I adopt those ideas and consider the latter

in the context of evolutionary studies purporting to confirm the significance of language as a unique marker of the human as contrasted with other mammals. I subscribe to the idea of multiple interpretations. Hermeneutic theories have been largely formulated in terms of language at large rather than for specific languages such as I propose Freud's theory may be. The hermeneutic discussions about psychoanalysis have tended to be about the clinical experiences and concern the interaction between therapist and patient. I differ from those hermeneutic studies in that they tend to reify the concepts as if they were independently existing entities rather than as being created by the metapsychological language itself. Ricoeur (1970) refers to 'the Freudian unconscious' and 'the unconscious' as if each were language independent. In Freud's writing the idea of 'the unconscious' had more than one definition and differed in the topographical and structural theories. It is evident that these were different ways of thinking about the concept and involved the creation of languages within which that thinking could be accommodated. Grünbaum (1984) has rejected the possibility of hermeneutics as a basis of psychoanalysis because in his view it cannot provide a demonstrable causal foundation such as he Schafer (1976) proposes a new language for psychoanalysis and favours the locus of the clinical as the foundation for this new language but does not consider the idea that the same clinical material might give rise to several different languages rather than just one action language. He refers to good and bad metapsychologies, which he also regards as languages, but does not seem to appreciate that languages may not be validated in that way since there may be no standards by which one may be judged to be better than another. In fact, he seems to assume that the clinical action language needs no theoretical underpinning from a metapsychology even though it may be needed to give the clinical language a basis from which it derives its meaning. Spence (1982 & 1987) has also discussed the importance of narrative in the psychoanalytic session and has described Freud's metapsychological theory as a metaphor or a series of metaphors, which Freud came to regard as objectively established realities. Spence demonstrates convincingly that they cannot be so

regarded but, in common with other theorist in the post-modern post-structuralist tradition, he tends to conclude sceptically about any form of psychic reality. Commenting on dream images and the contents of free associations he claims that the fact that the patient and the analyst can make sense of them 'says nothing about the presence of an overall structure' (1987:204). This is an interesting comment because it implies that there is no overall structure to which anything corresponds and later he abjures the idea of correspondence to an independently existing reality. This is not because there is no such reality but because it is ultimately unknowable. However, he refers to the brain events as possibly generating the images to which meaning may be attached. Relying on Davidson's concept that all mental events are physical events under another description this might not be an unlikely possibility and moreover need not assume that the mental description must always be the same. So using the Saussurean notation the signifiers of the Freudian metapsychology could be generated by those physical brain events to provide a domain of meaning using Freudian language but that other domains of equal legitimacy might be created by other metapsychological languages. The metapsychological language is then the creator of the meaning and of the psychic reality. Freud took seriously the need to base mental events on neurological events. *The Project for a Scientific Psychology* was a serious, if unsuccessful, attempt to work out in the scientific ideas of his day what that connection might be, and he made another attempt in Chapter 7 of *The Interpretation of Dreams*. In the light of Davidson's concept that mental events are the same as physical events but under another description Freud's hypothesis does not seem unreasonable even if his scientific theories were not equal to the task.

Beginning with the notion that psychodynamic psychotherapy, in all its forms, is concerned with meaning and its expression in the language of psychoanalysis rather than with the attempt to recover veridical memories of an actual historical past I consider the concept of meaning itself and its relationship to ideas of causality both in

an abstract sense and in their application to psychoanalytic and psychodynamic theories in particular in Chapters 7 & 8. The ideas of hermeneutic theorists are particularly relevant in this discussion and especially their notion of speech and language as a defining attribute of the human species. Some independent evidence for the importance of linguisticity is provided by some contemporary studies of archæology (Donald 1991; Mithen 1996) which suggest that an important evolutionary development for human beings occurred between fifty and sixty thousand years ago when the capacity to speak seems to have precipitated a remarkable change in their evolutionary pathway. It gave rise to a capacity for reflection and to consideration of issues which, so far as could be told, were and are not available to non-linguistic species. This has implications for the nature of psychic reality in its psychoanalytic usage. Structural and Post-Structural thought has also emphasized the significance of language in the construction of perceptions and truth claims as well as the possibility of multiple meanings of formulations both verbal and written, although it regards them as transient phenomena and unrelated to any underlying reality. Additionally, although Structuralism began with the analysis of linguistic structures in the understanding of cultures, in its later Post-Modern manifestations it has become more concerned with power relationships as determined by the structure of the prevailing 'narrative'. As Connor (1989) says, Post-Modernism is not about what it means but about what it does, and that its defining characteristic 'lies in an important readjustment of power relationships within and across cultural and critical-academic institutions' (1989:12). In more recent accounts the retreat from meaning is even more pronounced leading to an extreme scepticism about the existence of an reality either as created by language itself or independently of it. Elliott (1996) has considered the relationship between postmodernity and psychoanalysis and relies heavily, if uncritically, on material drawn from some Kleinian and post-Kleinian thinkers. He describes the disruption of self, subjectivity and inter-subjectivity consequent upon what he calls the postmodern age, but it is not clear whose self and subjectivity he is considering. Plainly it is not his own. More importantly, his 'self

seems to be disembodied in a way that Freud's is not. Additionally the postmodern world he describes seems to be language independent, existing in its own right and the listing of globalization, trans-national communication systems, new information technologies, the industrialization of war, the collapse of Soviet-style socialism and universal consumerism as the defining characteristics of the postmodern world repeated at intervals through the book illustrates the point. Moreover his account of the debate between modernism and postmodernism seems at base to be a contemporary account of the perennial and unresolved conflict between those who believe that humans are fundamentally bad and need to be firmly controlled to be able to participate in civic society, and those who believe that human beings are fundamentally good and left to themselves they have the potential to be creative and construct a society free from conflict. Given Elliott's view that human identity is fragmented, chaotic and hate filled under postmodern culture it is difficult to see where his optimism comes from. Like the Social Contract theorists of the 17th & 18th Century he sees the dilemma but relies upon some rather selective accounts of post-Kleinian psychoanalysis to resolve it without considering whether the evidence from those sources is well founded. In this thesis I am primarily concerned with the capacity of language to create psychological realities providing structures of meaning for the clinical discourse so I will not be relying on postmodern theory but will consider some of Elliott's accounts of psychoanalysis elsewhere.

An important issue is the nature of the 'reality' created by linguisticity. I consider that issue in Chapter 7 through a discussion of the ideas of Austin and Searle in relation to language, brain functioning and its relevance to conscious and unconscious ideas, and relate them to Freud's important concepts of consciousness, unconsciousness and repression and their relevance to thing-presentations and word-presentations and the relationship between them. Wittgenstein's idea of the 'language game' which is defined by the rules of its 'grammar' rather than by the correspondence of language to the reality accords with some of the thinking of

Millikan, Searle and others about language and the physical reality. Language is a system of symbolic representations which represents reality and in that way provides a map to the world but does not correspond with it in the way that scientific concepts correspond with the material reality. Davidson's attempt to escape from dualistic thinking by suggesting that the difference between the material and the mental lies in the fact that what is known as 'mental' is the material world under a different description may be applicable to psychoanalytic thinking about the repressed unconscious and its transition to consciousness by the association of the thing-presentations with word-presentations. These ideas I discuss in Chapters 7 & 8 where the importance of language for the psychoanalytic/psychodynamic enterprise and as providing the foundation of 'psychic reality' is examined (with linguisticity rather than instinct providing the physiological basis). Here the argument is that psychic reality is not ontological but epistemological and in psychoanalytical formulations is better understood as being established by the metapsychological language which provides a source of the meanings which can be ascribed to the clinical material in the patients' discourses. So, for example, the Freudian metapsychological language provides for meanings relating to sexual phantasies, sexuality and its bodily manifestations. Other formulations give warrant for the assignment of different meanings to the same material, so that, for example, Kleinians use terms such as internal objects, the good and bad breasts, and the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions. I discuss the idea of repression as the important process in psychoanalysis which involves the dissociation of thing-presentations and word-presentations to form the dynamic unconscious material which is significant in the formation of symptoms. I note that the dynamic unconscious is different from the use of the term *system-ucs* which Freud uses to denote a broader concept of the unconscious. From this I conclude that, given the basic linguisticity of human beings and the way in which the idea of psychic reality is used in the psychoanalytic discourse in both its conscious and unconscious forms, that metapsychology and its account of psychic reality is related to language, and that

the theories themselves may be better considered as languages which provide the foundation on which a variety of individual narratives may be created in the clinical session.

An argument has been made by Fonagy that language in psychoanalysis should not be confined to linguisticity and verbalizations and that there is a 'proto-language' that consists of the physical, somatic body language supplemented by phonic exchanges between mother and infant in the preverbal stages of development. The term 'proto-language' seems to have been borrowed from linguistics (Trask 1999) where it refers to a primal language used by early humans from which the variety of languages has developed. It does not refer to the preverbal signals and body languages which may have been in use by the fore-runners of early humans and perhaps had a great deal in common with the communication systems of the other mammals. Without casting any doubts on the importance of the very earliest stages of development and the understanding of them in the practice of *psychotherapy* with both children and adults I will argue that psychoanalysis proper cannot function without language in its linguistic form (see also Hurry 1998). I consider the argument more fully in Chapter 8.

Finally, I consider the development of Freud's theory and show how it functions in important ways as a language which he developed from his own experiences which did not necessarily provide evidential support for the truth of his ideas. This reliance on personal experience, as well as the 19th Century explanations of the role of female sexuality in mental conditions, may have led to his emphasis on the importance of sexual experience and sexual symbolism as providing the source of meanings especially in terms of infantile sexuality, castration anxieties and the oedipal complex, all of which may be seen to have been significant in Freud's own personal development as well as in his early thinking about the way in which neurotic symptoms are formed. Other theories developed after Freud having been derived

from Freud's original concepts and using the same mode of analysis might be shown to be alternative languages since none depend upon empirically demonstrated entities as their bases; and might equally be capable of being related to their originator's personal developmental problems (Stolorow & Atwood 1979).

Chapter 1

The Development of Psychodynamic Thought

Since Freud began to develop his theories of psychoanalysis there have been a number of deviations from, enlargements of and other changes to his original ideas. All these alternative theories share some common concepts and views about the nature of mental phenomena as well as views about the existence of conflict between competing desires and between unconscious wishes and the reality, and the process of resolution of those conflicts through dialogue with the therapist. I propose to use the term 'psychodynamic' to cover the spectrum of theories which are now extant, none of which can be regarded as the incontrovertible explanation of the nature of mental processes nor can any of them claim unique therapeutic effectiveness. Even within the formerly monolithic psychoanalytic edifice a number of competing theories have developed. Peterfreund (1983) said that

...my training at the New York Psychoanalytic Institute 20 years ago left one with the conviction that what is called Freudian analysis had very different meaning for different analysts ... (1983:ix).

Eleven years later Tuckett (1994) confirmed this in his Introduction to *Parts 4 & 5 of the International Journal of Psychoanalysis*. He wrote

Psychoanalysis today, to judge by what we know of both theory and practice, is in a state of considerable ferment. We have schools of analysis which appear to be entirely at odds with each other. We have extreme forms of relativism. We have major departures from the core clinical setting, so that five-times-a-week, lying-down-on-

the-couch etc. treatment is now apparently rare. We have fashionable and charismatic movements...

And if the perspective is widened to include other varieties of psychodynamic thinking such as the Jungian, Lacanian, and those which have developed in innovative new institutions registered in this country by the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy the sense of disarray is increased. Although Freud (1909) had claimed that the particular therapeutic effectiveness of psychoanalysis was evidence for its truth, this is contested by Grünbaum (1984), and Sandler (1991) has commented that it is no longer possible to support truth claims for psychoanalysis, in its classical and institutional sense, on the grounds of its unique therapeutic potency. Other therapies, Sandler says, have been as effective as psychoanalysis. So in terms of effective therapy there are good grounds for assuming that other theoretical orientations may have as credible a claim to be truthful accounts of mental processes as psychoanalysis. Stolorow and Atwood (1979) extend this discussion even more widely to include all theories of personality derived from psychology and psychoanalysis, referring to their diversity and disunity as a result of the indeterminacy of the relationships between them since 'each tends to present itself as a foundation for the science of man' (1979:15). They cannot be tested against each other because they do not offer alternative theoretical models but 'are competing ideological and conceptual orientations to the problem of what it is to be human' (1979:16).

One explanation for this theoretical promiscuity may be found in Kuhn's (1970) view about the nature of scientific development and the concept of the paradigm which constellates scientific research and thinking around a common theme acceptable to the workers in the field. Before a paradigm is accepted a pre-paradigmatic state exists, according to Kuhn, where there is no consensus about any particular, over-riding concept around which research can be organised. This may seem very like the

condition currently prevailing in psychodynamic thinking where there seems to be little agreement beyond a common belief that dialogue between the analysand and the analyst conducted according to the principle of free association which seeks to enable the patient to convey to the therapist the immediate contents of his conscious thinking in the most unconstrained way possible is the way in which psychological symptoms may be understood and relieved and from which theories about the structure of the mind and psychic functioning can be constructed. The acceptance of this pre-paradigmatic view, however, already presupposes something about the nature of psychodynamic theories, i.e. that they are scientific or capable of becoming scientific. This is an opinion which I wish to leave open for examination. In my view there is a different reason for the evident diversity of the theories offered by different schools of psychodynamics which does not presume that it arises from the absence of a prevailing paradigm which when it emerges would subsume them under the authenticating banner of science.

A third possibility is that as time passes and experience accumulates the theories required to encompass the emerging knowledge become more complex. The simpler concepts of earlier days may be found to be serviceable no longer, or to be capable of accounting for only a small proportion of the phenomena now being presented. Classical theory was believed only to account for what were known as the transference neuroses; now theories have to encompass psychosis, border-line conditions, autism, serious behavioural problems and so on. In this they may be analogous to the biological theory of increasing complexity of living organisms with evolution (MacShea 1991. Lewin 1993). Spencer suggested that this process was driven by the internal dynamics of the systems and their need to adapt to the environment. It might not be too fanciful to suggest that explanations of mental and psychics states might be driven in the same way and that both the diversity and

complexity of concepts and explanatory systems are the outcome of the same dynamics.

New Hypotheses and Criticisms of Original Theories

In the light of that it may be worth while to examine the burgeoning hypotheses as criticisms of the classical theories as first stated by Freud thus producing the promiscuous and divergent concepts now available. It became evident very early in the history of the psychoanalytic movement that there was significant dissent even among the early pioneers from some of the basic tenets as they were being formulated by Freud. Adler and Stekel were among the earliest of the defectors and, Adler in particular took issue with Freud's view of the predominance of sexuality in the aetiology of neurosis, and additionally Adler was concerned about the discounting of social factors in the theories then being developed. Both Jung and Freud denigrated the two defectors in very personal terms for their dissent, and this personalised way of attacking deviations as a manifestation of the unresolved neuroses of the deviant continues as a kind of defence against some of the non-psychoanalytic critics (Robinson 1993). Sayers (1991) commented that both Horney and Klein had their dissent from Freud's patriarchal theories attributed to personal neuroticism rather than being seen as an interesting alternative explanation for the roots of neurosis. It seems that if the competing claims could not be determined by an appeal to the evidence then an appeal to the apparently non-neurotic authority was required to resolve the issue.

Interestingly not long after Adler had resigned from the movement Jung too began to express his discontent with the particular emphasis Freud laid on sexual factors in the causation of neurosis, although it seems probable that Jung had held these views all the time and that he had simply suppressed them during the years of his friendship and co-operation with Freud (Gay 1989:226, Donn 1988). Freud dealt with Jung's

growing criticism by comparing him with Adler. Jung was incensed by this comparison with Adler over his revision of the function of the incest taboo (McGuire 1979, Letters 315J, 316F, 318J) and this seems to have been the beginning of their personal and professional estrangement. However, Jung had expressed his early differences from Freud in almost the same terms as Adler had used about the incest taboo. Each described it not as a defence against powerful sexual wishes for the mother, but as a way of warding off free floating anxiety (which has no apparent source but could be diminished if it can be attached to a cause). For Adler this anxiety was a consequence of overpowering libido, while for Jung the taboo was one among a number of taboos used by primitive man to deal with free floating anxiety which then was inherited by succeeding generations. He says

From this standpoint we must say that incest is forbidden *not because it is desired* but because the free-floating anxiety regressively reactivates infantile material and turns it into a ceremony of atonement (as though incest had been, or might have been, desired). (McGuire 1979 Letter 315J)

Jung came to this opinion by a different route and was particularly impressed by the evidence of an extensive mythology about the oedipal theme from which he concluded that the fantasy was inherited and not simply part of an individual subjective experience. Freud often found it difficult to allow others to offer alternative explanations to the ideas he was developing and was concerned to ground them confidently in contemporary scientific methodology. He expressed anxiety about the nature of the evidence he was producing for his theories through the clinical accounts of his patients.

. . . . it still strikes me myself as strange that the case histories I write should read like short stories, and that, as one might say, they lack the serious stamp of scientific method. (1895:160)

As Kitcher (1992) shows Freud made considerable efforts to relate his theories to many of the cognate scientific theories of his day, in her view quite properly seeking epistemological support from them even if many of those theories were shown to be unfounded by later scientific research. Despite Jung's criticism Freud continued to express confidence in his conclusions. Writing to Ferenczi in 1913 about the disagreements which were beginning to be expressed by Jung he says

Naturally everything that strays from our truths has official applause on its side. It is quite possible that this time they will really bury us after they have so often sung us the dirge in vain. This, he added defiantly, will change much in our fate, but nothing in science. We are in possession of the truth: I am as certain as I was fifteen years ago. (Gay 1989)

In his final work, *An Outline of Psychoanalysis (1940)*, referring to the way that inferences about the contents of the unconscious are made from the presentation of conscious material and from the gaps which occur in it, he says

The relative certainty of our psychical science is based on the binding force of those inferences. Anyone who enters deeply into our work will find that our technique holds its ground against *any* criticism. (1940:159) [my italics]

The attempt to stifle dissent

The possibility that the same observations may be explained by a number of different hypotheses the truth of which might not be determined by an appeal to those same observations did not seem to accord with Freud's understanding of the positivistic scientific principles of his time. Kris (1954) has pointed out that whatever else Freud changed in his theories throughout his life he sustained his belief in the drive theory of

libido and its relation to sexuality together with the principle of homeostasis as the two fundamental tenets of psychoanalysis which he believed were supported by the scientific evidence of his day. In his final work (Freud 1940) provides ample evidence for the maintenance of these two basic ideas as the foundation of his scientific thought, as well as for the disregard of alternative hypotheses which might account for his observations. This concern about the possibility of alternative theories being erected on the same foundation led, with other more personal factors, to the final rupture with Jung (Donn 1988: Gay 1989: Jones 1953) as it had with Adler. He (Adler) had commented at one of the meetings of the Vienna Psychoanalytical Society at Freud's home that he doubted that psychoanalysis could be taught or learned and that 'there is more than one way in psychoanalysis' (Nunberg & Federn 1962). Freud disagreed. To try and ensure that there was adequate control to prevent deviations the International Psychoanalytic Association was established in 1910 to replace the International Psychoanalytic Congress with greater powers over the local branches. When this failed to control the differences with Jung, Freud expressed his anxiety that 'our opponents will soon be able to speak of an experienced psychoanalyst whose conclusions are radically different from ours'. (McGuire 1979 Letter 223F) and his growing unease about Jung's theoretical apostasy led to another attempt to maintain a monolithic control through the establishment of a clandestine Committee to preserve the unitary nature of psychoanalysis. This development was proposed by Jones and its secrecy was a condition imposed by Freud himself (Jones 1955). Its purpose was to reply to Freud's critics and each of its members agreed to continue to subscribe to the fundamental tenets of psychoanalysis in public and to discuss any variation in his views privately with other members. Despite Greenberg & Mitchell's (1993) claim that Freud throughout his life modified his theories in response to criticism (the strategy of accommodation); but he did not seem to be able to do so if the critics were those he

regarded as his adherents¹. Mitchell (1988) believed that Freud was always ready to change his mind if he felt that he had been misguided but

Freud's openness towards changes in his own mind, however, did not extend to a toleration of change of minds of his followers (1988:7).

The Accord Breaks Down

Although the creation of the Committee in fact prevented the emergence of any further public dissent from the theories being developed by Freud for some years, this accord was relatively short-lived. Some deviations began to be formulated by Karen Horney and Melanie Klein in the 20's. Horney from very early on in her career in psychoanalysis began to express her dissent from some of the cardinal hypotheses of Freud and in particular from his phallogentric notions and the importance of the oedipal father in the development of neurosis. In her various books and papers, although changing her position radically in the course of time, Horney asserted the importance of maternal care and significance of the infant's interaction with its mother and that neurosis was likely to derive from deprivation rather than from frustration of the sexual instinct. It was however many years before she was finally expelled from the psychoanalytic establishment in America, when she set up her own organisation, the Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis (AAP).

Melanie Klein in the 20's also diverged and developed her ideas from her experience of working with young children. The drive/structure theory did not seem to provide her with appropriate concepts to explain what she saw in her clinical work and she began the process of developing an object relations theory depending in the first instance on the idea that the infant experienced two different kinds of anxiety, persecutory and depressive anxiety, which could not be satisfactorily explained within the Freudian hypotheses as they then stood. That she attempted to contain her new

ideas within that framework and her adoption of Freud's formulation of the death instinct, and the theory of instinctual drives associated with it, provided the basis within which she could accommodate the two developmental principles forming the fundamental aspect of her theories, and may have helped her to evade the need to leave, or to be expelled from, the psychoanalytic fold. Her growing conflict with Anna Freud about the nature and techniques of child therapy did attract Freud's opposition, but interestingly Klein's theories gained the support of Jones, one of the holders of the gold rings which designated the members of the Committee established to preserve the purity of psychoanalytic thought. Jones had also supported Horney's emphasis upon the mother as a key element in psychological development (Sayers 1991). So, the attempt to ensure that deviations were kept out of the public eye did not succeed in binding one important member of the Committee², and the structure set up by Freud to ensure a unified theory standing on the secure foundations of scientific method as he understood it could not survive a rising tide of alternative theories, and that process began with the work of Horney and Klein (Sayer 1991; Wallerstein 1992).

In the United States a unified theory under the banner of ego psychology (now incorporating some of Adler's ideas about adaptation) deriving from the work of Anna Freud on the analysis of defences had been established. Although these theories were a deviation from the original thinking of Freud they became the mainstream of psychoanalytical thinking in America, with Hartmann, Kris and Loewenstein providing the intellectual content for it. As Wallerstein (1992) points out other dissenters during the 1930's were not able to be contained within the orthodox framework. So Sullivan (1953), who was also developing an object relations theory substantially different from Klein's, could not be contained within the confines of the American Psychoanalytic Association. And later Horney set up her own Association too. They continued to develop their ideas outside that framework and have not been

reincorporated into the mainstream of psychoanalytic thinking, any more than has Jung despite the coincidence of some of his ideas with received psychoanalytical thought (Samuels 1985).

The resistance to the incorporation of their ideas Wallerstein (1992) ascribes to the continuing influence of Freud's conceptual stance and he draws attention to the way in which the introduction of new ways of thinking are often still prefaced with references to Freud's papers with the intention of showing that these novelties are not a departure from his doctrine but either an extension of it or a new way of looking at it. Lacan even claimed that his ideas were a restatement of the original concepts of Freud from which others, especially the ego psychologists, had departed. It is noteworthy that after Freud's death the conflict between the classical theorists and the Kleinians came into distressing and painful conflict in the British Institute, but after the Controversial Discussions an agreement (called the Gentlemen's Agreement although signed by three women [King & Steiner 1991]) was reached which enabled the two traditions to remain within the same institutional framework each with its own training protocols and structures as well as providing for the establishment of a third section independent of both called, until recently, the Middle Group. For the first time acute dissent from some of the classical formulations were contained and allowed to exist side by side with them. The same was not true in the United States where the unified theoretical structure was maintained and little notice was taken of the divergences introduced by Klein, nor of the alternative object relations theories of Fairbairn, Balint and Winnicott. It is interesting to note that Fairbairn writing around the time of Freud's death and subsequently to it did not attract either the attention or the controversy surrounding the developments of Klein's theories.

Although there were significant differences in the way they thought, the object relations theorists were expressing a growing unease about the drive/structure theory

which was so central to the classical formulation. In various ways these theorists were trying to get away from the mechanistic view of human life which seemed endemic in that theory. What seemed particularly nonhuman was the drive theory which apparently implied that human motivation, even in the psychic dimension of the drive theory, was somehow impersonal and deterministic and independent of the context of human relationships in which the individual existed. H S Sullivan and others with whom he discussed his ideas, Fromm, Horney, Thompson, & Fromm-Reichmann (Greenberg & Mitchell 1983), were critical of the classical theory because they alleged that it underemphasised the social and cultural influences on personality development. Sullivan believed that Freud's drive theory could be better understood as an outcome of interpersonal and social processes. Fromm (1980) criticising Freud's use of the term 'love-object' says

Is there really such a thing as a 'love-object' ? Does not the loved person cease to be an object, ie, something outside and opposed to me ? Is not love precisely the inner activity which unites two people so that they cease to be objects (ie, possessions for each other) ?

And Winnicott, discussing the interaction between mother and baby, emphasises the human-ness of the exchange rather than its foundation in the infant's drives. The mother's empathic anticipations of the infant's needs are necessary to foster the infant's omnipotent illusion, 'a human being has to be taking the trouble all the time to bring the world to the baby in an understandable form' (1958:154). Weiss (1986) considering two different hypotheses he finds in the Freudian canon says of Freud's earliest concepts, which he (Weiss) calls the automatic mental functioning hypothesis and includes the instinctual and drive theories, that they cannot fully account for the unconscious processes brought to analysis by the patients despite their continued wide use. He says that

. . . writers including (G) Klein (1976), Gill (1976), and Holt (1976) have argued that natural science concepts of the automatic functioning hypothesis are not derived from analytic data, do not apply to that data, and fail to explain it. (1986:37)

Mitchell (1988) in discussing the development of relational concepts in psychoanalysis as a further step on the path away from the mechanistic drive concepts says

Much of the complex and multifaceted history of psychoanalytic ideas can be understood as a series of alternative strategies for dealing with the central conceptual dilemma with which Freud was grappling in 1923 - the clash between clinical data saturated with relations with others and a conceptual framework which relegates personal relationship to a mediating, secondary role. (1988:52)

Most of the alternative theories are attempting to find a way of dealing with this problem and of couching their concepts in more recognisably human terms. Fairbairn's solution was to adopt a theory of psychic structure which incorporated the idea of energy (libido) as an alternative form of structure, rather along the lines of the unity of mass/energy formulation of Relativity Theory summarised in Einstein's famous equation. This theory makes it impossible to maintain Freud's concept of object-less and direction-less energy existing within the system unconscious, since energy without mass was no longer a valid hypothesis, and as an alternative Fairbairn (1952) proposed the concept 'endopsychic structure/energy' to overcome the difficulty. But since psychic structures by definition have no mass they can have no energy either and the concept can function only as an heuristic device. Without explicitly formulating the thought Fairbairn must have realised that Freud's libido theory could not stand alone and required a structural theory to make it work, hence Freud's conceptualisations of structure in the form of unconscious, preconscious and

conscious; and then the familiar id, ego, superego. Fairbairn therefore needed to reformulate it if he was to retain the notion of the libido. The reformulation of the libido theory in this way may have been an attempt to remain within the domain of natural science, following Freud's powerful example, and it may be significant that Fairbairn's theories are currently gaining interest in the United States where concern about sustaining the natural science status of psychoanalysis is prevalent.

The strength of Freud's charismatic influence over the psychoanalytic community seems to have inhibited the further development of psychodynamic ideas until at least the 1970's. Lacan's endeavour in the 1950's and 60's to 'return to Freud' through the structural linguistic theory, derived from Saussure, and to depart from the monolithic ego-psychology development in America was unacceptable and his ideas and his unorthodox practice were not able to be contained within the confines of the International Association. Roudinesco (1990) describes in minute detail the split in the Societe francaise de psychanalyse(SFP) which followed from its attempt to affiliate to the International Association and the difficulties in the way of affiliation so long as Lacan retained his role as a training analyst. The controversy resulted in the dissolution of the SFP and Lacan set up his own Ecole francaise de psychanalyse, later to become the Ecole freudienne de Paris. Despite his claim to be returning to the original theories of Freud from which other had departed this has never been accepted by the International Association. Although apparently reaffirming ideas drawn from the earliest of Freud's works the linguistic tilt Lacan gave them together with the unorthodoxy of his practice ensured that he would be expelled from the psychoanalytic fold as others had been. Lacan's ideas were one of the forerunners of what was later to emerge as the hermeneutic theories emphasising the importance of speech and dialogue in the clinical setting as the foundation of psychodynamic thinking and concepts, and the importance of the search for meaning as the therapeutic factor (Habermas 1971; Ricoeur 1970 & 1981). The link with the

drive/structure theory was now being disavowed and there was no attempt to accommodate the new ideas to it. Equally G Klein (1976), was criticising the metapsychological concepts as being unnecessary and irrelevant since it was not possible to validate them by natural scientific methods. He, together with Gill (1976), Holt (1981 & 1982) and Rycroft (1966 & 1974) drove a wedge between clinical theory and metapsychology which has subsequently been attacked by Wallerstein (1992) and Meissner (1991) both of whom wish to preserve the value of metapsychology as well as the natural scientific provenance of the psychoanalytic endeavour. The movement away from the drive/ structure theory in the direction of hermeneutic ideas was continued by Schafer (1976) and Spence (1982) whose focus on language and narrative was giving psychoanalytic theories a different basis from the variants of object relations theory. That theory was itself undergoing revision by Kohut, perhaps because the concept of the object was itself too impersonal and required moderating. He introduced the notion of the 'self-object' which was an identification with an external person, or an aspect of a person, whose mental aspect then became incorporated into the self as a self-object.

The object-relations theorists have been followed by the relational theorists relying on the ideas of Winnicott, Balint and Bowlby. Bowlby (1963, 1965, & 1967), building on the experience of Anna Freud and Dorothy Burlingham in their work in wartime nurseries where children were separated from their families, developed concepts about attachment as a primary impulse in dealing with vulnerability and dependency and created a theory which emphasised the importance of environmental factors in the development of the individual. In this he was thinking in a similar way to Winnicott but with a greater emphasis upon the relational world than Winnicott, who continued to be interested in the psychic structure of the individual albeit shaped by deficits in the social environment. These ideas paved the way for the relational concepts of Mitchell (1988) and of Atwood and Stolorow (1984) which focus attention on the

individuals in their social context, and links with the hermeneutic theories in their accentuation of the immediacy of the clinical session as providing both the milieu in which the experience of the analysand's attempts to replicate his familiar ways of relating can be understood and remedied. These theories emphasised the continuing struggle of the individual to make and maintain current attachments and relationships which although forged in the past were to be understood and remodelled in the present rather than by the regressive re-evocation of the past in the transference. In this they differ from the object relations theorists who assume either deprivation model or a developmental arrest model which have to be counter-acted in the therapy by returning to the point of deprivation or fixation. So it can be seen that successive critical re-evaluations of the classical statement of psychodynamic ideas as first delivered by Freud beginning almost as the first concepts were being formulated has resulted in a multiplicity of hypotheses, not all of which have been contained in the institutional framework of psychoanalysis. It has been claimed that these variations are not just differing emphases in the presentation of the same fundamental ideas, but differing ideological approaches to the science of man (Stolorow & Atwood 1979). If this is so then the question of the truth claims of each of these theoretical models arises and will be considered in the next chapter.

Notes to Chapter 1

- 1 The boundary of Freud's narcissism seems to have incorporated his closest colleagues, as it also included the members of his immediate family and especially his wife (Gay 1989), so that dissension from them became unthinkable and unendurable. The formation of the Committee was an attempt to formalise this narcissistic need and to bind its members at least to public unity. It is interesting to note that to signify their membership of the Committee each were given a Greek intaglio which they then mounted into a gold ring. Perhaps the rings were symbolic of a kind of marriage to Freud and a willingness to be bound by his narcissistic wishes as Martha had been from the day of her marriage to Freud and her submission to his demand that she should give up all Jewish religious observances and ritual from thenceforward, despite the orthodox nature of her upbringing.
- 2 Two other members of the Committee (Ferenczi and Rank) at a later date were regarded as unreliable. Ferenczi's paper 'The Confusion of Tongues' brought him into disrepute towards the end of his life; and Rank's emphasis on the birth trauma as the origin of anxiety led to a complete rift with the psychoanalytic establishment and the creation of his own school of psychoanalysis in the United States.

Chapter 2

The Status of Psychodynamic Concepts

If there are so many critical divergences from the drive/ structure theory, which appear to have multiplied even more rapidly in the 1980's alongside the trenchant criticisms of psychoanalysis as a whole (Grünbaum 1984, 1993, Sulloway 1992), how are their claims to be truthful to be judged when compared to each other ? The classical concepts formulated by Freud were claimed by him to be scientific and were to be judged by the scientific canons of his day. An early attempt to frame the theory in scientific terms was set out in the *Project for a Scientific Psychology* (Freud 1895a) but never published in his lifetime. In it he was attempting to establish his new theories on a firm foundation of science which primarily was to be found in physiology. In the version of *The Project* published in the Standard Edition Freud wrote

The intention is to furnish a psychology that shall be a natural science: that is, to represent psychical processes as quantitatively determinate states of specifiable material particles, thus making those processes perspicuous and free from contradictions. (Freud 1895a:295)

Kris (1954), writing an Introduction to *The Origins of Psychoanalysis*, asserts that Freud believed that the anxiety that underlies the phenomenon of neurosis cannot admit of a psychological derivation (and) promised to lead from the uncertainty of

psychological insight to the firm ground of physiological processes (1954:25). Kitcher (1992) explores in detail the need for psychoanalysis as a science to be related to other natural and social scientific disciplines which bear on similar subject matter and concludes that in the light of what was known at the end of the 19th Century and the beginning of the 20th Century Freud was drawing quite properly on a number of sources, including physiology, to support his ideas. The problem with his use of a variety of theories extant at that time was that with the passage of time he failed to amend some of his basic concepts to accommodate changes which were occurring in those hypotheses. He continued to believe that the abandoned or substantially modified scientific theories still offered support for his views, even though some of the new theories cast doubt on or refuted them (Kitcher 1992). This seemed to be particularly true of his theories about instinctual energy (libido) and the concept of the constancy principle which according to Jones (1953/7), Kris (1954), and Kitcher (1992) he maintained to the end of his life. So that although he wished to be grounded firmly in physiological processes, those processes, as the theories about them developed, did not continue to provide the support he had relied upon. As Sulloway remarks, "... bad biology spawned bad psychology" (1992/153).

If a firm grounding was required was Freud right in believing that it could be found in scientific methods? In the last half of the 19th Century following the publication of Darwin's evolutionary theories there was a considerable optimism about science and its discoveries which suggested that the universe was likely to be better understood through the application of scientific method than in any other way. The prevailing scientific theories of the day were confidently deterministic and it was believed that all phenomena could be explained by the physical-mathematical method (Gay 1988). This belief was supported by the important range of discoveries being made in many fields during these years. Brücke, in whose laboratory Freud studied, was a leading

proponent of this view of science so it is hardly surprising that Freud subscribed to the same view of the salience of scientific method, reaffirming it as late as 1933 in the *New Introductory Lectures* (Freud 1933). The work of Darwin offered a foundation for this philosophy and it too was influential in Freud's formulation of psychoanalytic ideas (Kitcher 1992). References to evolution and inherited factors abound in Freud's papers. Harding (1976) comments that 19th Century scientists and philosophers believed that while theories about nature could not be proved to be true nevertheless the elimination of rival hypotheses through prescribed scientific methods 'could finally reveal the residual, single, true description of nature' (ibid/x). However, this confidence about the findings of 19th Century science was about to be thrown into doubt by developments in the early years of the 20th Century by Einstein's Theory of Relativity, the beginnings of the Quantum Theory and Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle. Even if these developments had not occurred there are other reasons for doubting whether the findings of science can be finally established. Popper (1968), writing later in the 20th Century, claims that all scientific theories are provisional and are subject to revision through tests which are capable of refuting them. Theories, he suggests, do not develop in a cumulative way like a wall being built from bricks standing one upon another. They are usually overthrown by experiments and replaced by others which purport to be a better explanation and are subjected to the same testing. Theories are conjectures which have to be tested before they can be accepted even provisionally.

Freud had not shown much interest in testing his concepts extra-clinically. However, both Edelson (1984) and Glymour (1980) suggest that as clinical theories are hypotheses like all scientific theories they have the same status. They go on to argue that not only can theories derived in this way be claimed for science but that their testing in the clinical setting can provide the necessary element of refutability and as a result they may have an enhanced status resulting from this degree of objectivity. Freud's theoretical papers are full of conjectures which are not tested empirically

except by reference to clinical material which he usually does not present. An example drawn from *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920a) reads as follows

Patients repeat all of these unwanted situations and painful emotions in the transference and revive them with the greatest ingenuity. They seek to bring about the interruption of the treatment while it is still incomplete; they contrive once more to feel themselves scorned, to oblige the physician to speak severely to them and treat them coldly; they discover appropriate objects of their jealousy; instead of the passionately desired baby of their childhood, they produce a plan or promise of some grand present - which turns out as a rule to be no less unreal. (ibid:21)

In a scientific treatise it might be expected that this account would be followed by, or even interspersed with, some actual examples drawn from clinical records which would instantiate these generalizations. Even more, there might be an attempt to combat the anecdotalism that the citation of single examples might imply through some statistical corroboration of the incidence of each or any of these general statements¹. Instead what is offered in Freud's paper is a comparison with what 'can be observed in the lives of some normal people'. Even here what is presented is a series of stereotypical situations unrelated to any actual persons - the benefactor treated with ingratitude by successive protégés; the man who is always betrayed by his friends; the lover whose affairs always pass through the same phases to reach the same conclusion. Thought provoking as these examples are they do not have the same probative value that the citation of the clinical or other material might have; nor are they subject to refutation or support by comparison with other clinical material collected under the same conditions as the cited evidence. By their nature, these generalizations suggest that there is comparable material available which might be used to illustrate and support them even if from outside the clinical setting itself. Freud does not produce it. This style of writing has been called the rhetoric of

persuasion and it denies the reader direct access to the material which would enable an independent judgement to be made. Freud, because of his scientific training in Brücke's laboratory, must have been aware that this fell short of what was required for scientific support for his hypotheses, whether or not it could have given them the kind of reliability he claimed. Most of the discussions about the scientificity of psychodynamic theories have concerned Freud's original concepts (Eysenck 1963; Grünbaum 1984; Hartmann 1950; Macmillan 1992; Nagel 1960; Popper 1973; Rapaport 1951). Eysenck & Wilson 1973, Fisher & Greenberg 1983 and Kline 1981 have undertaken reviews of the experimental evidence for those concepts. Further examinations of material derived from the observation of infants have been undertaken by Lichtenberg (1983) and Parens (1979). In the very early days of the development of psychoanalytic theory Jung's word association tests (Jung 1973) seemed to be offering empirical support for some of Freud's concepts and particularly to the idea that there were unconscious factors which were influencing the patient's responses to the stimulus words. These tests were undertaken before Jung and Freud formed their brief professional relationship and so the tests themselves were not supportive of the detailed concepts that he (Freud) was formulating but offered general support to the idea that symptoms were related to unconscious factors that Jung called 'complexes' and which were revealed by delayed response times to the stimulus words. The details of the complexes had to be elicited by further associations from the patient. The tests fell out of use perhaps because they were unable to provide specific support for the complex ideas that were being developed before the rift between Freud and Jung.

Opinions seem divided between those who believe that those concepts are capable of being scientifically validated, or at least that they have been framed in such a way that they could be subject to empirical testing and refutation (Grünbaum 1979, 1984, 1993), and those who believe that they are not capable of scientific validation (Basch 1976, Cioffi 1970, Holt 1976, Popper 1973). Even those who have examined the

empirical experiments do not claim that there is strong support for the range of hypotheses that Freud advanced, and evidence for the existence of unconscious conflicts underlying the symptoms is difficult to verify outside the clinical setting in which they are claimed to manifest themselves (Meissner 1991; *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* V75 Pts 5/6 1994). Some of the concepts, such as the topographical theory, are constructs and are therefore not directly observable; while unconscious material also is not itself directly observable but is posited by inference from the surface phenomena. The use of projective techniques such as the Rorschach Test and others have not been found to be sufficiently reliable to corroborate the existence of unconscious conflicts independently of the clinical setting (Fisher & Greenberg 1983). So the debate, although tending to support the lack of independent scientific validation for Freudian concepts of dynamic psychology, has not been finally resolved. In order to establish scientific credibility a number of conditions have to be met. Popper (1973) argues that refutability is an essential characteristic for a theory to be able to establish its scientific credentials, and that its operational hypotheses must be framed in such a way that they can be refuted by tests which would be capable of showing that the facts did not conform with those hypotheses. Confirmation by empirical tests is insufficient if those tests are potentially incapable of producing material contradicting the hypothesis under examination. Many of the experiments reported in Kline (1981), Fisher & Greenberg (1983), or Eysenck & Wilson (1973) are of this kind, and although some of the studies show that the hypotheses being tested receive some empirical support since in many cases these experiments would not have been capable of offering refutation they do not meet Popper's criterion. Grünbaum (1984) differs from this view and while not asserting that Freud's theories have been subject to sufficient empirical testing to establish their scientific validity he believes that they are capable of such testing and that some have been framed in such a way that epidemiological and/or experimental research would provide the requisite element of refutability that would serve to provide some validation for the hypotheses if they were not refuted.

The principle of refutability carries with it the implication that the theories being examined are not derived from simple observation of the facts, but are attempts to provide explanations of those observations and their value lies in the success with which they can make predictions resulting from theories derived from the observations. An example is the problem created by the discovery that light can be considered to be waves of energy, or a series of particles according to the technique of observation in use. The problem is to account for these two different observations of the behaviour of light and the solution is found through the Quantum Theory which sets out to explain this paradox, and it does so by proposing that they are explainable as two different manifestations of the same reality determined or created by the method of observation being used. It is further hypothesised that either the position or the velocity of a particle of light may be predicted but not both (Heisenberg 1959). The predictions take the form of mathematical equations. This is very different from what may be available in psychodynamic theorizing, which is conventionally thought to be about the content of the subjective worlds of individual analysands, and where the possibility of making comparisons and predictions about what may be observed in the subjective worlds of large numbers of people is difficult² even if those subjective worlds could be available for independent examination. Erikson (1958) discussing the way in which he made use of clinical material refers to one methodological point truly unique to clinical work, namely, the disposition of the clinician's "mixed" feelings, his emotions and opinions. The evidence is not "all in" if he does not succeed in using his own emotional responses during a clinical encounter as an evidential source and as a guide to intervention, instead of putting them aside with a spurious claim to unassailable objectivity (ibid: 85) This view is supported by O'Shaughnessy's (1994) comments about the fundamentally unique quality of the clinical session which cannot be replicated by another therapist. In respect of individual patients in psychoanalytical psychotherapy the best that seems to be possible is a kind of retrodictive tracing of their history through which their symptoms might be seen to make some kind of sense. An example of this method in Freud's

work can be seen in the study of *The Wolf Man* (1918). The patient's adult symptoms were ascribed to the outcome of an infantile neurosis attributed to the observation of intercourse between his parents at a very early age, and which was encapsulated in the dream of the wolves in the tree. So a line was traced from this observation, through some reported subsequent childhood incidents, to his choice of sexual partners in adult life³. The reconstitution of patients' histories as veridical accounts of their lives has been challenged by Spence (1982) when he contrasts historical truth, which may be inaccessible, with narrative truth whose validity is to be found in its coherence rather than in correspondence with the reality of the patient's history. Weiner (1965) has compared this retracing of history in psychotherapeutic accounts to a biological mode of accounting for similar outcomes in the evolutionary development of organisms. Their history is traced retrodictively to show how the developmental pathways converged but the historical theory depends on agreement about the principles of classification of the elements of the fossil record. This classification changes from time to time and produces a different account of the development.

If it is agreed that clinical work can generate hypotheses capable of independent testing, then the hypotheses generated by the clinical observations providing the basis for authentic scientific research must be those recognised by a particular scientific community. Kuhn (1970) says that

... 'normal science' means research firmly based upon one or more past scientific achievements, achievements that some particular scientific community acknowledges for a time as supplying the foundation for its further practice. (ibid:10)

It is unclear whether the hypotheses derived from clinical practice have been demonstrated to command general assent of the psychoanalytical community. There is undoubtedly such a community in existence consisting of the practitioners organised in a variety of institutes often structured around particular theoretical

hypotheses, but even in the most prestigious of these, as Tuckett (1994) suggests there are substantial differences of theoretical orientation as well as in clinical practice⁴.

Freud, prompted by Jones, attempted to deal with this tendency towards diversity and disagreement by establishing a community which was under the control of a small elite, the clandestine Committee, to control entry to the profession and to prevent unauthorised deviations from the orthodoxy they were to establish. Sachs (1944) approvingly described this development as akin to the management of a religious order with the training becoming like a religious novitiate. If this were so then it would seem to undermine the claims of psychoanalysis to scientific status because of the nature of religious dogma which novitiates are required to accept without challenge and is a far cry from the requirements of a valid social construction of scientific research as described by Sulloway (1992). He says that three different technologies are required.

1. A material technology which allows for the replication of the material object by others following the published technique.
2. A literary technology using rhetoric to make readers into 'vicarious witnesses' of the experiments.
3. A social technology involving the establishment of open spaces where experiments and equipment could be freely observed.

Spence (1987) affirms these principles and adds the process of accumulation of evidence and material in addition to replication as being significant in establishing the claim to scientificity, while denying that this principle can be observed operating in the psychodynamic world. Additionally, he asserts that appeals to truth must be on the basis of evidence publicly available and not to unchallengeable authority. Bauer (1992) places such emphasis upon the public availability of scientific findings that it almost becomes the sine qua non of the scientificity of any study since it is through public dissemination of results and the open discussion of results that errors and

faults can be corrected. Without such open-ness and however correct the methods that have been followed he asserts that the prejudices and biases of the experimenter favouring the support of his hypotheses undergoing testing will go undetected.

Not only did Freud, following an initiative by Jones (Jones 1955, Gay 1988, Grünbaum 1993), seal off the psychoanalytic community from public and critical scrutiny in the first instance through the foundation of the Committee which had the effect of ensuring that any appeal against orthodoxy was not to the evidence but to the authority of the members of the Committee and to himself in the last instance, but also controlled entry to the profession by ensuring that all entrants must be analysed by approved analysts. Kerr (1994), discussing this development, says

The sole purpose of this group was to guard against future deviations from Freud's views within the psychoanalytic movement. Explicitly, Freud was to tell them where to stand and they would stand there. If they found internal obstacles in their way they were to resolve these through further self- analysis. These facts, and the fact that it operated in secrecy for over a dozen years, stamp the Committee as anything but a legitimate scientific organisation. Open discussion and honest consideration of alternative hypotheses are the hallmarks of science, not secrecy and pressure-group tactics behind the scenes.

(ibid:52)

This appeal to authority was strengthened by ascribing criticism from outside that community, as well as from insiders (Masson 1985, McGuire 1979), to unresolved unconscious problems and neurosis rather than to the strength of the evidence that the critics were able to muster. That practice continues and Robinson (1992) in examining some trenchant criticism of psychoanalysis includes in his rebuttal some thoughts about the psychopathology of the critics and in so doing muddles discussion of ideas about the unconscious and its relevance to theories of psychoanalysis with the discussion of unconscious ideas per se. More importantly,

the possibility of replication by others was undermined by the fact that Freud's published papers on technique were insufficient to be a systematic account of psychoanalytic technique (Strachey 1958). In recent years although there have been publications which address the question of technique (Etchegoyen 1992; Greenson 1973; Reich 1950) replication still remains subject to a long and arduous apprenticeship which maintains the closed nature of the psychoanalytic community. However the nature of the psychoanalytic and psychodynamic enterprise suggests that replication even by the cognoscenti is much more difficult than might be apparent and perhaps may be impossible. O'Shaughnessy (1994) in her discussion of clinical facts implies that replication even of the basic material of analytic experience might not be possible. If clinical facts manifest themselves in the seclusion of an analytic hour, *unrepeatable by another analyst*, how then is an alternative view possible? The alternative view she says later involves a shift of perspective and a change in perception which reorders the clinical facts. She suggests that the something beyond the clinical facts is quintessential in the therapeutic situation which is the 'truth about the immediate emotional reality between the patient and analyst', by which she seems to mean the interplay of the transference and the counter-transference particular to an individual session. Although she maintains her belief in the scientificity of psychoanalysis her statement bases the fundamental 'facts' of psychoanalysis firmly in an intersubjective experience of the particular analysand and therapist. The implications of this view, which is shared by others in the psychodynamic world, seem to make it impossible for the three criteria referred to above to be met and so to remove psychoanalysis and psychodynamics from the realm of scientific discourse as defined by them. A number of theorists (Ricoeur 1970; Lacan 1977; Spence 1982; Tuckett 1994) agree that the essence of psychodynamic experience is to be found in the clinical sessions, and theories must address the observations made in the clinical experience. The belief is that experience-near theories will provide a better basis for hypothesising which can then be tested against further clinical material and thus establish the scientific validity not only of those 'low-level' concepts but also of the

more complex theories built on them (Wallerstein 1992). Edelson (1984) makes a detailed claim for the single case study as a valid foundation for the scientific credentials of psychoanalysis, and Glymour (1980) makes a similar claim. This raises the issue of the probative value of hypotheses derived from clinical experience and their value as a basis for generalization about a non-clinical population. Many of the pioneers in psychoanalysis believed that even a minimum number of clinical cases could provide such a foundation for the confident application to the population at large of the theories derived in that way. Freud, for example, made claims for the universality of the oedipal complex without further testing in a non-clinical setting. It may be that his confidence in making that application was based on the contemporary view of biological sciences that one example described all. Such a view would now be regarded as unacceptable in medicine, psychology and sociology where the use of control groups and comparative samples would be required to provide a secure basis for generalization.

A further difficulty about the use of clinical experiences as a basis for scientific research, as opposed to the creation of hypotheses that might be subjected to independent testing, is to be found in the way that such experience is reported. Spence (1987) has subjected this to critical consideration and has concluded that clinical reports tend to be written to support the narrative that the therapist is formulating. He further criticises them as inadequate for the provision of a foundation for a scientific discourse because

- a) the audience cannot have access to the data because the experience is private, confined to the patient and therapist.
- b) rules of inference which underlie the interpretations reported are not made explicit.
- c) the link between the manifest content of the clinical material and the latent content may be made through the use of secondary process

thinking which cannot be made explicit and therefore cannot be challenged by an independent critic.

d) clinical reports may be subject to considerable smoothing so that they do not correspond to the events they may be reporting.

e) clinical events and therapeutic work are not intended to test theories in a scientific way⁵

f) alternative explanations than those offered by the therapist are not considered⁶.

Spence does not withdraw from the belief that there might be a way of reporting case material that would enable the emergence of testable alternative theories and hypotheses, although he does not specify what this might be and he seems to be withdrawing from the conclusion emerging from his discussion that multiple and possibly discordant meanings might emerge from the same clinical experiences. It is evident from patients' accounts of their therapies with different therapists that not only are there very different ways of conducting therapy, but that very different interpretations of similar material may be offered (Hill 1993; Little 1990) and this supports Spence's view that the context may also be an important variable in the construction of the therapeutic narrative. As has been shown (Chapter 1) the number of alternative hypotheses derived from a similar observational basis have been multiplying and none of these have been subjected to the same kind of testing that has been reported in the studies referred to above (Pp24/5). Marmor (1962) has commented that depending on the point of view of the analyst, the patients of each school seem to bring up precisely the kind of phenomenological data which confirm the theories and interpretations of their analysts.

Some theories seem to have been devised to remove the probative value of the theories from the realm of natural science and to find other arenas of discourse in which they could take their place alongside other disciplines, such as history or the law, whose truth claims are established in accordance with different principles. they

exempting themselves from the necessity of being subject to the test of refutability, even if with some discomfort (Spence 1987; Strenger 1991).

In determining the scientificity of psychodynamic theories, if independent empirical research will not serve because of the difficulty in framing hypotheses involving unconscious mental phenomena in terms of refutable statements, then might observation provide another way of establishing the concepts on a testable basis? This might seem to be a favourable basis on which to stand because of the agreement that there can be no observation apart from theory. This issue is apparent in other disciplines (Hull 1988) where there can be the possibility of making a prediction to test theory suffused observations enabling them to be substantiated or refuted. This is, indeed, a principle that is cited by a number of contributors to *Vol. 75 of the International Journal of Psychoanalysis (1994)* where the definition of a 'clinical fact' in psychoanalysis is discussed at length. In his Introduction, Tuckett asserts that there is no observation or fact that stands outside a theoretical framework within which it is perceived⁷. What this means is that data or events are significant, or have meanings, through the theories in which they are embedded. A distinction may perhaps need to be made between a perception and an observation. A perception may be of data which in themselves may be without meaning until they are associated with a theory when they become observations capable of refutation or substantiation. For example, infant observation as a part of psychotherapy training is very frequently theory related and data in the form of infant behaviour or infant-parent interactions may be observed but may not be seen to have meaning until they are set within the theory. A refinement of the observational process has been to include the observer's subjective experience as part of the observed/observer gestalt as if this might provide some additional evidence for the emotional state of the observed infant or mother-

infant pair on an analogy with the use of counter-transference in clinical work. Sand (1983) commenting on the Dora case asserts that the thought of the patient and the analyst must be clearly distinguished. This applies equally to the feelings that each experience, but the idea that the feelings, thoughts and reverie of the analyst are somehow a reflection of those of the analysand requires confirmation which is sometimes forthcoming in the clinical session but often is not. The stance of the infant observer is strictly passive and the observations cannot be jeopardized by any interventions of the observer. There then can be no test within the observation session to confirm whether the observer's subjective responses to the situation are in fact a reflection of the infant's subjective experience. A test of the theory might be provided if certain consequences of the original observation were to be made which subsequent observations might confirm or refute. However, given that observation, like clinical work, is influenced by the theory the observer and the supervisor hold an element of independence may be difficult to establish.

Observation and theory then are intimately linked, and theories may guide the observations made to support or refute them. Theory creation in the social and psychological realms, as well as in medicine may be socially and culturally related and so influence the kind of observations made. 19th Century medical theories of hysteria seem to have been informed by the culturally related views of female sexuality (see Chapter 3) and determined the kinds of treatment offered, which appeared to confirm those theories if the treatment was followed by the disappearance of the symptoms. If the observations had not been based on single case examples but upon an epidemiological study then substantiation or refutation may have been more reliable. So observation may provide a route through to an appropriate kind of scientific probity for psychodynamic theories, although

exempting themselves from the necessity of being subject to the test of refutability, even if with some discomfort (Spence 1987; Strenger 1991).

In determining the scientificity of psychodynamic theories, if independent empirical research will not serve because of the difficulty in framing hypotheses involving unconscious mental phenomena in terms of refutable statements, then might observation provide another way of establishing the concepts on a testable basis? This might seem to be a favourable basis on which to stand because of the agreement that there can be no observation apart from theory. This issue is apparent in other disciplines (Hull 1988) where there can be the possibility of making a prediction to test theory suffused observations enabling them to be substantiated or refuted. This is, indeed, a principle that is cited by a number of contributors to *Vol. 75 of the International Journal of Psychoanalysis (1994)* where the definition of a 'clinical fact' in psychoanalysis is discussed at length. In his Introduction, Tuckett asserts that there is no observation or fact that stands outside a theoretical framework within which it is perceived⁷. What this means is that data or events are significant, or have meanings, through the theories in which they are embedded. A distinction may perhaps need to be made between a perception and an observation. A perception may be of data which in themselves may be without meaning until they are associated with a theory when they become observations capable of refutation or substantiation. For example, infant observation as a part of psychotherapy training is very frequently theory related and data in the form of infant behaviour or infant-parent interactions may be observed but may not be seen to have meaning until they are set within the theory. A refinement of the observational process has been to include the observer's subjective experience as part of the observed/observer gestalt as if this might provide some additional evidence for the emotional state of the observed infant or mother-

observations and predictions within the clinical sessions of an individual patient may have no greater scientific probity than was provided by 19th Century medical practice. Few, if any, epidemiological studies of psychoanalytic concepts have been made and Rubinstein (1983) thought that individual observations made in clinical practice were unreliable and disturbing because he believed that the theory far outweighs the evidence and that interpretations were arbitrary and lacked adequate confirmation.

Observations guided by theory may simply be self-referring unless the hypotheses drawn from them can be substantiated by independent testing in a non-clinical⁸ context to provide this objective quality of scientificity. Edelson (1983) attempts to meet this difficulty by claiming that the clinical context and the single subject study can include careful comparisons of the subject under conditions which would be as probative as independent, extra-clinical testing, although he agrees that current methods of case recording could not meet the requirements for such studies. It is interesting to note that in attempting to define the clinical facts which would provide a better basis for the theories many of the discussions go no further than showing how the associations of analysands to an interpretation (hypothesis) appear to confirm it without any consideration of what associations might have refuted it, or of any consideration of how some independent support for them might be found. The assumption seems to be that the interpretation is correct when apparently corroborative associations follow it. It is, of course, simply conceivable that the analysand for whatever reason is following the suggestion made by the therapist in the interpretation however carefully it has been framed. Grünbaum (1984) takes the problem of suggestion very seriously, and believes that its very subtle influence is often overlooked and even denied by contemporary therapists. He argues that Freud was very aware of the possibility of the contamination of clinical material by suggestion and claims that he discussed it many times without finally dispelling the possibility (Freud 1893, 1905, 1910a, 1912a, 1913b, 1917, 1923). He further asserts

that the existence of transference makes patients particularly vulnerable to the therapist and that this adds to the likelihood that the clinical confirmation of psychodynamic hypotheses may be a consequence of suggestion. A further problem about the use of clinical material as the basis from which theoretical concepts may be constructed is that some of what occurs in clinical work is not about observation at all but is based upon inference as Spence (1982) correctly suggests. The inferences are concerned with what may lie behind or beneath the patient's associations and may be attributable to 'the unconscious'. These unconscious factors are not directly observable, even in dreams, and the interpretations of the therapist attempting to bring them into consciousness need to be verified in some way by the patient. Freud discussed what would constitute a satisfactory verification in his paper 'Constructions in Analysis' (1937) but without reaching a very satisfactory conclusion.

Observations outside the clinical session seem to suffer from the same inadequacy of seeking only confirmation rather than refutation from the facts observed under the influence of the theory. Segal (1978) reports the observation of a child contentedly sucking its thumb (although it is not clear whether this is an actual observation or simply an example of something that may be commonly observed) and concludes that this is evidence that the child is hallucinating the good breast. There are two matters here which are not observations but theoretical concepts. The first is the concept of hallucination that undoubtedly can be verified independently, but not in this example since nobody can have direct access to the baby's mental state. The second is the concept of the good breast for which no independent verification can be had which will determine whether the baby has any such notion. So this observation turns out not to be an observation at all but an inference drawn from what can be observed. There is nothing wrong with that since it might be a good working hypothesis and it accords with the principle that facts are perceived through a veil of theory. But what is required is some idea of what the theory might have to overcome if it were not to be refuted; an awareness of what would demonstrate that the contented sucking did not

involve either the idea of hallucination or the idea of the good breast; but no mention is made of any of these matters in the report.

Another example of an observation being taken to confirm the theory on which it was based is to be found in Klein M et al (1952). In the paper entitled 'On Observing the Behaviour of Young Infants' the dependence of the infant's early relationships upon feeding and the appeasement of hunger is sought to be established by a mixture of observation and theory validating the concept that a part-object, the breast, is the object of that primary relationship. Although it is not clear whether it derives from a particular example or whether it is a generalization made from several, unreported observations, Klein notes that another factor is influential independently of the feeding relationship with the breast. She calls it 'love for the mother' and asserts that it has to be taken into account although she clearly thinks that it is subordinate to the phantasies about the breast. However, it seems very like the impulse Bowlby (1969) called attachment which he argued was more fundamental than the oral gratification sought in the relationship with the breast. Klein did not make anything of her observation because it did not fit with the conceptual scheme based upon Freud's hypothesis of oral erotism and the primary part-object, the breast, which she was concerned to sustain. Throughout psychodynamic theorizing the consideration of alternative hypotheses which might account for the facts under observation is rarely encountered, and this is particularly true of the primary source of psychodynamic evidence, the clinical session. It has been noted by Tuckett (1994) that in public presentation of clinical material different therapists may advance different opinions about the clinical material under consideration which arise from their different theoretical stances rather than from the reported data. An alternative and apparently independent source of testing for concepts derived from clinical practice is provided by infant observation in non-clinical settings (see note 7 below). Examples of these kinds of observation are to be found in (Bowlby 1969; Freud A 1973; Lichtenberg 1983; Mahler (1971); Parens 1979), and the process of infant observation is often

used in the training of psychotherapists of various persuasions. As in the examples cited above (Pp30/1) it is difficult to be sure that the observations made are not simply being taken for confirmation of theories already developed in clinical practice. Anna Freud (1973) discusses the problems of infant observation and the difficulty of being unable to observe directly the unconscious factors that form the basis of psychoanalytic thinking. She cautions against the practice of inferring directly from surface phenomena the underlying unconscious factors which produce them, and regards this as particularly reprehensible in therapy sessions with children, although she seemed to believe that it was acceptable in child observation outside the therapeutic setting. Following Hartmann (1950) she believed that psychoanalytic psychology was not limited to what could be discovered from the clinical setting. She cites observations made on their own children by analysts "with regard to the details of infantile sexuality, the œdipus and castration complexes." (1973:10/11) It may be noted that the observations were related to the concepts of analytic theory and that they were in the service of psychoanalytic child analysis. Although she raises the issue of whether direct observation of the surface behaviour can lead to conclusions about the underlying factors she asserts that so far as child development is concerned the questions raised can be answered with "increasing positiveness". (ibid:11) She goes on to draw very positive conclusions about the existence of unconscious material from surface examples, although reminding herself that the therapist does not have direct access to unconscious material either but only to its conscious derivatives. The analytically trained observer when seeing those same conscious derivatives will be able to draw the correct conclusions about their unconscious sources. The impression that the observations were not intended to raise questions about the concepts is strengthened by the absolute certainty with which she connects various types of observable behaviour with unconscious causes:-

the fact that *orderliness, time sense, cleanliness, unaggressiveness* are unmistakable pointers to bygone conflicts with anal strivings, it is possible to pin-point similar indicators for conflict in the phallic phase.

There are *shyness* and *modesty* which are reaction formations and as such complete reversals of former exhibitionistic tendencies; there is, further, the behavior described commonly as *buffoonery* or *clowning* which, in analysis, has been revealed as a distortion of phallic exhibitionism, with showing off displaced from an asset of the individual to one of his defects. *Exaggerated manliness* and *noisy aggression* are overcompensations which betray underlying castration fears. Complaints about being *maltreated* and *discriminated against* are a transparent defense against passive fantasies and wishes. When a child complains about excessive *boredom*, we can be certain that he has forcibly suppressed his masturbation fantasies or masturbatory activities. (ibid:18 /19)

Even in 1973, after the researches of Masters & Johnson, it seems odd to see masturbation regarded as pathogenic, but more importantly the confidence with which the connection between the conscious behaviour and its unconscious determinants is made seems breathtaking. That there may be questions to be asked about this certainty is never considered, and it is quite evident that seeking extra-clinical confirmation of concepts derived from clinical practice by assuming that they are correct does not offer independent support for them. Fisher & Greenberg (1983) reviewing the experimental evidence for the existence of some of the developmental stages which Anna Freud takes for granted are much more cautious about the way in which surface behaviour may be taken to be evidence for the existence of unconscious processes.

Parens (1979) makes a rather more sophisticated use of observation in his study of aggression in childhood and its epigenesis, but like Anna Freud he assumes that some of the hypotheses of psychoanalysis, notably the instinctual drive theory, can be taken for granted. All his observations are based on this concept even though he raises some questions about its original formulation and he makes use of the

modifications of the developmental phases proposed by Mahler. In describing his methodology he says

We have relied not only on the directly observed phenomenology of infant and mother activities but in viewing this phenomenology as the manifestation of intra-psychic functioning of drives, ego and superego. (ibid:127)

He also cites Anna Freud in support of the general proposition that developmental stages are genetically tied to specific drive derivatives and that direct conclusions may be drawn about their unconscious sources (Freud A 1973). While his observations may be accurate his assumptions already include the conclusions he wishes to draw and cannot therefore provide the independent element needed. Nor does he consider whether any other theory than the instinctual drive theory might provide an equally good explanation of his observations so that he could set up appropriate tests to determine the matter.

Lichtenberg (1983) makes a much more radical approach to the material being produced by researchers (Emde, Mahler, Piaget, Sander, Spitz, and Stern among others) who have been observing infants extra-clinically and whose theoretical approach is markedly different to the psychoanalytical observers referred to above. He asserts that neonate research challenges many psychodynamic and psychoanalytical hypotheses about the early development of infants and while he is sympathetic to psychoanalysis he comments that there is no simple way of reconciling the findings of neonate research with psychoanalytical drive theory and its related theory of motivation (ibid:10). While he evidently believes that some reconciliation may be possible the material he cites from research into the first year of life casts authoritative doubt upon there being an intra- psychic element in the life of the infant during that time. The first year seems characterized by an interactional system consisting of the infant and its caretaker based upon innate *biological patterning* which defines a readiness to react to the caretaker's recurring initiatives in

a way that can be most easily understood as an integrated interactional system. While he does not note the similarity this bears to Winnicott's observation that there is no such thing as a baby, only mothers-and-babies, he suggests that this interactional system may give some support to object-relations theory. As an aside he comments that this way of thinking about infant development is in the tradition of Hartmann, Spitz, Erikson and Winnicott who are somewhat detached from the mainstream of object-relations thought as represented by Melanie Klein, Bion, and Meltzer. The object-relations theory of this latter group of thinkers requires the existence of a complex intra-psychic world with phantasised objects with sophisticated psychic interactions between them in the infant. Neonate research emphasises the interactional foundation of the exchange and does not presuppose more than a biologically primed capacity of both child and mother to respond to each other. Moreover, neonate research places greater emphasis upon the role of the mother in initiating interactions as well as responding to the infant's overtures in a way that object-relations theory does not. In fact, perhaps because neonate researchers are observing the mother/baby pair, they are more aware of the interaction between them than psychoanalytical therapists who tend to draw conclusions retrospectively from adult patients' reports or from the treatment of individual children who are past the neonatal phase and who are usually seen in the mother's absence. Klein, it has been reported, never treated any infant under the age of 27 months so that all her views about the timing of the transition from the paranoid-schizoid position to the depressive position and the development of the oedipal complex are speculative and not dependent upon direct evidence.

An issue for consideration is how the stance of the neonate researchers affects their findings and whether those findings can be reconciled with psychoanalytical observations arising from a different observational stance. Lichtenberg is clear that the researchers he cites do not take a position with respect to the internal world of the infant but regard the mother/baby pair as biologically, neurologically and behaviourally

programmed to function like a system in which each of the pair acts reciprocally to cues provided by the other. There is a good deal of observational evidence for the interaction between the baby and the mother, although the conclusion that this is programmed in the way referred to is a conclusion which the evidence suggests rather than one which can be regarded as beyond refutation. The observational evidence, however, does seem to refute the psychoanalytical concept of instinctual drives and tension reduction as a basis of psychic life. Rather than motivation depending upon the flows and discharges of energy the evidence suggests that the system's interaction depends upon the exchange of signals and information through gazing, smiling, vocalizing, touching, and mimicking all of which are contextual rather than internal. This refutation accords with the position of contemporary psychoanalytical theorists who believe that the drive theory can no longer be sustained (Basch 1974, Holt 1976, Schafer 1976, 1978). The postulation of the drive theory and the notion of behaviour being internally motivated seems to have been a consequence of the psychoanalytical stance of observing individuals in isolation from their social and familial contexts so that motivations seem to arise from within the individual and then making use of that mode of explanation to understand the infant within its family. Since what appear to be observations in the individual context are actually inferences drawn from verbal reports or from interpretations of observed behaviour, when the same behaviour is seen in the family context the same inferences are made as if the interactions are an outcome of the interplay between two independently functioning metabolic systems. While both theories provide explanations for the observations they are both derived from the observational stance of the observer, but it may be concluded that since the psychoanalytical explanations are inferential rather than a consequence of direct observations that the non-psychoanalytical theories seem to be better founded and to be closer to the behaviour to be explained.

Lichtenberg believes that the reconciliation is to be found in object-relations theory and this may seem likely, although in their current states such theories are as much concerned with the internal world of the infant and the individual as with the interaction with the 'object' in the external world. In the work of Klein, Bion and Meltzer it is difficult to discern an external other who exists independently of the object in the infant's mind with which it is hypothesised it is born. So that the objects which the infant seeks are replicas of those pre-existing at birth in the infant's mind (Bion 1963; Klein M 1952, 1975). This is plainly not what Lichtenberg has in mind when he asserts that there is no evidence in neonate research for the assumption of an internal psychic world until sometime in the 2nd year of life, and that this is associated with the development of speech and language. So whether in respect of the drive theory or object-relations theory as currently understood no confirmation of prevailing theories can be found in neonate research and despite the different observational stance of neonate researchers some basic psychoanalytical concepts seem irreconcilable with that research at least so far as developments during the first year and into the second year are concerned.

Summary

In this chapter I have examined the epistemological status of Freud's basic theories and have considered them particularly in relation to the support they might receive from scientific examination. Freud was trained as a scientist and clearly regarded the scientific validation of his ideas as most important because of the confidence which the apparent certainty of the scientific *weltanschauung* of his day could give, and secondly because of his need, in conformity with the principles of his scientific mentors, to find that certainty in the reduction of mental phenomena to aspects of physical and physiological functioning. Kitcher (1992) has shown how important it is that a scientific theory should conform to and be cognate with the findings of other relevant scientific studies, but she also showed how Freud failed to revise his views to deal with changes in scientific thinking. Some of that failure was a consequence of

Freud's endeavours to seal off the psychoanalytical community from public discussion and dissent, thus substituting authority for evidence in the formulation of theory and the development of practice.

Another part of the failure was a consequence of the nature of the material under examination and the source from which it came. It will be seen later how the basis of the psychic world was given quite a different interpretation by Freud himself in some of his theoretical writings despite his wish to sustain the 'scientific' nature of the explanations relying on the drive/tension discharge theories. Increasingly a number of contemporary theorists have been developing different ideas about the nature of psychic reality, particularly since scientific experimental studies have not been able to provide the kind of support in testing hypotheses derived from clinical practice that had been anticipated. Some challenge the idea that psychoanalytical concepts are capable of empirical verification in that way, although that view is strongly contested by Grünbaum (1984, 1993) who believes not only that many can be so tested and would be refuted, but that the alternative hypotheses of subsequent psychodynamic thinkers are inferior to those of Freud and not worthy of serious consideration. This opinion applies to the hypotheses derived from clinical practice rather than to the evidence occurring in clinical sessions themselves. That material has been criticized as lacking in probative value because of the way in which it has been customarily recorded, but more significantly because of its susceptibility to suggestion and even more because of its unique nature as being specific to the individual therapist and patient and unreplicable by any other therapeutic pair. This has led in some cases (Freud A 1973; & Parens 1979) to assumptions derived from clinical theories being applied to observations in non-clinical settings without any consideration of other concepts which might have served to provide an equally convincing explanation. Independent neonate research has thrown considerable doubt upon psychoanalytic theories applying to the very earliest stages of life and in particular casts doubt upon the drive/ tension discharge theories which under-pinned classical Freudian thinking.

It has also raised questions about the object-relations theories relying upon the existence of a complex, sophisticated capacity of the infant to phantasise from birth. Despite all this uncertainty some psychoanalytic thinkers attempt to assert the validity of psychoanalysis as a science by claiming that it is different in nature from other sciences and has its own validity (Harrison 1970, Wallerstein 1992). Wallerstein also claims, with some support from post-structural theory, that because all scientific ideas are not capable of being established as absolute truth then psychoanalysis, where very little has been independently established, is similar to other sciences (Wallerstein 1992).

Notes to Chapter 2

1 The problem of statistical corroboration has proved to be difficult for psychoanalysis and psychodynamic theories because of the private nature of the clinical transactions and the uncertainty about whether they are capable of rendering examples of phenomena which are strictly comparable with each other. Equally the inferential nature of the examples of unconscious factors lying behind the conscious transactions in the clinical session gives rise to the possibility that the rules of inference used by different practitioners may be subtly different and therefore not valid as statistical data. These issues are discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

2 If valid inferences about the operation of unconscious factors on behaviour could be made, then it might be theoretically possible to make predictions about particular pieces of behaviour if the presence of the relevant unconscious factors could be determined. Although it would be quite difficult to establish the presence of such factors in a unanalysed population. Grünbaum (1984) claims that it ought to be possible to test epidemiologically Freud's theory that paranoid factors were determining of homosexuality. The prediction would be that in all cases of homosexuality there would be a paranoid factor that caused it and the prediction could therefore be falsified or validated through the examination of a previously unanalysed sample of homosexual subjects.

3 The account of The Wolf Man has been challenged on a number of occasions (Mahoney 1984, Obholzer 1982) and Gardiner (1971) has given an account of the two analyses of The Wolf Man with Freud and Ruth Mack-Brunswick and includes an autobiographical account of the work with Freud by The Wolf Man himself. Interestingly that autobiography does not include any reference to his famous dream or to any of the conclusions that Freud drew from it. According to The Wolf Man his great development was what he describes as 'the break-through to the woman' (Gardiner 1971). Obholzer asserts that before his life ended The Wolf Man denied that he had ever had the opportunity to observe his parents' intercourse and that it had not been the custom in aristocratic Russian families for infants to sleep in their parents' bedrooms, and that he had not done so. It seems evident from the case study that the primal scene material was a reconstruction and that on a number of occasions Freud expressed various views about whether the event of which the wolf-dream was symbolic had actually occurred.

4 See also Wallerstein (1992) and Meissner (1991)

5 Kerr (1992) and Winnicott (1962) appear to support this view of clinical experience and theory validation

6 Eysenck & Wilson (1973) make the same point about experimental testing of psychoanalytical theories.

7 In studies of evolution the nature of the fossil record may be disputed, not in respect of the facts or data, but about what the facts mean. Lieberman (1998) says

The heated debate over which fossils define different australopithecine species and which species are in our direct line of descent may surprise people outside the field.

8 The term non-clinical here really means in a setting where no treatment of a psychotherapeutic kind is being undertaken, although the observations may be made in a setting of a clinic where mothers bring their babies for other purposes.

Chapter 3

Can Psychodynamic theories be established reliably ?

The natural science model has had a long tradition in Freudian thinking and despite the many criticisms of it from both within and outside the psychoanalytic community attempts are still being made to assert it as the method by which reliable knowledge can be established. It has been claimed that reliability of theories does not only depend on science but may also be established in other ways, as is the case for sociological theories. In Freud's writings there can be seen other modes of explanation which depart from the canons of natural science, so that it may seem as if, despite some of the certainty of his explanations made in the previous chapter, Freud was not wholly convinced of his explanations made in scientific form and he was struggling to find an alternative to it which could be trusted to establish psychoanalysis on a firm epistemological foundation. In *An Outline of Psychoanalysis* (1940) Freud indicates that he never really found that alternative to his final satisfaction and the various accounts of psychoanalytic ideas re-emphasise the importance of instincts, libido theory, and the medico-scientific notion of homeostasis as the basis of the hypotheses as well as the practice. Freud's intention expressed in the brief Preface

to bring together the tenets of psychoanalysis and to state them, as it were, dogmatically - in the most concise form and in the most unequivocal terms. (ibid 1940:144)

seems to leave no room for the exploration of alternative explanations apparent, if not firmly asserted, in his previous works. In this chapter and the next I propose to examine that tension between the different modes of explanation and to consider whether there are other reliable alternatives to the unestablished natural science formulations.

The Medical Model and its Implications

Webster (1995) has pointed out that all the patients described in *The Studies on Hysteria* (Breuer & Freud 1893) were suffering from physical symptoms which they were presenting for treatment. This was also true of the patients whom Freud treated during the 1880's and diagnosed as suffering from neurasthenia. He reported that it was not only the commonest disease of his time but the one he met with repeatedly in his medical practice (Macmillan 1992). These patients commonly complained of physical symptoms which Freud regarded as a consequence of sexual excess and of masturbation (Masson 1985:37-44). Webster claims that the same presentation was true of the eighteen patients¹ upon whom Freud based his seduction hypothesis about hysteria. So his ideas were developed in his medical practice with these patients and the physical conditions from which they suffered. Breuer in company with Freud, and later Freud working alone, demonstrated to their own satisfaction that these physical symptoms when giving rise to hysteria had a psychological origin. But in developing a theory to account for this process of conversion, they were constrained by the conventions of medical practice which ascribed causation of the symptoms and the illness uniquely to the patient who could then be treated in isolation from their social milieu. In fact in all the accounts of these patients, as well as of others whose treatment was reported by Freud subsequently (Freud S 1905a,

1909a, 1909b, 1918, 1920b), it is evident that the supposed pathogenic incidents all occurred in the context of familial and other relationships. Decker (1991), commenting on the case of Dora considers the way in which Freud's treatment of her was influenced by 19th Century medicine (1991:98). She makes explicit not only the familial but the social and cultural factors which may have contributed to Dora's problems, but says that

His (Freud's) primary goal was to rid her of her hysterical symptoms, most pointedly, the cough and the loss of voice (1991:95/6)

So the medical conventions required an explanation of how these incidents occurring in the patient's social world could be transformed first into physical symptoms and then into fantasies in the psychic reality of the patient. Thus the social relationships and their implications were lost in this transition allowing the cause of the illness to be regarded entirely as an aspect of the patient's functioning and the treatment to be therefore focused on him/her to the exclusion of all else in accordance with contemporary medical protocol. This then led to the formulation of concepts like libido which existed within the patient's biological and psychological make-up and whose transformations produced the physical symptoms through an analogy with the neuronal energy which Freud speculated existed as part of the physiological functioning of the patient. In the beginning the pathogenic agent was thought to be a physical event or trauma which was accompanied by an emotional state. [In respect of neurasthenia the physical causes were thought by Freud to be sufficient to produce the symptom which could be removed by suitable advice about the patient's sexual practices (Macmillan 1992:105)]. An example is one which occurred in the case of Cacilie M, an early patient of Freud's, one of whose symptoms was a violent facial neuralgia which had been very resistant to treatment. The pain disappeared quite suddenly when under hypnosis she recalled a conversation she had had with her husband in which he insulted her. "Suddenly she put her hand to her cheek, gave a loud cry of pain and said, 'It was like a slap in the face' ". (Breuer & Freud 1893).

But that was not the end of the story and subsequent analysis drew attention to an original scene early in her pregnancy when a painful sight accompanied by feelings of self reproach led her "to force back another set of thoughts" (ibid). This conflict, it was hypothesised, attached itself to toothache she was suffering from at the time and could be re-evoked when her mental conflicts became unbearable. Freud reports that earlier in her life the neuralgia had been diagnosed as being caused by her teeth. Seven were extracted leaving behind some firmly attached roots. The operation did not relieve the neuralgia, but it was believed that its persistence was a consequence of the diseased roots so that its recurrence led to the further attentions of the dentist. Freud reports that the neuralgia suddenly ceased" each time as the dentist began work. It was, Freud concluded, a symbolization of her thoughts converted into a physical symptom which could be set going by "associative reverberations from her mental life" (ibid).

Soon after this Freud began to believe that the pathogenic event was always to be found in an actual, physically sexual event with the patient in infancy which he announced triumphantly in a lecture to the Society for Psychiatry and Neurology in Vienna as being like the discovery of the source of the Nile (Freud 1896b). This matched the ætiology he had earlier hypothesised for neurasthenia.

Later, however, Freud began to have doubts about the reality of the sexual scenes that he believed his patients were reporting and relayed his uncertainty to Fliess in a letter dated 21st September 1897 (Masson 1985), although it was sometime before he publicly reported his withdrawal from the theory that the origin of neurosis lay in an actual erotic event (Freud 1905b:190). The modification of the seduction theory to exclude the necessity of any actual incestuous event had the further effect of removing the patient and the precipitating pathogenic factors from the social or familial environment and locating them entirely in the psychic reality of the patient

(Freud 1914). This movement has been regarded as the defining moment in psychoanalysis transforming the treatment into psychoanalytic treatment proper (Jones 1953). All subsequent theoretical formulations in the development of the classical theory maintained this format of events in the psychic reality being determining and causative of the illness and its symptoms so that when these causes were exposed and dealt with the symptoms would be relieved and the illness cured. The treatment could then be carried out in accordance with the conventions of medical practice which conceptualized the disease entity as being confined exclusively to the patient even though the pathogenic agent might be something which had invaded the patient (the germ theory of illness of Pasteur and Koch). Koch (1882) in particular had developed a series of postulates which were used to demonstrate the causal relationship between the invasive bacillus and the development of the illness. These postulates provided the medical and natural science account of disease. They proposed that the micro-organism had to be different from any other; that it had to be found in every instance of the disease but not in other diseases; and that the inoculation of the pure culture of the micro-organism had to produce the disease. Freud was aware of these postulates and their importance for a medical explanation of illness and he had, in fact, reported them in an anonymous letter to the *Medical News* (Philadelphia) in 1883 (Carter 1987, Macmillan 1992). He had gone on to apply them to neurasthenia and the actual neuroses but had some difficulty in establishing the third of the postulates which was required to show that the pathogenic factor (micro-organism in Koch's explanation) was not only a necessary cause but that it was also sufficient. He was aware of the need to find a way of adapting this postulate to the causation of nervous conditions and realized that he needed to examine a healthy population, as a control group, and to show that they did not have the pathogenic factor he purported to have found in patients. This would then provide the counter-part to inoculation in the example of physical illness. This possibility was raised in a letter to Fliess (Masson 1985:38).

Although this would have been possible with the co-operation of others, at least one of whom was available, with access to a non-neurotic sample (Sulloway 1979) Freud failed to follow it up. The consequence of this neglect to provide an adequate control group meant that Freud could only establish that the causes he had discovered in his patients were necessary and not sufficient.

According to Webster (1995) and Macmillan (1992) the influence of the Koch's theory on Freud was reinforced by the Helmholtzian principle that scientific explanations must be essentially simple and reduce complex phenomena to uncomplicated formulae. Freud then was disposed through his medical practice to look for explanations which contained the causes of the illness within the individual patient thus potentially bringing into the consulting room the whole of the problem and reducing it to a relatively basic explanatory framework of the influence of sexual excess when it was neurasthenia, or the inhibition of sexual gratification if the illness was an actual neurosis. When he extended this medical explanation in his discussion of hysteria then the pathogenic factors became the repressed memory of the phantasy, and the vicissitudes of the sexual instinct and the fluctuation of the libido. Of these the repressed memory was the most important, and the undoing of the repression leading to the recovery of the memory was followed by the disappearance of the symptom. Cavell (1993) discussing Freud's reliance on the drive and instinctual theory, which leads to the idea that "mental development is determined by things going on in the organism" (ibid/46), suggests that the term 'unconscious' in this context "is a pseudo-psychological name for what would be better described in bodily terms" (ibid:46). This seems to be a logical deduction from Freud's medical approach to the physical problems presented to him by his patients which he wished to ascribe to psychological causes.

Freud thought he had discovered that the single, basic cause of neurosis in its various forms was traumatic or premature sexual experience, or phantasies about sexuality the memory of which was repressed. The sexual cause of neurasthenia was one he discussed frequently in his correspondence with Fliess (Masson 1985), and it is interesting to consider why he reached this conclusion so soon in his researches. It appears that in the medical world of the 19th Century it was commonplace to ascribe nervous disorders, especially in women, to sexual or genital dysfunction (Shorter 1992). Shorter has demonstrated how great was the influence of doctors in the 18th & 19th centuries in determining the way in which psychosomatic symptoms were presented by the patient and showed that throughout the 19th Century particularly the non-organically based physical symptoms of women were related to their gender and gynaecological structure leading to quite cruelly invasive treatments such as the cauterisation and or extirpation of the clitoris, or the removal of the uterus and/or the ovaries as these organs became suspected of being the source of neurotic conditions. They became part of what Shorter called the cultural 'symptom pool' through which patients could hope to present their mental problems without incurring the scorn of their doctors, even though they were often far from successful in this manoeuvre. Shorter quotes from the account of treatment offered by an American doctor in 1908 for spinal irritation (already a somewhat archaic diagnosis for neurosis) as follows

Something must be done as a rule to impress the patient with the fact that the doctor is "boss"... The best method of impressing the patient is the "white-hot iron", best applied along the spine, through hot water douching, fly-blistering [raising a vesicle with "Spanish fly"], a good spanking, sometimes even a good "cussing" will often serve the purpose. (ibid/34)

The reflex theory linking the uterus to the brain, which was prevalent in the 19th Century Shorter asserts, paved the way to the medical intervention in the female organs of reproduction reducing women to the status of automata regulated by the passive than men. He argues that unspecific, uncomfortable, internal sensations whose origins were social and familial rather than organic were brought within the medical orbit through this concept according to which distress in one organ could be transmitted to another without there being any defect in the organ into which the distress was displaced. Since pain in the organs of reproduction cannot be felt specifically, and its localization in those organs is merely guesswork on the part of the patients, supported by the attribution of such pain through the direction of their attention to those organs by medical or other suggestion, patients with non-specific distress learnt to present their problems in the way which supported their doctors' concepts who thus found that their theories of illness were confirmed. Shorter says that

Having relatively little authority with which to oppose the opinions of their famous clinicians, many of these women, preoccupied with internal sensations rather than external relations, ended up subject to the most astonishing procedures. (ibid/63)

Moreover, when the presentation of symptoms turned from distress of the reproductive organs to hysterical paralyses Shorter remarks that they are not simply medical but a

symbol of male-female relationships in the 19th Century. The Victorian woman, stereotyped in her day as weak and passive, was able to communicate with a world dominated by powerful males often only by becoming "paralysed".(ibid/128)

Appignanesi and Forrester (1992) suggest that...this development was not the responsibility of doctors alone.

It is not so much that doctors invented hysteria and then dispensed with it when it no longer served their purposes; rather it was a collaborative invention, of doctors, fathers, husbands, families - and patients. (1992/66)

Thompson (1994) commenting that self deception and fear of sexual intimacy are not medical causes, but if they give rise to somatic conditions

everyone assumed that these symptoms were medical illnesses of some kind or other . . . When neurotics consulted physicians hoping to pour their hearts out about their pain of broken heartedness, they discovered their doctors weren't really interested in listening to their troubles . . . Physicians, because of their medical training, were already convinced that these problems were organic in nature caused by a functional disorder of the nervous system. (1994:242).

These seem to be a graphic accounts of the way in which a cultural symptom pool can be created. So by the time Freud began to ascribe neurosis to the repression of memories of sexual incidents and phantasies, as well as to the vicissitudes of the sexual instinct, rather than as an expression of the culturally defined relationship between men and women, the ground had been well prepared by his medical predecessors, with the collusion of others, for that development. Decker (1991), commenting on the case of Dora (Freud 1905a), says

As Freud learned Dora's story and sought to evaluate the determinants of her illness, he was heavily influenced by the contemporary medical views about women, and by late Victorian middle-class customs and conventions.

Freud, in his approach to neurosis as presented by his patients, most of whom were women, was following in the same tradition set by 19th Century medical practice in relating them to their sexuality, although in respect of his views about the relationship

between sexuality and neurosis he was concerned less with the diseased status of the organs themselves than with their functioning or their excessive or precocious stimulation. As applied to the diagnosis of hysteria the pathogenic factor was no longer the functioning or stimulation of the sexual organs but the repressed sexual phantasies of infancy. While he was not physically abusive of his patients he was nevertheless no less dominating of them than his other medical contemporaries (Appignanesi & Forrester 1992; Breuer & Freud 1893; Esterson 1993; Webster 1995). Medical tradition treated the symptom as the effect of an underlying or preceding cause which had to be treated in order to remove the symptom. Freud's original theorizing about the causes of symptoms was founded upon his understanding of Koch's postulates, and the search for the repressed memory or, later, the repressed wish was the practical application of the theory in accordance with good medical practice. In much of Freud's writing there is, however, a rather different kind of theorizing about symptomatology which eschews the medical and natural science based cause and effect model which will be discussed below.

Much of the criticism of Freud's practice has focused on this medical model and Grünbaum (1984, 1993), in his critique of the classical theory, wishes to uphold a natural science view of the theory as exemplified by the medical model with its ætiological foundations of cause and effect. He dismisses any attempt to suggest that Freud was not being scientific in his approach and shows how frequently he claimed scientific status for his ideas and practice. Grünbaum demonstrates not simply that Freud held primarily a natural scientific medical theory but that his account of the causes of the symptoms and the illness which is characteristic of those medical explanations is both refutable and refuted. He dismisses attempts to move away from the classical theory as being inadequate because they cannot be fitted into the canons of illness and disease, with their concomitant foundation in the sequence of cause and effect, which apply to medical contexts². In this he is followed by other

critics. In the development of the classical theory Freud can be seen to be struggling with the need on the one hand to stay within the scientific medical model in which the patient is invaded from without by pathogenic noxae (the seduction theory, or sexual malpractices like masturbation or coitus interruptus), which cause the symptom, and on the other to claim that the pathogenic influences on mental events are unconscious phantasies, memories, and finally, wishes, desires and intentions. Galdston (1956) calls this the tradition of Romantic Medicine, following ideas introduced by Leibniz, in which teleological concepts determine the course of events rather than their historic causes. Wishes, desires and intentions may be related to memories, conscious or unconscious, but even recollection is not just a simple matter of reiterating the static past (Freud 1895, 1896; Edelman 1987; Modell 1990). Modell (ibid) asserts that in introducing the concept of 'nachträglichkeit' Freud was anticipating modern research on remembering which emphasises its creative and recreative nature in contrast to the sense that memories consist of static pictures from the patient's past.

Freud (1926) contemplated the thought that psychoanalysis might not be a medical specialism at all by discussing the possibility that lay analysts might be as valuable as doctors in its practice; and proposing that the study of other subjects than medicine, including the history of civilisation and mythology, as well as many topics drawn from the arts rather than the sciences, should take their place in the preparation and education for this field³. He did not however conclude as others have done (Szasz 1972) that neurosis and other mental disorders which cannot be ascribed to physiological sources or brain malfunctioning are not illnesses at all. However, in his discussion of lay analysis he seems to be making a claim for psychic disorders to be in a different realm from physical illnesses.

Far the greater number of neuroses which occupy us are fortunately of a psychogenic nature and give no grounds for pathological suspicions. (Freud 1926:243).

The word 'pathological' seems to mean 'of the body' in this context rather than simply 'generative of disease or disorder', and if neuroses are illnesses then they are so in a different sense from bodily ailments. There is however, a tension in his work between what I have described as the traditional medical model, with its predictive, ætiological foundation, and which ascribes symptoms to historically prior events from which they could be predicted, and a different kind of explanation providing reasons for symptoms which do not involve the possibility of prediction. For example he says

So long as we trace the development from its final outcome backwards, the chain of events appears continuous, and we feel we have gained insight which is completely satisfactory and even exhaustive. But if proceed to reverse the way, if we start from the premises inferred from the analysis and try to follow these up to the final results, we no longer get the impression of an inevitable sequence of events which could not have been otherwise determined. (Freud 1920:167)

Earlier, in the *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (Freud 1916/17), he had specifically denied that phantasies had an ætiological function.

Sometimes ... symptoms represent phantasies of the patients which are not, of course, suited to playing an ætiological role. (ibid:367)

It is not apparent whether the phantasies referred to are those thought to be currently operating in the patient but which may have been formulated from memories and past experiences, rather than historic material round which the symptom has formed. If their ætiological influence is being denied then the latter might have to be disowned, too. Despite that, in his paper 'Constructions in Analysis' (Freud 1937) he claims that phantasy may be a remnant of past reality which is available to be reconstructed in

analysis. As with so many of Freud's hypotheses there is an unresolved tension between their formulation in different parts of his complete oeuvre. While this may seem to cast doubts on the basic deterministic position which Freud maintained in other contexts for the rest of his life Strachey (1974) nevertheless concludes that

Behind all of Freud's work, however, we should posit his belief in the universal validity of the law of determinism. (ibid:17)

The suggestion here is that the determinism is the same as that provided by Koch's postulates which determine that the presence of the bacillus must be the cause of the disease. The existence of another mode of explanation is, perhaps, an aspect of the paradox which runs through his work. In reaching for the type of explanation which has been regarded as marking the shift⁴ from the physical to the psychoanalytic mode Freud may have realized intuitively that the strictly deterministic, scientific model might not apply to the understanding of mental perspectives. That it may have been impossible for Freud to resolve it seems to be a consequence not only of his difficulty of abandoning his scientific model, but also of the irreconcilability of mental and physical descriptions of events. As Cavell (1993) puts it

. . . Mind and Body articulate one and the same realm of material processes and events in different and irreducible languages that may never mesh, with the result that no system of causal laws can capture psychological states. (1990:73)

A similar point is made by Davidson (1984) who asserts that psychological and physical phenomena causally interact implying that there are strict laws instantiating such events. However, he argues that there are no strict laws covering events described in psychological terms since if there were this would reduce them to events described in physical terms. He deals with this apparent contradiction by claiming that causation is a relationship between individual events under any description, but that laws relate events described in a certain way. Crane (1995) describes the argument in this way

... since mental and physical events causally interact , they must instantiate a law. But they can't instantiate a psychophysical law, since there aren't any - so they must instantiate a physical law. But to instantiate a physical law, the mental events must have a physical description, and to have a physical description is to be a physical event. So all mental events are physical events. (ibid:177)

Consideration of this point will be postponed until an example of Freud's mode of explanation in respect of an incident in the account of the Wolf Man has been examined in detail.

Freud's Causal Analysis in the Account of the Wolf Man

It has been argued that even if psychoanalysis cannot claim strict causality for its ætiological descriptions they may describe reasons which can be considered to be causal. Hermeneutic theories reject the idea that reasons can be causes because they are in a different kind of discourse. Edelson (1990) in rejecting the idea that reasons are not causes advances a number of ways of describing how reasons may be established as causes. He refers to 'causal stories', 'causal connections', 'causal processes', 'causal probabilities', 'causal models', and 'constitutive experiences'. In using these designations Edelson seems to be indicating that they are different from what might be understood by the basic term 'cause'. To illustrate them Edelson cites a causal sequence in the case of The Wolf Man to explain a change in his character in his third year which goes as follows:-

1. A sexual trauma of seduction by his sister, ambivalently pleasurable and painful, causes a wish for a state of affairs which would reproduce the pleasure without the pain.
2. This caused a mental operation, the substitution of his nurse for his sister in the desired state of affairs.

3. An attempted realization of this wish caused a new external trauma, namely, the nurse's rebuff and a castration threat.
4. This new trauma caused a wish to avoid this painful situation.
5. This wish caused other mental operations, namely, the substitution of father for nurse in the desired state of affairs; the substitution of one kind of wish for another - to torment others instead of to masturbate; the substitution of one object for another in the new desired state of affairs namely, himself for another as the one to be hurt. (ibid:289)

This is an interesting sequence of events but it may be wondered how these causal claims can be justified, and for them to become causal a number of inferences are required to be made about the raw material from which they are drawn. From the account of the analysis provided by Freud (1918) it is not always easy to determine how far these inferences are supported by evidence from the therapy itself. An even greater difficulty in the way of understanding the causal influences is to be found in the fact that the story of the infant events is told in adulthood and their timing is subject to considerable uncertainty. After 1924 Freud himself alters it when it then fits more readily into the causal explanation he is making. In this connection it has to be borne in mind that the paper was written with a polemical intention ie to counter arguments being put forward by Adler and Jung about the ætiology of neurosis and hysteria. In a footnote to the 'Introductory Remarks' Freud says

This case history was written down shortly after the termination of the treatment, in the winter of 1914-15. At that time I was still freshly under the impression of the twisted re-interpretations which C G Jung and Alfred Adler were endeavouring to give to the findings of psychoanalysis. This paper is therefore connected with my essay 'On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement'. . . . It supplements

the polemic contained in that essay, which is in its essence of a personal character, by an objective estimation of the analytic material. (1918:1).

It may be legitimately questioned whether a supplement to a polemic can be an objective estimation of the material when both have been written by the same person with the same object in mind. The need to assert the primacy of the sexual instinct and the vicissitudes of the libido may underlie the attribution of causation and sexuality to events which might with as much cogency be interpreted differently. Later he refers to another discussion of primal scene material (Lecture 23, Freud 1916/17) where he treated 'the subject on more general lines with no controversial aim in view...' (Freud 1918:57), but with the same outcome about the causative implications.

The first step, described as a sexual trauma by Edelson and a sexual seduction by Freud ('seduced him into sexual practices' in Freud's words in the Strachey translation) consisted of two events involving the Wolf Man's sister. They seem to be ways of describing matters as very dramatic which seem rather less so when fully considered. The children, aged 3+ and 5+, were in the habit of going to the lavatory together and his sister suggested that they should show each other their bottoms. This was followed by an occasion while they were playing together when his sister had taken hold of his penis and played with it, telling him at the same time that his nurse was in the habit of doing the same thing with all kinds of people. It is this scene whose timing is changed between the first publication and in accounts subsequent to 1924. If this can be described as a seduction then there are likely to be a very large number of children who have been traumatized (in Edelson's description) by such events since scenes like this can be readily observed among children of nursery age. Its ætiological character depends on the nature of the particular historical events in the life of

the Wolf Man which Freud describes as following it and which he believed to have been caused by it. These were the sexual scenes and their implications outlined by Edelson above which retrodictively had to be considered to be causative if they were to be sufficiently powerful to be capable of producing the prolonged periods of naughtiness which subsequently occurred. (An alternative explanation offered by the family but which Freud dismissed will be considered below.⁵). A great deal of this first inference then depends upon the validity of the description 'seduction' as applied to the events relayed in the account of the interaction between the Wolf Man and his sister. In a comment on the relationship between the two, Freud remarks

His sister was not agreeable to him as a sexual object, probably because his relation to her had already been determined in a hostile direction owing to their rivalry for their parents' love. (Freud 1918:24)

According to Freud then she was not, and did not become, a sexual object for him and possibly might have been thought to have been unsexuctive if that were the case. If what is meant by the term 'seduction' is that she introduced him to the pleasures of masturbation, it seems unlikely that a child towards the end of his 3rd year when these games with his sister took place had not already experienced pleasure from touching his penis⁶. The inference that these quasi-masturbatory experiences with his sister were ambivalent in the way Edelson describes is contained in Freud's account of the case in rather a different way. For both Edelson and Freud the chronic naughty behaviour of the Wolf Man as a child is supposed to be explained by this experience of seduction and its consequences and the assumption is that since one apparently followed the other then the first event must be the cause of the other. In Freud's first account there is a direct link between the seduction and the naughty behaviour and both occur in the spring before his parents had gone away for their holiday. The more circuitous route is described later and the

naughty behaviour does not appear until after his parents have gone away and the governess has arrived, and this accords with the account of the parents that he had changed while they had been away. It seems as if given Freud's already established views about the source of symptoms then a proximate sexual cause has to be found and this can only be done by describing the sexual play as having the consequence that the Wolf Man has to engage in aggressive play with his sister for which he is punished and behaves in the unrestrained naughty way 'which the family tradition talked of so much'. This, incidentally, might also be seen to be offering support for the first of Koch's postulates that a single pathogenic factor has to be isolated to account necessarily for the development of the symptom.

There is an obvious problem about the timing of these events and the way that they relate to the absence of the parents in the summer months. Freud as we have seen changed his mind about it after 1924. In the earlier account the Wolf Man was described as being between three and a quarter and three and a half years which dates it between March to June and much nearer to the summer when the parents left for their holiday and the governess arrived. It would therefore be more consistent with the parents' belief that he was fundamentally altered on their return and fits better with their explanation that it was something to do with the governess. The much more definite timing of three and a quarter years in editions following 1924 makes the link between the seduction and the naughty behaviour much closer and removes the arrival of the governess from the explanatory sequence. Moreover constructed in this way it will not only account for the naughtiness but provide an explanation for the obsessional behaviour which followed it. It also seems to ensure that, by a subtle refinement of the evidence, the explanation offered by Freud accords with the first of Koch's postulates that a single pathogenic factor has to be isolated as a necessary factor in the development of the symptom, and excludes the intrusion of other factors as possible explanations.

The next step in this causal sequence became not the naughty behaviour itself, as in the first account, but the substitution of the nurse for the sister as the erotic object. This is based upon the report from the material in the analysis that in the process of the 'seduction' his sister had told the Wolf Man that his nurse often played with the genitals of others in a particularly gross way. It is not clear whether in the analysis the Wolf Man reported that he was stimulated by that account to attempt to engage the nurse sexually by touching his genitals in her presence. What is reported is that because his sister was 'not agreeable to him as a sexual object' he tried to win another person

and the information which his sister herself had given him, and in which she had claimed his Nanya as a model, turned his choice in that direction. (Freud 1918:24)

It is not clear if this is Freud's interpretation of another event (playing with his penis in front of his nurse) which was reported in the Wolf Man's associations in a historical way or that it was simply an incident reported at some point and constructed into the historical events in order to provide a continuing causal thread in the narrative. As Esterson (1993) says Freud's explanations in the case of the Wolf Man fit together too well so that doubts about his explanations almost inevitably arise. However that may be the story continues with an account of the attempted 'seduction' of the nurse by playing with his penis in her presence. This, Freud says,

like so many other instances in which children do not conceal their masturbation, must be regarded as an attempt at seduction.(ibid:24)

No evidence of a direct kind to support this conclusion is given and it is far from clear what evidence Freud would have had from his practice since he did not work psychoanalytically with children, and the practice of child analysis had yet to develop.

Since Freud does not report the direct material from which the deduction that the nurse became a sexual object in the Wolf Man's imagination it is difficult to know

whether we are being confronted with two events which follow each other (the sexual play between the Wolf Man and his sister and the masturbatory play in front of his nurse) from which Freud makes these inferences without additional confirmation from the Wolf Man's material; or if Freud made an interpretation along the lines of the replacement of the sister by the nurse that it was in any way confirmed by further associations from the Wolf Man. The reported response of the nurse does not confirm that supposition. Freud reports that she explained that

that wasn't good; children who did that, she added, got a 'wound' in that place. (ibid:24)

It may be queried whether this sequence of events (the 'seduction' by the sister; his attempted 'seduction' of the nurse) is causal in the sense that the primal arousal of genital sexuality was caused by the first event which was then displaced on to the second event. Or, whether both were a display of the kind of sexual interest that children of this age are wont to exhibit and are not necessarily causal of events which follow them other than in the sense of *post hoc, propter hoc*. It may have been very likely that the nurse responded to the masturbatory play with a castration threat but the use of the word 'wound', with the emphasis given in the text by the inverted commas, also raises questions since it replicates what the Wolf Man is reported to have believed when was reputed to have seen his mother's genitals in the primal scene, taken to be the foundation of the famous wolf dream, and that his perception of them was that they were a wound⁷. So it is nicely predictive of something which has yet to emerge in the case material in the account Freud is giving in the paper. Of course, an alternative explanation, which is hinted at, is that these events may not be historical and may be a construction retrodictively created in phantasy by the Wolf Man to make sense of some of his difficulties which were occurring in his adult life. It may be that he was helped in this reconstruction by Freud through his interpretations

and his concern to find sexual causes for his difficulties even if those sexual causes were in phantasy only. But in this section Freud is attempting to explain an event (the Wolf Man's out of character naughtiness) whose reality was corroborated by his parents' explanation of it as being caused by the presence of the governess and their absence, and to link it with other historical sexual events whose reality he establishes through references to the time when they had occurred.

The next step in the causal chain is to explain the transfer of his sexual interest from his nurse to other objects. This is done by describing his ambivalent feelings about her which are related historically to the arrival of the aggressive governess and his own aggressive reaction to both the governess and the nurse. Freud's account of these events is as follows

When the governess came on the scene and abused his Nanya, drove her out of the room, and tried to destroy her authority, he, on the contrary, exaggerated his love for the victim of these attacks and assumed a brusque and defiant attitude towards the aggressive governess. (Freud 1918: 24)

He was not only aggressive to the governess but also to his Nanya, and Freud describes him as being very embittered against her. Although this embitteredness seems to be ascribed to the supposed rejection of him as well as by the castration threat, another possibility might be equally persuasive, ie that he was angry with her for failing to provide protection for him against the governess in the absence of his parents. The report from the Wolf Man that he had suppressed his masturbatory practices 'soon after' the castration threat leads to the inference that his sexual development regressed to the anal phase and became sadistic. The sadism was then turned inward upon himself. Evidence for the latter trend is provided by 'memories of phantasies, which he experienced as a child, of boys being chastised by being beaten

carries an assumption, unless it was supported by some relevant associations, that passivity in a 3 year boy can only be wounding because it denies the natural active and aggressive role which he ought to be playing. In the developing story the issue of passivity does not appear until Freud offers an analytic explanation of the events themselves. He buttresses the account through the record of the aggressive adolescent dreams and his interpretation that they must be a reaction formation to the passive events of infancy.

The material provided by the patient in support of this story is relatively minimal and primarily involves recollections of incidents which may be supposed to lend support to the anxiety about castration which underlies the regression to the anal-sadistic stage⁸. It can be seen to involve a number of assumptions and suppositions which are not contained in the Wolf Man's original material but are drawn from it.

The first is the issue about the 'seduction.', which has already been mentioned. Nothing in the Wolf Man's account of this event seems to call for this description nor for the addition by Edelson of the notion of a trauma. Unless it is so regarded, however, there would be difficulty in making it the first in a series of historical events which are supposed to account for the naughty behaviour which is to be explained. The need for the use of the term is also strengthened by Freud's attribution of it as providing an explanation 'at a single blow' (a phrase he also used in the case of Dora to describe a startling insight of a sexual kind) of the Wolf Man's report of aggressive phantasies he had in puberty about his sister and his governess. Freud described these phantasies in puberty as a belated attempt to redress the repressed memory of his passivity in his sexual interaction with his sister in infancy. It should be recalled that there are two further explanations for the naughty behaviour namely, the defensive conversion of his passivity into aggression against the nurse before his

parents left, and the expression of passive sexual wishes for gratification from his father after he returned from holiday. These accounts are also part of Freud's wish to demonstrate a sexual foundation of neurosis which is elaborated into a causal sequence. The first event, the seduction by his sister, requires to be emphasized in this way to confirm the adaptation of Koch's first postulate to mental disorders ie. that the pathogenic factor in this case must have been a sexual one.

This leads to the second matter which is implicit in the account of this causal chain. Is it really an historical account of a chain of events ? More than that, is it an aetiological history in which one event followed another with each successive event being caused by its predecessor ? Its historicity may reasonably be considered doubtful in that the account is finessed after 1924 by the re-timing of some of the events so that they fit more readily into the sequence which Freud wished to establish to support the inferences he made in order to connect the events causally. The wish to strengthen the narrative line may have been driven by Freud's wish to ensure that the account might serve the polemical end of providing evidence in favour of Freud's view in contrast to those of Adler and Jung. It is possible to see that even the description of the events themselves goes beyond a simple account and is coloured by some conceptual implications which would not be directly apparent in an unvarnished account of the behaviour. The attempted seduction of the nurse by the Wolf Man's masturbation in front of her is an example. Freud's inference that such behaviour 'must' be so regarded goes beyond the simple account of the behaviour and might be expected to be supported by some direct material from the Wolf Man's associations but none is provided. The evidence for this conclusion is drawn from what appears to be a general observation of childish behaviour, but is simply an assumption made by Freud without any evidence. On it depends the inference that

by playing with his penis in the nurse's presence the Wolf Man had demonstrated that he had changed the object of his sexual libido. That remains an inference and is not an observation. Sand (1983), commenting on the Dora case and Freud's inferences about it, says

It is necessary to separate what *may* be understood in a certain fashion from what *must*, by the nature of the evidence, be regarded as factual.

Later Sand refers to the problem of not being able to distinguish between the meanings that Freud attached to the associations and those which were provided by the analysand. It is often difficult in this fragment of the story and its causal account to make that distinction. As in this example of the inference to be drawn from the masturbation before the nurse it seems likely that this is Freud's inference, which, while it fits with the theory that Freud wishes to demonstrate, such a fit does not establish its truth, or that such an identity existed in the mind of the Wolf Man.

The idea of a regression to the anal-sadistic stage of libidinal development following the 'rejection' by his nurse of his seductive intentions is demonstrated by his sadistic behaviour which was confirmed by accounts of cruelty to insects and small animals and of phantasies of beating horses. This example illustrates the tension between the need to provide easily available evidence for the interpretation offered and the need to ensure that each piece of behaviour can be shown to have had a hidden sexual meaning which was unconsciously influencing the behaviour being described. The sadistic behaviour has two meanings according to Freud since it is both a regression to an earlier phase of development and is also an attempt to deal with the re-aroused anxiety about castration following the nurse's reference to the possibility of being wounded 'in that place'. It is associated with a further change in the Wolf Man's sexual object. Freud claims that while his father was still away he became the Wolf Man's new sexual object although he offers no evidence for this claim apart from what

he regards as attempts to get his father to beat him after his return. To support this contention the naughty behaviour has to be seen as having at least two or more different but complementary meanings any of which would have been capable of explaining the naughty behaviour by itself. An example is his behaviour towards his father which is said to have been not only a continuation of his passive reaction to his sister's 'seduction' displaced from his nurse on to his father but also a reversal of the sadistic purpose in his relations with his nurse. The evidence for the change of object from nurse to father was that he wished his father to beat him not only to fulfill his passive sexual wishes but also to assuage his guilty feelings aroused by his sexual wishes by being punished. This explanation is believed by Freud to be confirmed by the Wolf Man's account that

He had preserved a memory of how, during one of these scenes of naughtiness, he had redoubled his screams as his father came towards him. (Freud 1918:28)

Here it can be seen that Freud is hoping to provide some evidence from the reality which might be seen to support his interpretation, but does not consider whether there might be alternative ways of accounting for this recollection of the event, or of the event itself. Did the redoubled screaming really have the intention to provoke the father even further, or might it have proceeded from a simple fear of the punishment that father might inflict ?

Finally, there is the problem of whether mental explanations can be causally related to events. Freud had believed that at the outset of his theorizing about the cause of neurosis he had discovered that both the physical symptoms and their psychological foundations were caused by actual sexual events - the famous seduction theory (Freud 1896b). He almost immediately expressed dissatisfaction with this formulation (Masson 1984) although he did not publicly acknowledge his repudiation of it until much later (Freud 1914b). But although he may have given up the specific aetiology

of the trauma of infantile seduction, in this account he returns first of all to the impact of real and not phantasied sexual events for which he is concerned to provide historical authentication (the 'seduction' was alleged to be corroborated by the recollection of a cousin 10 years older than the Wolf Man, who conveyed to him some time later, that the Wolf Man's sister had sat on the cousin's lap around this time "and opened his trousers to take hold of his penis" [ibid 1918:21]; and of course the corroboration of the account of the Wolf Man's naughtiness by his parents even if they ascribed it to a different cause). But, equally, if there were also unconscious causes arising from the misperceptions and phantasies of the Wolf Man and their consequences for the vicissitudes of the libido and its development, the events themselves cannot provide authentication for those phantasies. Interpretations and inferences are required to bridge the gap between the events and the phantasies derived from them and the evidence for the link between them requires some relevant associations from the Wolf Man which are not provided in this account. (It may be relevant here to note that Freud was writing for "investigators who have already been convinced by their own clinical experiences".) So the causal chain created by Freud consists not only of the events themselves but inferences about their meaning for the Wolf Man and their supposed consequences for the development of his libido and assumptions about unconscious characteristics and their functioning which Freud felt were determining of the outcomes he regarded as meriting the description of neurosis.

The possibility that the same event can be taken as evidence for more than one mental experience or phantasy (eg redoubling his screams to try to ensure punishment from his father which would fulfil both the passive sexual wishes about his father and the wish to assuage his guilty feeling by being punished), draws attention to the problem that Freud must have been experiencing over the attempt to reconcile the principles of Koch's postulates with the kind of explanations he was

offering in this account and others. In terms of the actual neuroses where the cause and its effects were regarded as primarily physiological it may have been possible to provide an ætiological account which fitted with those postulates. As soon as the domain is transferred from the physiological to the psychological then their application becomes much more problematical and there is no longer a straightforward, self-evident link between the cause and effect as in the case of physical symptoms. Here two wishes are thought to be producing the one kind of behaviour (ie the redoubled screaming). The Wolf Man is believed to be intending to provoke his father into beating him, and the beating will satisfy both the desire to submit passively to father's sexual attack and the desire for punishment to relieve the guilt about the sexual wish for gratification in that way. It is less easy to be certain that the third of Koch's postulates can be satisfied with this explanation. Can the two wishes both be shown to be the necessary and sufficient cause for the redoubled screaming? Would they always inevitably produce the same outcome? Or might it be unconnected with either of them? Might the passive sexual wish and the need for the relief of guilty feelings be satisfied by other pieces of behaviour not only for the Wolf Man but for others? Moreover, if two unconscious wishes are being expressed by the same piece of behaviour why should there not be other wishes being expressed by that behaviour which have not been explicated in Freud's account? Over-determination and condensation may be unlimited and in Freud's accounts of his own dreams (Freud 1900) the same manifest content is capable of multiple elaboration in the course of uncovering the latent content. So just as it is impossible to say with absolute certainty that the same manifest content of a dream will inevitably and invariably lead to the same latent content so it seems impossible to show that the same behaviour will always be able to be traced back to the same mental causes. Since Freud had himself developed this mode of explanation in his major study of the meaning of dreams and had applied it to the understanding of physical and mental symptoms with a psychological origin it seems possible that he felt constrained by a

need to reconcile it with the medical model of explanation given his own lengthy experience of natural scientific and medical work as well as a readiness, based on the medical and cultural climate of opinion, to find a sexual cause for neurosis. So despite his rejection of the reality of the infantile seduction as a necessary condition in the aetiology of neurosis, he returns to something like it in the account of the Wolf Man where realities rather than phantasies are relied on to support the aetiological story. This is true even of the primal scene material, which despite his doubts, he attempts to reassure himself by unverifiable comments about the under-garments the parents were thought to be wearing and the certainty with which he recounts the number of times that intercourse took place between the parents on that occasion when the Wolf Man at the age of eighteen months was observing.

The pathway to the significance of the supposed seduction by his sister led from screen memories about the governess which Freud alleged could be interpreted as pointing to a castration complex. After this interpretation some dreams appeared (although it seems as if they were reports of dreams from an earlier period of life rather than dreams concurrent with the analysis). These dreams were about being aggressively sexual with his sister. It led Freud to assume that these phantasies were a consequence of the Wolf Man's anxiety at having been the passive object of his sister's sexual initiative. Freud knew that the Wolf Man had made an overtly sexual attempt on his sister in adolescence which had been rejected by her. So the phantasies might equally have been a wish fulfilment related to that event rather than to the earlier one which the Wolf Man had forgotten (repressed?) until it emerged later in the analysis to be seized on by Freud who was looking for a sexual event in infancy to account for the naughty behaviour. Freud in creating the concept of 'nachträglichkeit' had hypothesized that adolescent experiences and phantasies were projected backward on to infantile experiences to account for their sexual qualities. The governess appeared in the adolescent phantasies and Freud assumed that her

appearance meant that the dream referred to the infantile period rather than to adolescence. In making the transition from the material of the phantasies in puberty to the infantile experiences Freud says that

since these dreams gave an impression of always working over the same material in various different ways, the correct reading of these ostensible reminiscences became assured: it could only be a question of phantasies, which the dreamer had made on the subject of his childhood at some time or other, probably at the age of puberty, and which had now come to the surface again in this unrecognizable form. (1918: 19)

It is interesting to note the certainty which Freud attaches to his assumptions. The correct reading becomes *assured* and it could *only* be a question of something relating to childhood. No evidence is offered for this explanation of the Wolf Man's phantasies beyond that they fitted neatly with the coherence of the narrative which Freud wished to construct, and which he hoped would be persuasive in demonstrating that the narrative was not simply coherent but that its coherence might be evidence for its correspondence with the historical reality. To enhance the coherence of the narrative its timing had to be gently revamped after 1924 to ensure that it fitted more neatly with the causal sequence that had been constructed, and to exclude firmly the possibility of it having been related to the presence of the governess. It is unclear why Freud could have been more certain about the timing of these events some years later than he was when the case study was first written, unless he saw the need to exclude the possibility of other causal explanations more definitely. In so doing he believed that it would substantiate his theory of the sexual origins of neurosis and counter those of Adler and Jung.

The explanation of the relevance of the pubertal phantasies to the 'seduction' is, however, full of assumptions as follows:-

1. that the dreams referred not to the events of puberty but to infancy,
2. that they were constructions which dealt with an event in infancy which was the reverse of the dreamt or phantasied events,
3. that there were no other processes in the dreamwork other than that of reversal. The introduction of the image of the governess was a direct reference to the time of the historical events and required no other interpretation,
4. that there could be no other interpretation of these phantasies ("it could only be a question of. . .") than the one that Freud offers.

The account then contains two modes of explanation. Firstly, an historical biography containing a sexual event in real life which leads to a neurotic illness. Secondly, a narrative which draws on inferences and assumptions to create a coherent, causal story, but whose historicity cannot be authenticated by those assumptions so as to demonstrate that it is both necessary and sufficient to produce the outcome. The two modes of explanation intertwine to create a plausible interpretation but not a uniquely truthful one. Schafer (1983), discussing the question of narrative in psychoanalysis, says

there is no single, necessary, definitive account of a life history and psychopathology, of biological and social influences on personality, or of the psychoanalytical method and its results. (1983:213)

Ricoeur (1977) also argues that narrativity is an important aspect of the truth claims of psychoanalysis. According to Ricoeur the narrative is a reorganization of facts into a meaningful whole. Each individual 'case study' is an understandable narrative and is distinguished from the concept of a 'case' which is more objective and generalized to

conform with scientific observation. The continued tension between the different styles of explanation resulted in the discomfort Freud expressed when describing his case studies as reading like short stories and lacking the stamp of scientific method (Breuer & Freud 1893). It is certainly true that the story of the Wolf Man is knitted together so that it forms a coherent whole, each aspect of it dovetailing neatly. The account of the seduction by the sister and its sequelae in the build up to the uncharacteristically naughty behaviour, the symptom requiring explanation, looks backward in historical time to the primal scene material which was itself to come later in the analysis, and forward to the emergence not only of that material but to the dream of the wolves in the tree. (The reference to the 'wound' in the nurse's castration threat; the brief mention of the story of the wolf's tail being broken off in the ice are two examples of this backward and forward reference in the analysis and in the life of the Wolf Man.) In his study of the Wolf Man Freud often refers to the coherence of the narrative as compelling evidence for its truth, and its truth value may indeed lie in its coherence rather than in its correspondence to some reality existing independently. Macmillan (1992) asserts that Freud claimed that coherence was itself another and stronger proof of the reality of infant memories, but here in the story of the Wolf Man he went further by claiming that the coherence of the narrative was evidence for its truth. The truth Freud wanted to assert was the truth of his theories about the sexual aetiology of neuroses in contrast to those of Adler and Jung to whom he refers from time to time with the intention of showing how their views about the aetiology of neurosis are not in accord with the 'evidence' he found in the case of the Wolf Man. As can be seen from this extract from the full story the narrative coherence and its explanatory power cannot be derived directly from the history of the events themselves but require many inferences about how those events are to be understood. So that if Freud was trying to construct a medical scientific account with the same predictive capability as the demonstration by Koch of the consequences of the bacillae of tuberculosis or syphilis for the development of those

diseases, he must have been aware that he had offered quite a different type of causal explanation. That he found it difficult to acknowledge it is, perhaps, attested by the frequency with which he uses constructions like the assertion that the lack of concealment of masturbation "must be regarded as an attempt at seduction"; and elsewhere he is apt to claim that there can be 'no doubt' about the correctness of a construction, hypothesis, or assertion. The tension between the need to provide an account which appears to correspond with an objective, historical sequence and the construction of a coherent narrative making sense of the subjective experiences of the Wolf Man seems to be a consequence of the necessity for a medically valid record, as well as for the polemical purposes of the case study. Both of these objectives seem to be overtaken by the construction of a history which makes sense of the historical events coherently but without necessarily being correspondent to those events in a way that can be independently established. The two modes of explanation do not seem to be finally reconcilable. The construction of a discourse which attempts to build upon notions of sexual development and sexual trauma as a foundation of neurosis to create a coherent narrative departs from the strictly medical scientific model and opens the door to the construction of other narratives and the possibility that other models of explanation might be equally valid as Schafer (1983) suggests.

Freud himself continued to change the way in which he constructed causal, psychoanalytical accounts but as he did so he attempted to reconcile them with a medical natural science model, and by 1926 he appeared to make a move away from the sexual aetiology of neurosis. In *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1926) he claimed that it was anxiety that created the symptom which was a defence against that anxiety. He also raised questions about the natural science medical model of causation for neurosis. He wrote

It is to be feared that our need to find a single, tangible 'ultimate cause' of neurotic illness will remain unsatisfied. The ideal solution, which medical men no doubt still yearn for, would be to discover some bacillus which could be isolated and bred in a pure culture and which, when injected into anyone, would invariably produce the same illness; or, to put it rather less extravagantly, to demonstrate the existence of certain chemical substances the administration of which would bring about or cure particular neuroses. But the probability of a solution of this kind seems slight. (Freud 1926:152/3)

Perhaps one of the yearning medical men was Freud himself, who in the last part of this passage seems to be referring back to his earlier theory of the causation of the actual neuroses for he continued.

Psycho-analysis leads to less simple and satisfactory conclusions.

(ibid)

The departure from Koch's postulates and the theory of causation they espouse was a little ambiguous and the attempt to replace the sexual foundation of neurosis with anxiety had the possibility that it might become the single, simple cause which would make it concordant with those postulates. Throughout this work Freud seemed to be seeking ways in which his new theory can be reconciled with the old one. Wallace (1985) comments that

He was plagued by the nagging suspicion, expressed in the self-dissection dream and elsewhere, that he had strayed from the revered Brücke's strict materialistic path. (ibid:161)

The attempt is ingenious and even though he believed that psychoanalytic solutions were less simple and less satisfactory than the more confident medical ones, he still wished to contain his hypotheses within the framework already advanced in previous papers. Notably he produces no new case material to underpin the change in his theory of causation and the Wolf Man and Little Hans are liberally cited in support,

together with references to the other modal cases. So there is no new evidence but the old evidence is interpreted in a new way. Anxiety becomes the source which provides the motivation for the symptom and its foundation is separation anxiety rather than the pressure from frustrated or surplus libido. Although this seems to be an acceptance of Rank's theory of the birth trauma he is concerned to differentiate himself from what he regards as the over-simplistic ideas of Rank. In Freud's new theory the separation at birth forms the prototype of later separations which rely on the libido theory but which no longer operates in the way originally hypothesised by Freud. The instinctual demand from within is of itself not capable of giving rise to anxiety, which is an apprehension of a danger arising from the external world. So the pressure of the instinct is assumed to give rise to a possible conflict with the external world if it is to be gratified. This applies particularly to the incestuous feelings of the infant boy which arouse fears of castration by the father. The anxiety is then about an apprehension of the possible separation of the child from his penis, which Freud remarks is a very highly valued organ, and in the case of Little Hans and the Wolf Man involved a displacement of the fear on to horses or on to wolves. Freud says that

the castration anxiety is directed to a different object and expressed in a distorted form, so that the patient is afraid, not of being castrated by his father, but of being bitten by a horse or devoured by a wolf.

(Freud 1926:125)

The displacement was the defence and enabled the external danger and the anxiety arising therefrom to be banished since both horses and wolves can be avoided in a way that the father cannot. Freud has thus saved some of his original theorizing about the sexual foundations of neurosis but it is on a different logical basis now that a new factor has been introduced which, because of the the departure from the concept of libido with its analogy with neurological functioning, does not appear to conform to the structure of biological thinking to which he had been trying to adapt his

original hypotheses. Moreover, Freud notes that the castration complex as a basis for anxiety cannot apply to women since somebody who is already castrated cannot be afraid that it will occur in the future. Quite apart from the issue of phallo-centricity which characterizes much of Freud's theorizing, the application of a different principle to women -the fear of the loss of love - as a precipitating cause of anxiety offers a less concise example (because 'love' is a more amorphous concept notion than, say, 'penis envy' as a basis for castration fears) of the determinism of cause and effect than Freud had been depending on in his early hypotheses. Despite its relative simplicity it cannot be reconciled with Koch's postulates which are equally applicable to diseases specific to either sex without modification. Since Freud believed that women were more subject to neurosis than men, in common with the general medical opinion of his day (Decker 1991), it might have been thought that in the light of this new factor a major revision to the theory of the aetiology neurosis might have been felt to be necessary. Freud merely distinguishes between hysteria, characteristic of women, and obsessional neurosis, characteristic of men, preserving some of the sexual theories but at the expense of opening the door yet wider to other kinds of theorizing. Bowlby's thinking about attachment also depended on anxiety about separation and its consequences and as he was not bound by the need to preserve causality related to the epigenesis of sexuality he made no distinction between the sexes in its relevance to the development of neurosis, nor did he need to make special reference to the importance of anxieties about castration.

What then can be said about the reliability of knowledge to be derived from Freud's thinking? Firstly, that the assurance he seeks to derive from his reliance on medical scientific models cannot be sustained. Even if it is true that scientific theories are supportable only until new evidence overthrows them, Freud's theories are not of this type, in fact the citation of old evidence in support of new theories suggest that the

theories have changed and the evidence is then fitted to them.(Cioffi 1970). The tension between the scientific discourse and the narrative discourse seems to be more and more resolved in favour of the latter. Although the attempt to sustain a scientific discourse is never finally abandoned the weakened form of determinism it involves allows for the admissibility of other modes of explanation. With the passage of time other modes of establishing reliable accounts than the scientific one have been offered. The application of the Leibnizian concept of Romantic Medicine with its teleological implications and Heidegger's concept of truth (Thompson 1994) involving not simply the objective, non-personal but the subjectivity of the individual as an integral aspect of truth are but two. Others involve considering the applicability of different models of explanation and other modes of determination than those used by natural science (Lacan 1977; Ricoeur 1977; Strenger 1991; Wallace 1985). Before discussing other theories which have been offered as alternatives of or extensions to those of Freud the significance of ideas about and theories of causation will be examined to provide a basis for considering the nature and truth claims of psychodynamic hypotheses of all kinds.

Notes to Chapter 3

1 There is some controversy about the number of patients on whom Freud relied for his early formulations. See Esterson (1993), Masson (1984), Webster (1994).

2 Most psychotherapeutic treatments of whatever modality seem to follow this convention and in them attention is focused on the individual to the exclusion of others. In conventional psychiatric practice the disturbances are attributed to organic or chemical malfunctions of the brain to which physical methods can be applied such as ECT, brain surgery, or various kinds of drug treatment. Notable exceptions to this tradition are treatment offered for couple relationships; family therapy; or group analysis. On the whole, however, the medical model still prevails despite the fact that large numbers of psychotherapists of all persuasions are not medically qualified.

3 Although the number of lay therapists and trainings for them have proliferated it is ironic that most of those trainings for psychoanalytic psychotherapy have not followed Freud's mold breaking proposals. Most of these trainings have as their staple content the study of Freud and other psychoanalytic thinkers such as Jung, M Klein, Fairbairn, Kohut, Winnicott, Bion and others. I know of none which have included as a substantial part of their curriculum the study of appropriate historical, human or artistic subjects. Neither do they include studies of neurology or the functioning of the brain.

4 Masson (1983) suggests an entirely different motive for this development. But his view depends on whether the memories of seduction on which Freud at first relied were authentic, and this has been disputed by Cioffi (1970,1973), Schatzman (1992), Israels & Schatzman 1993, and Webster (1994). Freud was himself very ambiguous about whether memories were recovered or constructed in analysis.

5. There may have been something sufficiently traumatic about the presence of the English Governess to explain the naughty behaviour which would account for the family's understanding that it was connected with her. Freud dismissed that explanation on the grounds that because the behaviour continued long after the governess had been dismissed it could not be ascribed to her influence, which seems rather odd in view of Freud's belief that unconscious causes were timeless. The arrival of the governess coincided with the departure of the Wolf Man's parents for two month holiday which it was their custom to take each year. As was usual he was left in the care of his Nanny but in addition a new governess was appointed who quarreled with the nurse, often calling her a witch, as well as behaving in an eccentric way. As Freud makes clear in the discussion of the Wolf Man's relation with his sister and their rivalry over the love of their parents, the presence of the nurse in no way diminished the importance of his parents in his psychological economy. Moreover, his mother seems to have suffered from chronic ill-health which may well have created a residual anxiety which might have been intensified during her absences. So that when his parents depart and are replaced by a belligerent governess who begins to fight with his mother-substitute anxieties about the loss of important attachments might well be aroused. It is now known (Bowlby 1973) how prolonged disturbances arising from traumatic separations may be. So it is at least possible that the behaviour being ascribed to the seduction by the sister may have been wrongly attributed.

6 Interestingly, the Wolf Man in his conversations reported by Obholzer (1982) refers to this experience as a seduction but draws different conclusions from it than Freud did. He believed that he remained incestuously fixated to his sister and that this had to be denied in his choice of sexual partners who were always women of lower class status than himself. To the end of his life he continued to make these choices and there is an account in Obholzer of his long relationship with another woman fitting this description after his wife's death. So according to the Wolf Man he did not lose his life-long incestuous attachment to his sister, and Obholzer recounts (1982:8) how she made use of this in obtaining his confidence by adopting the role of his older sister, even to the extent on one occasion of dressing in a long skirt to try to replicate the turn of the century atmosphere.

7 Mahony (1984) criticises the account of the primal scene and its implications for what the Wolf Man could see of his parents' genitals to suggest that it is actually not possible to see the genitals of either partner, and particularly not of the woman, unless the observer was 'neither behind nor before the couple but at their very conjunction'. Freud (1918) makes the claim that 'coitus a tergo... alone offers the spectator a possibility of inspecting the genitals'. This claim can be shown to be incorrect by examining a recent picture by the war artist, Peter Howson, of an atrocity in the Bosnian conflict, entitled *Croatian and Muslim* in which two soldiers are raping a naked woman a *tergo* and demonstrates quite clearly that the genitals of both the man and the woman are completely hidden while the intercourse is in progress. The same is true of intercourse face to face. This is illustrated in a picture by Picasso entitled *The Lovers* showing a naked couple making love in a face to face position which demonstrates that the genitals of both partners are completely hidden from view. If it is assumed that the primal scene material was a phantasy of the Wolf Man rather than an observation of a real event (and Freud is inconsistent about whether it was a reality or phantasy, or whether it was a memory or a construction) it would assume a detailed knowledge of the genitalia of both sexes and in that case it might be unlikely that he would have been traumatized by knowledge he already had.

8. These are described by Freud as memories of seeing his sister and another girl urinating (although since he had been in the habit of seeing his sister's bottom prior to that, it is not clear why this scene should have been particularly disturbing, and, indeed, Freud describes how he dismissed that evidence even after having been told by his nurse that he would get a 'wound' for masturbating); of the governess describing pieces of sugar sticks as chopped-up snakes; of father once beating a snake to pieces with his stick during a walk; of a wolf wishing to fish during the winter and, using his

tail for the purpose, had it broken off in the ice; and so on. There may be an assumption that all these stories and others are cited in order not simply to support the chain of causal inferences for this aspect of the story, but to underpin the interpretation of the wolf dream, which although historically prior to the events being examined here, has not yet appeared in the account.

Chapter 4

Causes, Reasons and Covering Laws

If Freud's difficulties in the development of a consistent theory arose in part from the constraints of trying to apply a medical model of explanation and an analogy with Koch's postulates to material which could not easily be accounted for in that way what becomes of the truth claims that he made in its support? In fact, he seems to have offered two different models of explanation which appear and reappear throughout his work, although he lay greater emphasis on the scientific, medico-causal model and reaffirmed it in his final work, *An Outline of Psychoanalysis* (1940). These two models are a correspondence theory, ie that the theory has a relation of correspondence with the way things are in the world, and a coherence criterion of truth which provides a test of truth by virtue of the fit of aspects of the theory with each other (Grayling 1982). A problem about the idea of correspondence with the way things are in the world is that there can be no certainty about the facts in the world with which correspondence may be claimed (ibid). This may be particularly true of psychoanalytical facts which are often unconscious and subject to different interpretations which may provide different coherent criteria by which their truth may be tested. Freud provided an explanation of the Wolf Man's neurosis which he believed to be true because it fitted together in a convincing way, even if some finessing of some of the facts was required to provide both this fit and to ensure correspondence with the empirical facts of which he was not entirely sure (Freud 1918:45n1). Nevertheless, as has been noted above, he expressed some discomfort about the reliance on the coherent stories he told in his case studies because they seemed to depart from what he felt to be authentic scientific standards of evidence. A theory which claims to be

correspondent with the facts may gain support if its concepts fit together coherently, but in the end the claim of correspondence must be supported by evidence for it through comparison with facts it purports to explain. The reliance upon coherence as a test of truth may have implications for alternative psychodynamic theories whose coherent contents may be equally truthful. It also raises questions about issues of causation if a correspondent medical model is replaced by other modes of explanation such as either the hermeneutic model or the historical studies analogy.

The Conflict about Causation in Freud's Thought

In much of his theorizing although Freud appeared to be taking an uncompromising stand upon issues of causation with very firm statements about determinism and the medical model of cause and effect (Freud 1909a, 1923), in fact he often qualified these very strong claims in other places (Freud 1904).

. . . in practice the simple schematic outline of the therapeutic operation was almost always complicated by the circumstances that it was not a *single* (traumatic) impression, but in most cases a series of impressions - not easily scanned - which had participated in the creation of the symptom. [Emphasis in the original.] (1903/4:249)

That is to say that several traumata, but not necessarily of the same kind might have played a part in the creation of the original symptom. (See p62 above for the claim that several events, some conscious and others unconscious, contributed to the Wolf Man's neurosis.)

In a paper entitled in On Psychotherapy also written in 1904 he denied that sexual deprivation was the ultimate cause of neurosis claiming that

. . . sexual need and privation are merely one factor at work in the mechanism of neurosis. (Freud1904/5)

Another important, even essential, factor seems to be the opposition of the ego (ibid:163n2) which prevents the expression and enactment of 'sexual instinctual forces'. Here he fails to make a distinction between general expressions of sexual drive and tabooed sexual wishes. At the organic level it is difficult to make distinctions of this kind. The repressing motive of the ego is provided by the capacity to make moral distinctions ('shame and disgust'), and a distinction, which can only be expressed in language, between incestuous sexual wishes and non-incestuous wishes.

A similar conflict is evident in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) which begins

In the pages that follow I shall bring forward proof that there is a psychological technique which makes it possible to interpret dreams, and that, if the procedure is employed, every dream reveals itself as a psychical structure *which has meaning* and which can be inserted at an assignable point in the mental activities of waking life. (ibid:1) [my emphasis]

As Moore (1980) points out his explanations of specific dreams were couched . . . in the language of meaning, ie in terms of motives, wishes, intentions, and the like. (ibid:462)

These are psychological concepts which have a different sense from the neuro-physiological account he gave in Chapter 7. In that chapter of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, however, Freud moved into the explanation not of dreams but of dreaming, via the idea of dreaming as being the fulfilment of a wish to continue sleeping, and with it to the neurophysiological processes which became the foundation of his metapsychology and the drive hypothesis. Basch (1976) has criticized this position by questioning whether

the processes underlying dreams can be penetrated by examining the phenomenon of dreaming. (ibid:62)

The solution, according to Freud

... must be approached on the basis of material of another kind.

(Freud 1900:1)

and

... we shall feel obliged to set up a number of fresh hypotheses which touch tentatively upon the structure of the apparatus of the mind and upon the play of forces operating in it. (ibid:511)

In using the term 'apparatus of the mind' Freud might have been thinking more of the structure and functioning of the brain and this seems to be borne out by the contents of Chapter 7. Basch (1976) has drawn attention to the way that, in that chapter, Freud described the notion of a 'mental apparatus' in psychoanalysis in terms of the neurological functioning of the brain. Thus the language of meaning gave way to the language of physiology and neurology, and, as Moore points out, the concept of dreaming as being the fulfilment of a wish to continue sleeping and overcoming the disturbing internal or external stimuli is not an explanation in terms of a wish but of a function - assuming that dreaming can be shown to have such a function. That is to say that if *dreaming* can be shown to have a neuro-physiological basis whose function is to preserve sleep then it is like any other such function of the organism whose purpose is to maintain or preserve an end-state (Moore 1980), such as the heart beat which maintains the circulation of the blood, and which operate without the need for a wish to motivate them. Millikan (1984) draws the same distinction in considering the idea of intentionality. Not every device which is meant to perform a certain function has intentionality and she cites the case of the heart which performs its function of circulating the blood without displaying intentionality. Edelson (1973) and Lacan (1966) have both in different ways drawn similar conclusions from *The Interpretation of Dreams* about the importance of meaning and language in the development of psychoanalytic ideas and their contrast with medico-scientific explanations.

Holt (1972) has also commented on the duality in Freud's thinking, referring to the mechanistic and humanistic models of explanation alternating in his writings throughout his life and he believes that the humanistic model was never fully differentiated. Yankelovich and Barrett (1970) made a similar point contrasting Freud's experiential accounts of his clinical practice which are dominated by the human encounter described in terms of wishes, motives and intentions, with his metapsychological theories which were dominated by concepts of energies, instincts and drives.

The problems about this approach have been considered in Chapter 3 but it is worth noting again that that Freud had difficulty in conforming to the scientific mode of explanation even when he was using the language of neurophysiology. Webster (1995) has drawn attention to the way in which he even seems to have failed to observe the customary medical procedures before establishing his diagnoses and assessments in many of his case illustrations. Edelson (1984) considered the case for the scientific credentials of Freud's theories defending them against Grünbaum's attack in various publications. In establishing nine specifications (together with a number of sub-specifications) required to validate psychoanalytic hypotheses and practice he did not note that Freud had failed to observe most of them. While it may be the case that as the scrutiny of psychoanalytic and psychotherapeutic practice has become more intense and detailed its justification has had to be developed in the same detail, nevertheless it is quite evident that Freud's own publications fell short of proper scientific validation even his own day. Alternative hypotheses are rarely considered (see especially *Dora* and the *Wolf Man*) and more particularly evidence derived from clinical practice is often only referred to, sometimes in a cursory way, rather than being cited in detail as would be expected in a scientific paper. Wittgenstein (1966) has commented that in considering the idea of birth anxiety (Freud 1926) as being the foundation of all anxiety Freud did not establish that by

reference to the evidence because he could not do so, and Wittgenstein seems to be claiming that this was not the way scientists proceed. Perhaps Freud felt some unease about some of his methodology and his famous comment about the story-like nature of his case studies is evidence for his discomfort (Breuer & Freud 1893:160).

So he used the two modes of explanation and even as late as 1937 in *Constructions in Analysis* when he appeared to be emphasising explanations in terms of coherence and says that the analyst's task

... is to make out what has been forgotten from the traces it has left behind or, more correctly, to *construct* it. [Emphasis in the original] (ibid:258/9).

This explanation was apparently abandoned in 1939 with the publication of *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*, which despite its provisional nature, reaffirmed the determinism of some earlier publications¹.

Coherent and Correspondent Tests of Truth

However, his comment about the story-like quality of his case presentations suggests that on the clinical level coherence might be their most important and significant characteristic. His claim that the perception of cause and effect in psychic terms could only be made constructively (Freud 1920b) to some extent undermined the support for a correspondence theory and re-affirmed the concept of coherence as a test of the truth of his hypotheses first advanced in 1896. He says in *Constructions in Analysis*

if the analysis is carried out correctly, we produce in him an assured conviction of the truth of the construction which achieves the same result as a recaptured memory. (ibid 1937)

It should be noted here that it is not claimed that the construction is the same as the memory or of the actual event but that it has the same effect. Moreover, his

announcement to Fliess in his letter of 21st September 1897 (Masson 1985) that he no longer believed in his infantile seduction theory seemed to have indicated the abandonment of a correspondence theory in which the *experience* of infantile seduction, the repression of its memory and its recall in puberty was the pathogenic factor confirming the analogy with Koch's hypothesis. It may be noted that he claimed that the truth of this theory was attested by a coherence criterion, namely that it fitted like a piece in a child's puzzle leaving no room for any other possibility (Freud 1896a:205). The coherence and correspondent criteria are evident in this analogy. The jigsaw piece is coherent with the other pieces which together make up the picture with which they collectively correspond. However, his assertion in a letter to Fliess that

there are no indications of reality in the unconscious, so that one cannot distinguish between truth and fiction that has been cathected with affect. (Masson 1985:264)

illustrates the difficulty of trying to rely on a correspondence with 'facts' which cannot be shown to have had any independent existence, or be distinguished from fiction, and which, he sometimes seemed to be admitting, that the patients could not remember them either (Masson 1985:265; Freud 1896)²

Shifting the locus of the aetiological factors from the 'material' reality to the 'psychic' reality equally presents problems for a correspondence theory since the psychic reality is even less open to verification and substantiation than the contents of memory of historical events, particularly if the phantasies which comprise the psychic reality have been subject to repression so that they have become unavailable to the consciousness of their subject and can be known only through their conscious derivatives. The argument for the existence of these repressed pathogenic phantasies becomes rather circular and Freud's (1896b) account of his methods for attempting to evoke memories of them relied on his belief that the patient **must** have

had such fantasies if his theory was true. As his account of the Wolf Man shows he was confident that associations which did not refer to a childhood incident could not be pathogenic, although he did not establish that they were not, but 'at one blow' the Wolf Man's recollections of the so-called infantile seduction provided the material that Freud was seeking, and represented the jigsaw piece which provided the coherent explanation founded on the views contained in his 1896 paper, *The Aetiology of Hysteria*. There he says

If the first-discovered scene is unsatisfactory, we tell our patient that this experience explains nothing, but that behind it there must be hidden a more significant, earlier, experience; and we direct his attention by the same technique to the associative thread which connects the two memories - the one that has been discovered and the one that has still to be discovered. A continuation of the analysis then leads in every instance to the reproduction of new scenes of the character we expect. (ibid:195/6)

In this passage Freud seems to be arguing for a correspondence theory. The pathogenic memory has to be discovered but it will be congruent with the memory that has already been discovered, because it will be connected with it by an associative thread. In other words a coherent story is emerging which will attest to the truth of the final discovery. Freud's account of the Wolf Man's childhood neurosis was regarded by him as more truthful than the family's explanation because of the coherent story he was able to create about its origin. Grayling (1982) discusses the distinction between a truth claim and a test of truth and it may be that Freud's truth claim here is that there is a memory whose repression lies at the heart of an hysterical symptom and the congruence of the recovered memory with others attests to its truth³.

Putnam (1981) argues that the correspondence theory of truth is in any event untenable because the mind-independent objective world is unknowable in itself and therefore theories which purport to correspond with it are somehow left dangling. This perhaps is particularly applicable to the events on which the Freudian theories depended since their recollection is particularly prone to distortion and cannot readily be shown to have the independent objective existence required. In Putnam's view we are left with coherence theories and the fact that this leads to the possibility of a number of different and alternative theories between which it may be difficult to choose is not objectionable. He asks

... why should there not sometimes be equally coherent but incompatible conceptual schemes which fit our experiential beliefs equally well? He replies If truth is not (unique) correspondence then the possibility of a certain pluralism is opened up. (ibid:73)

The Implications of a Coherence Theory for a Theory of Causation

Sherwood (1969) considering the problems of explanation in psychoanalysis draws a distinction between what might be therapeutically effective 'which may be completely independent of the truth of the proposed explanation' (ibid:259), and what might be a truthful statement about human behaviour generally.

In raising this issue of the function of psychoanalytic explanations, an important truth is made explicit, namely that the goal of therapeutic efficacy is entirely distinct from the goal of the discovery of the true causes of human behavior. (ibid:250)

In making this distinction he was claiming that a coherent narrative about the patient might be a construction which took into consideration as much as possible of the patient's account of his history without its necessarily corresponding with an objective account of that same history, even if that were possible to discover. In claiming that the coherent clinical psychoanalytic narrative may not be either an objectively truthful

story about the patient or the foundation for a truthful general theory of human behaviour. Sherwood was aware that he had raised a number of problems about the verification of the clinical narrative and of the general theory. In order to argue that the coherent nature of the narrative does not open the door to other different but equally coherent narratives he claims, somewhat unconvincingly, that the psychoanalytical narrative is after all not just coherent but correspondent. It is so by virtue of its accurate and empirically verifiable assertions about the patient. Some of these assertions are about the patient's mental state and, using the Rat Man as an example, he regards as an empirically verifiable fact about him that he hated his father. This, however, is not a psychoanalytical statement. The psychoanalytical narrative is that he both loved and hated his father; that he split these two feelings and repressed the hatred so that it became unconscious. It was the conflict between his conscious and repressed unconscious attitudes to his father which was responsible for his obsessional neurosis and accounted for the incongruous, obsessional behaviour he exhibited. That narrative while coherent is not empirically verifiable through observation and, according to Sherwood (1969:251), from the point of view of its therapeutic effectiveness that does not matter, if it 'makes sense' to the patient and brings some kind of order and pattern to what may seem to be inexplicable and disordered sequences of events then this is all that is required of a psychoanalytical narrative in giving an explanatory, therapeutic account of the individual patient.

While psychoanalysts may be uneasy with this version of their practice some recent theorizing has built upon this concept of narrativity to construct hypotheses contrasting narrativity with historicity (Spence 1982; Schafer 1976 & 1983). Others have emphasized that the relativity and subjectivity of historical studies themselves, which are nevertheless regarded as 'truthful' interpretations of historical events, supports the claim for the same validity for psychoanalytical narratives (Ricoeur 1977;

Wallace 1985). Other thinking about the fundamental data from which psychodynamic hypotheses and therapeutic theories may be derived have emphasized the inter-subjective nature of the transactions of the session (Erikson 1958) as well as the problem of the unique nature of each therapeutic session and the impossibility of replicating the interaction between them even by the same therapist-patient duo (O'Shaughnessy 1994). This gives even more support for the view that to seek for correspondence with events which have only a very ephemeral existence, and then only in an inter-subjective sense, is an enterprise which has not yet been realized.

The coherence approach with its emphasis on narrativity which, according to Sherwood and Spence, need not be a veridical account of the patient's life nor verifiable by the contents of the analytical session creates problems for the general theory of psychoanalysis as a major truth claim. The basic hypotheses, which are statements believed to be of general application and stating laws of wider relevance than for the construction of clinical events, have not so far been confirmed by empirical evidence from clinical experiences, and the medico-causal explanation depending upon the existence of objective pathogenic events or phantasies of childhood has not been firmly established. In any case, as the last chapter showed, the causal explanation of the Wolf Man's neurosis, and in other case studies, may be relevant only to the particular analysand and not applicable to others despite Freud's wish to position himself in the deterministic, scientific consensus of the late 19th Century.

So if psychoanalytic and psychodynamic theories cannot be shown to be correspondent with some objective reality because of the nature of the material for which correspondence is sought then there seems to be no way in which alternative, coherent narratives can be excluded as being less valid than others. Even within the

confines of the definitive psychoanalytic world there are now a multiplicity of narratives and Schafer (1983) argues that there is no single, all-purpose, psychoanalytic life-history to be told. Psychoanalysis produces not one history, he claims, but a set of more or less co-ordinated accounts of a life history.

If that is the case is it possible to continue to adhere to the causal, medical model ?

Causation and Covering Laws

Causal explanations and causation have been the subject of a considerable philosophical discussion since Aristotle without the emergence of any definitive consensus. Hume (1737) described causation as being a constant conjunction between events but the notion of a necessary tie between them, Hume claimed, existed only in the mind of the observer and was not a feature of the events themselves. It can be argued that Hume's explanation does not allow for a distinction to be made between incidental but regular conjunctions of events and those which can be described as causal. For example, although night regularly follows day it cannot be argued that day causes night. According to Mackie (1974) and Honderich (1988) causation requires the existence of a necessary connection to distinguish causal regularity from incidental succession. Some evidence for necessity may be provided by what is known as counterfactual analysis (Mackie 1995) which takes the form 'if *c* is the cause of the effect *e* such that if *c* occurs then *e* also occurs, then if *c* has not occurred neither has *e*'. This analysis can be applied to single incidents to demonstrate that one factor has been the cause of another but Mackie (1974) cites Ducasse (1968) to the effect that single incidents cannot instantiate general, lawlike, causal relationships unless repetition and regularity ensure that the observation in the single case was correct. The difficulty of providing evidence of regularity and repetition across different clinical material from different analysands over successive sessions has already been remarked upon. Bunge (1963), considering the causal

principle, advances the view that causation is not the only form of determination and that it must take its place beside statistical, teleological, and dialectical determinacy. The concept of 'determination' seems to be a very much weaker notion than 'determinism', and Bunge asserts that what it implies is that effects **may** follow certain events but need not do so. This possibility seems to conflict with his view that determinacy nevertheless implies the idea of lawful production and that one aspect of lawfulness is that nothing unconditional, arbitrary or lawless can occur in nature. Although events may not be caused they occur in a lawlike way, which seems to imply some notion of regularity and with it the idea that lawfulness presupposes its applicability to a number of situations rather than to one only. So while Bunge's principle of dialectical determinacy would be most favourable to the psychoanalytic and psychodynamic way of thinking the dialectic would require generalization beyond the individual example in order to establish law-like causal explanations, as would the other designations of determination.

The necessity, which on some accounts causation implies, gives rise to the belief in determinism and idea of there being strict causal laws which can be more readily applied to the physical world than to mental events. While it seems to be generally accepted that mental events do not exist apart from physical events, (Davidson 1980, 1984; Honderich 1988; Kim 1993) it is nevertheless claimed that mental causation can occur although it may not instantiate 'strict causal laws' (Davidson 1993), which Davidson believes can only derive from the closed world of physical causation. Not all those who believe that mental events cannot be causative also accept Davidson's views about the absence of a strict nomological connection between mental causes and their affects. Van Gulick (1993) argues that in fact explanations making use of mental causation are no different in principle from those using physical causation and that both are probabilistically statistical rather than strictly deterministic and without exception, as is claimed by strict determinists. Hornsby (1993) considers that the

idea of agency, ie that each person is an agent of their actions, provides the element which is needed to distinguish mental causation from the impersonal, objective causation that provides the explanation for events in the physical world and without assuming that the effects so produced are inevitable. Agents are motivated by wishes, desires and intentions which provide adequate causal-explanations of what they do and which produce effects in the physical world, and without assuming that the effects so produced are inevitable. That a person crosses the road is adequately explained, she claims, by the wish to get to the other side; and that wish sets in motion a train of physiological events which may themselves be explained by a different level of causation but which in themselves do not provide an exclusive account of why the person crossed the road. Wallace (1985) concurs and claims that psychic causality and historical determinism both support the view that all behaviours are caused by an actor. However, Hornsby does not consider the question of unconscious motives which may exercise their influence on physiological events in an indirect way. Shope (1987) draws attention to Freud's explanation of slips of the tongue in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*(1901) which involves the error being caused by a word having an associative connection with the word being repressed. Freud accounts for his being unable to recall a name while producing an alternative to it by saying that the repressed name

had contrived to place itself in an associative connection with his (the person whose name had been repressed) name, so that my act of will missed its target. (ibid:1901)

Such causes, as described, are not in Freud's account nomological since Freud's use of the word 'contrived' suggests a 'manufactured' connection rather than a lawful one, that is to say, one which occurred as a consequence of a conflict of motives specific to that particular person or occasion. Nor, as Hornsby suggests, are they a result of the human agency of the wish to recall in the above example. Freud did not suggest that he would consistently produce the same error but that his explanation

accounted for his inability to recall the correct name on that occasion even though he consciously wished to do so. So this example does not conform to the concept of human agency as causative nor does it exemplify the idea of regularity in causation as required by the medical applications of causation.

Although in the example quoted above lawlike qualities are not clearly implied, Shope (1987) cites two other examples from Freud (1896) where he refers to associative and logical ties between scenes of infantile sexual trauma and hysterical symptoms, and from Freud (1923) where he comments that sexual trauma in later life owes its 'aetiological significance to an associative or symbolic connection' with an earlier, preceding, infantile trauma. No illustrative examples are given for these for these hypotheses which take the form of nomological statements with predictive power. He did provide in the account of the Wolf Man an example of the association of incestuous sexual fantasies in adolescence as being significant only because they confirmed the alleged seductive behaviour of his sister in the infancy of the Wolf Man. However, that the Wolf Man may have had exciting sexual fantasies about his sister in his adolescence does not necessarily confirm the belief that he and his sister indulged in some infantile sexual play, nor the conclusion that the traumatic impact of incestuous phantasies or behaviour relies upon their associative links with infantile sexual experiences. Freud's account of the implications of that play is an application of the theory he later formulated in the nomological hypothesis in the 1923 paper. In fact he draws on the later fantasies to provide some support for his conclusions about the aetiology of the childhood scenes in the infantile neurosis he was analysing, and does not claim that the adolescent fantasies were traumatic in themselves but became so because of their evocation of the infantile scenes. They are taken as evidence for the conclusion that the infantile neurosis of the Wolf Man was caused by the trauma of sexual seduction by his sister.

Reasons and Causes

Whether reasons can be causes of the generation of mental events has been questioned. Both Cavell (1993) and Grünbaum (1984:73) seem to be agreed that they may be. They are, however, different from the sort of causes which are pertinent to medical explanations even though both Freud and Grünbaum seem to be arguing that they are not. Three matters seem relevant to that difference. The first is that although reasons via the concept of agency are causal, or can provide a causal explanation as Hornsby (*ibid*) describes it, they do not always result in action in the real world. It is possible to have a reason to do something, or even a wish to do something, but not to do it, so that the notions of regularity and inevitability are absent. Bouveresse (1995), discussing Wittgenstein's views about Freud's theories, claims that

The language game of seeking causes is basically different in grammatical terms from the language game of seeking reasons and justifications. (*ibid*:71)

He goes on to assert that

If reasons are causes, they are causes which act in a way that does not lend itself to the formulation of causal laws. (*ibid*:73)

Citing Waismann (1983) he concludes that

. . . there cannot be a positive science of motivation, as Freud evidently believes, but only at best hermeneutics. (*ibid*:80)

Perhaps another way of expressing the difference between reasons and causes is that explanations in terms of reasons are answering the question 'why?'; those in terms of causes are answering the question 'how?'. The difference in the psychoanalytic explanations by reasons and causes is a result of the fact that

explanation by reasons is derived from the clinical theory (seeking to know *why* a symptom has been created), while the explanation by causes is part of the metapsychology which is seeking to establish a scientific, causal model for what has been described in the clinical theory (seeking to know *how* it happened). As Wittgenstein would claim, these are two different language games existing independently of each other.

The second matter which demonstrates a difference in the consideration of reasons as causes in psychoanalytic and psychodynamic thinking is that the reasons for an outcome are to be discovered retrospectively. So if an event *e* is found to have occurred then it is assumed that another event *c* will be discovered as its cause. The assumption seems to be that, if the cause had been recognised at the time that it occurred, it would have been possible to predict that the effect would also occur. This is a reversal of the usual causal explanations which involve predictions (ie if an event *c* occurs then it is predictable that another event *e* will also inevitably occur). An example is Freud's explanation of the Wolf Man's playing with his penis in front of his nurse as a result of a wish to seduce his nurse. That is that if playing with his penis in front of the nurse occurred then the wish to seduce her must have preceded it. The only evidence that such a wish had occurred is Freud's claim that the event **must** be regarded as having contained, or was an expression of, that wish rather than that there was evidence in the Wolf Man's associations to the memory of that event that such a repressed wish was discovered. More often the existence of the cause was derived from the theory itself and was to be discovered retrodictively; to wit, while Freud was convinced of the reality of the seduction theory and patients were failing to find any memories of such events, he would assure them that the reasons or memories they were producing were not explanatory and there were other matters they were not remembering which would provide the explanation he was seeking.

[See also p84 above and note2 below] However, in discussing the question of predictions Freud (1920b) said

So long as we trace the development from its final outcome backwards the chain of events appears continuous, and we feel we have gained insight which is completely satisfactory and even exhaustive. But if we proceed to reverse the way, if we start from the premises inferred from the analysis and try to follow these up to the final results, then we no longer get the impression of an inevitable sequence of events which could not have been otherwise determined. We notice at once that there might have been another result, and that we might have been just as well able to understand and explain the latter. The synthesis is thus not so satisfactory as the analysis; in other words, from a knowledge of the premises we could not have foretold the nature of the result. (ibid 1920:167)

In other words, and using the notation above, while Freud seems to be claiming that if e occurred then c must also have occurred, he also appears to be asserting that if c has occurred it cannot be assumed that e will also occur. It is equally likely that some other event f might occur instead. This must undermine the causality of c discovered retrodictively. Finally, reason-based mental causation is at best probabilistic and subject to *ceteris paribus* clauses which take the form that if a person desires an outcome O and has reason to believe that an action A will lead to the outcome O then he will do A 'other things being equal'. In effect this view is supported by Davidson's contention (1984 & 1993) that events only instantiate *strict* laws under certain descriptions, and for mental events to instantiate such laws requires them to be under a physical description instead of a psychological description, so that nomological laws of causation only apply to mental events physically described. Equally, Macmillan (1992), contesting the validity of Freud's sexual aetiology, claims that it was

developed in respect of and was applicable to neurasthenia and the actual neuroses, which had a physical symptomatology, rather than hysteria which did not.

So in addition to the fact that alternative explanations for the same events can be provided by coherent accounts of the analysand's material thus weakening their causal authority, coherent narratives are unable to demonstrate either their causal necessity or sufficiency so as to instantiate covering laws applicable in every case in the same way as medico-physiological explanations, and therefore rest on insecure foundations, as many subsequent theorists have agreed (Klein GS 1976; Holt 1989; Schafer 1976; Spence 1982; van Eckhardt 1985). Habermas (1968) puts it thus

As long as the theory (psychoanalysis) derives its meaning in relation to the reconstruction of a lost fragment of life history and therefore to self-reflection, its application is necessarily practical. In this role, however, psychoanalysis can never be replaced by technologies derived from other theories of the empirical sciences in a rigorous sense. (1968:247)

Or as McCarthy (1978) describing Habermas's hermeneutic account of causality in psychoanalysis says

(It is) different from causality in science and medicine since they do not represent *invariance* of natural laws - but an invariance of life history. . . .(1978:201)

As a result there have been various attempts to find some other basis for establishing the validity of psychodynamic concepts using analogies with other studies which make truth claims not requiring the demonstration of either strict causal laws or confident claims to exclude other narratives as equally truthful.

Notes to Chapter 4

1 The argument in *Constructions in Analysis* seems to be an interesting balancing of the claims for both reconstruction and construction and, by implication, a consideration of the issues of correspondence and coherence.

2 Macmillan (1992), citing Cioffi's view (1972:74) and Schimek (1987), asserts that "fairly conclusively in my view - most of the patients did not report seduction 'memories'. What Freud really describes was the foisting of his reconstructions on them. . ." (op cit:134). Macmillan continues, quoting Holt (1965), that most present-day clinicians do not confirm the aetiological sequence that Freud "thought he saw".

3 In a wider context, Kitcher (1992) discusses the issue of the coherence of Freud's theories with the scientific, anthropological, biological, and psychological and other theories of his day. She demonstrates that, while the issue of coherence on such a broad front is difficult, Freud was not sufficiently careful in the way he claimed support from other theories to confirm his own. In general the poor fit with those contemporary related ideas has become even more problematic as those disciplines have developed throughout this century

Chapter 5

Other Explanatory Models

Two propositions have been advanced to provide alternative explanatory frameworks to the medico-scientific model. Firstly, it has been asserted that while psychoanalytical or psychodynamic theories may not be scientific in the sense of being able to offer strict causal laws they nevertheless may make the same claim to veracity as historical studies (Schafer 1983; Strenger 1991). To some extent this follows Freud's own usage of comparing analytical work with archaeology (Freud 1905 & 1937), which tended to lead him to the conclusion that he was reconstructing the details of the historical past in a way which might be verifiable even more authentically than by the archaeologist. He said

. . . all the essentials are preserved; even things that seem completely forgotten are present somehow and somewhere, and have merely been buried and made inaccessible to the subject.
(1937:260)

This attests to a belief in the durability of the repressed memory of actual events in the aetiology of symptoms and to the importance Freud placed on the recovery of memories as offering veridical support for his theories as well as being an effective therapeutic process itself in accordance with medical theories of disease and cure.

Secondly, it is claimed that the theories have a different foundation and are concerned with meaning (Gadamer 1985; Habermas 1970; Ricoeur 1970), and that a hermeneutic basis for psychodynamic understanding leads to consideration of the importance of language both in the therapeutic process and the development of theory.

The Comparison with Historical Studies

The analogy with historical studies is based not only upon Freud's archaeological comparison but also upon the observation that the psychodynamic process is concerned with the establishment of the historical mental development of the analysand and with filling in blanks in the memory which obstruct the coherent and continuous life story. Loch (1977) puts it a little differently. He says

. . . fantasies, like recollections, are not brought to light like excavations- - - (they) do not represent discovered truths of a historical character but are attempts to create a sense, a significance in order to go on existing. (ibid:227)

Wallace, reviewing Stannard's (1980) *Shrinking History*, argues however that the comparison with historical studies is very apt. He claims

. . . both psychoanalysis *and* history are fundamentally interpretive and reconstructive enterprises. Rather than actually discerning 'causes' or 'determinants', the analyst and the historian are involved in arriving at causal *inferences* or *explanations*. (emphasis in the original)

This at once places causation in history and in psychoanalysis on a different basis from the medico-causal explanations, and the point made here is examined at length in Wallace (1985). He goes on to quote from Becker (1969) who asserts that "the historical fact is in someone's mind or it is nowhere", and goes on to draw a distinction between an "actual occurrence and the historical fact". This claim overlooks the existence of the vast library of historical works and documents which may have once existed in someone's mind but could hardly be said to do so any longer. The actual occurrence, Wallace claims, may no longer be discoverable, while the historical fact is a construction created by the historian. A similar view is advanced by Spence (1982) in differentiating between historical truth, by which he means the actual occurrence in Wallace's terms, and narrative truth, by which he means the coherent narrative which gradually emerges in the conversation between the therapist and analysand. The latter according to Wallace's is the 'historical fact' which exists in the mind of the historian. For Spence the narrative is the joint creation of the therapist and the analysand and bears the same relation to the actual occurrence as Wallace's 'historical facts'. Strenger (1991) offers the same distinction in discussing the comparison between the work the patient does in therapy, with the help of the therapist, in constructing his autobiography from the chronicle of recollected life events and the work done by the historian. Citing White (1973) who argues that

. . . The Historian does not just establish facts; he links them into humanly meaningful sequences or modes of emplotments. (ibid:125)

Strenger implies that the psychoanalytical psychotherapist is engaged in the same process.

The study of history according to Vincent (1995) is not the same as the study of the past since the past no longer exists. It is a human activity which can only be carried on in the present because it requires the examination of evidence which only exists in the present. This appears to echo Gadamer's concept of history as understood only through a consciousness standing in the present (Palmer 1969:178). Seen in this way it relies primarily on written material for its evidence whose explanation and meaning has to be determined by the historian exercising his own understanding of human motivations and behaviour. As a result it is a very partial exploration of past events, relying on the existence of material which may give a very biased view of the course of events as well as of historical personages who were by and large literate as well as being the winners rather than losers in human conflicts; men rather than women; and the rich rather than the poor. Above all it is

The attempt to supply the meaning of the past. The presence of meaning, rather than the absence of laws, is the distinction that matters most: meaning involving thought, motive, intention, and lack of intention. (Vincent 1995:19)

With this view Wallace is in agreement when he says

. . . the clinician is *not* unconcerned with actual events ('actual reality'). It is simply that the analyst does not stop there, but wants to know, above all, what they *mean* to individual patients, how they are perceived and interpreted by them (eg 'psychical reality'). [my emphasis] (Wallace 1983:249)

Similarly, in a later work (Wallace 1985) he claims that

The principle of psychic causality asserts that behaviors which follow immediately upon certain other events in the environment, and actions or statements which occur in temporal contiguity with one another, are *meaningfully and causally connected*. . . . [my emphasis](ibid:175)

Temporal contiguity does not of itself create a causal connection between events even if they are meaningfully connected. In wishing to establish the validity of psychoanalysis through a comparison with historical studies. Wallace goes a good deal further than Vincent in the attempt to assert the objective status of the material on which those studies depend, and thus validate the objective status of the events which psychoanalysis purports to discover. Wallace, (citing Becker again) says that

Even the records with which the historian works are, Becker continues, not the event itself but only a pattern of ink on paper left by someone with an image or an idea of the event. It is, in other words, the 'historical fact' rather than the 'actual occurrence', that is the historian's concern. All dynamic psychiatrists grasp this important distinction in their differentiation between the patient's 'actual biography' (the irrecoverable external events) and his 'analytic' one (the events perceived, interpreted, remembered and recounted by the person being analyzed).

Moreover, Wallace claims particular authority for the psychoanalytic examination of the past in the present by relying on an account of the transference as a re-enactment of the past in the present. He refers to the transference as

the patient's re-enactment of historically determined behavior in the presence of the analyst. (Wallace 1983:252)

which gives him (the analyst) a route into the past not available to the historian. Although he modifies the implication that the past is, as it were, directly experienced by the analyst he nevertheless refers to the 'reconstruction of the past' (ibid:252). The idea of reconstruction does seem to imply that it is the reality of past events that is being recreated, rather than a version of them which might more properly be called a construction and whose correspondence to actual historical events cannot be definitively demonstrated. This view of transference as a veridical repetition of the past in the present has been challenged, notably by Loch (1977) but also by Ross (1973) and Blos (1972), all of whom claim that transference has no inherent truth function in so far as past events are concerned. Loch cites Freud (1916/17) in support of this view. Freud wrote

Suppose we succeeded in bringing a case to a favourable conclusion by setting up and resolving a strong father-transference to the doctor. It would not be correct to conclude that the patient had suffered previously from a similar unconscious attachment of his libido to this father. (ibid:509)

Vincent (1995) is less certain about causal explanations, and about reconstructions of the past, and claims quite definitively that "causes do not exist" (195:45) and that the historian's selection of causes in his explanation of past events is "blatant subjectivity" belonging more to literary art and rhetoric. Citing Collingwood (1946) he puts the historian at the centre of historical studies, and it is a historian who does not simply

know 'that' but is seeking to know 'why'. Knowing why is, of course, an interpretation of the meaning of events which leaves open the possibility of a number of alternative and, perhaps equally valid, meanings.

History-as-evidence, in its severity, tells us what is not true; history-as-meaning, in its warm invitingness, usually leaves a multiplicity of possible truths, mine as good as yours Those who look on history as a search for meaning, purvey not truths but the attitude of one man to other men. (ibid:28)

Some psychodynamic commentators, like Wallace, would be uncomfortable with the relativity which this statement implies about the correspondence of historical interpretations with the historical facts, even when they accept the validity of the distinction between evidence and meaning. Strenger (1991), like Wallace, considers the dilemma of whether interpretations are constructions which organize the analysand's associations and memories into meaningful narratives which are sufficient in themselves for therapeutic efficacy or whether they can be in some sense reconstructions of the historical reality. Or can they be one of a number of coherent explanations any of which may fit the historical narrative as it has been conveyed in the therapy sessions ?

One way in which this dilemma can be examined turns on the nature of the evidence with which the therapist, considered as an historian, may be presented. As Vincent indicates historical evidence consists primarily of written material, which forms the chronicle of events from which the historian constructs the narrative and meaning. While questions need to be asked about the objectivity of this chronicle as well as

about its comprehensiveness it exists independently of the historian even though requiring his interaction with it to make it into a meaningful historical account. It is the idea of the interaction between the historian and his material which is appealing in the comparison with the psychoanalytic psychotherapist. Carr, in his 1961 Trevelyan Lectures (1984), posing the question 'What is History?' provisionally answers that

Our examination of the relation of the historian to the facts of history finds us, therefore, in an apparently precarious situation, navigating delicately between the Scylla of an untenable theory of history as an objective compilation of facts, of the unqualified primacy of facts over interpretation, and the Charybdis of an equally untenable theory as the subjective product of the mind of the historian who establishes the facts of history and masters them through the process of interpretation, between a view of history having the centre of gravity in the past and a view having the centre of gravity in the present.
(ibid:29)

His resolution of the dichotomy is to claim that history

... is a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past.
(ibid:30)

Carr makes the same kind of analysis in respect of causation in history and refers to the interaction between the historian's notion of causation and its interaction with his interpretation. The interpretation influences the kind of causes he seeks, and in their

turn influences those causes he selects to support the interpretation he makes. Writing in a different tradition Aron (1961) makes a similar point when he suggests that historians are implicated in understanding the past and their explanation of it so that absolute certainty about an event cannot be attested by an historical discourse. This is evidently a very different conception of causation from that proposed by Hume's idea of constant conjunction and the predictable regularity of cause and effect it implies, even if that predictability of outcome only exists in the observer and not in the reality. Ricoeur (1984) reaches the same conclusion when he describes the historian's use of causal explanations in the same way. He says that

. . . historians do use the expressions of the form that 'X causes Y' in a legitimate way; . . . these expressions are not the application of a law of the form 'if X then Y'. (ibid:126)

This is contrary to Wallace's view of psychical causation (see p102).

So the chronicle is not what history is about, but it is about the narrative constructed by the historian, and the interpretation of historical causes does not take the form of a covering law. This then gives rise to the possibility of a comparison with the coherent narratives created by the therapist and the analysand.

However that may be, the historian's narrative can be falsified by the chronicle as evidence even though it may not be verified by it. Does the evidence used by the psychotherapist have the same quality? In a sense the psychoanalytical psychotherapist knowingly deprives himself of access to anything which might be described as a chronicle such as diaries, letters written by the patient in the past,

recollections of other members of the family or other collateral material which a historian might use to flesh out the chronicle. While the purpose of that abstinence is to ensure that the transference remains uncontaminated it may mean that the contents of the sessions as evidence are impugned, and that in any event the existence of those contents as evidence is transient. The use of electronic recording methods in some contexts in recent years has ensured that some material may be preserved, and can thus be compared with the material evidence used by historians. It can, however, be relevant only to the progress of the therapy rather than to its correspondence, or lack of it, with the historical biography of the patient. It is worth noting that, however faithful the electronic recording may be, the act of listening to it may be very different from the experience of the session, just as, for example, a photograph or a film of an event does not convey the experience itself as it was occurring. The recording is partial and it appears to objectify what was a subjective experience of the analyst as well as of the patient in the therapeutic session thus distorting, or even falsifying, what occurred in the inter-subjective frame. Equally it is demonstrable that different people experience the same event in different ways. So for psychotherapy, unlike history, there is no independent chronicle with which clinical events can be compared from which the possibility of falsification or differences of interpretation might arise.

Can Memory be compared with Historical Evidence ?

It is the significance of memory as the foundation of classical psychoanalytical thinking which offers the most seductive element in the comparison with historical studies and the comparability with the basic evidential material from which the

historian constructs his narrative. Freud certainly regarded the search for repressed memories that were significant in the aetiology of neurosis as an important element in the process of therapy. He sought diligently for such memories in reconstructing the account of the origins of the patient's neurosis in accordance with medical concepts of the cause of illness and disease (Breuer & Freud 1893; Freud 1896b, 1918). However, in 1899 he expressed himself in a particularly ambiguous way about the veracity of childhood memories.

It may indeed be questioned whether we have any memories at all *from* our childhood: memories *relating* to our childhood may be all that we possess. Our childhood memories show us our earliest years not as they were but as they appeared at later periods when the memories were aroused. In these periods of arousal, the childhood memories did not, as people are accustomed to say, *emerge*; they were *formed* at that time. And a number of motives, with no concern for historical accuracy, had a part in forming them, as well as in the selection of the memories themselves. (1899:322) [emphasis in the original]

He seems to be making here some distinction between memories as they are laid down in childhood, the kind of images existing in the brain in what he called memory traces, and their recall in the present when the traces are modified by current motives for remembering. It is not absolutely clear whether the phrase 'formed at the time' refers to the historical period or to a later period when the memories are aroused, although it seems likely that the latter meaning was intended. Freud may have been

hinting here that memories are formed anew at the time of their arousal. A number of references to memory occur in his letters to Fliess and they may shed some light on this matter. In a letter dated 6th December 1896 he appears to confirm that memories are not just a simple matter of recall of an original incident. He wrote

... I am working on the assumption that our psychic mechanism has come into being by a process of stratification: the material present in the form of memory traces being subjected from time to time to a *rearrangement* in accordance with fresh circumstances - to a *retranscription*. Thus what is essentially new about my theory is the thesis that memory is present not once but several times over, that it is laid down in various kinds of indications. (Masson 1985:207)
[emphasis in the original]

This seems to be in accord with some modern thinking (see p118 et seq below). In a letter dated 3rd January 1899 (ibid:338) Freud, somewhat cryptically, remarks

... a small bit of my self-analysis has forced its way through and confirms that fantasies are products of later periods and are *projected back from what was then the present into earliest childhood* : the manner in which this occurred also emerged -once again by a verbal link. (my emphasis)

He continues

To the question “ what happened in earliest childhood ?” the answer is “Nothing, but the germ of a sexual impulse existed.” (ibid)

It is a moot point whether the fantasies he refers to in this fragment are the same as the memories he was discussing in his 1899 paper (p111 above) but it may seem that he is not claiming memories as evidence for actual historical events. In an earlier letter to Fliess, dated 2nd May 1897, Freud enclosed a draft of what was to become *The Project for a Scientific Psychology* and in it he said that

. . . fantasies are psychic facades produced to bar access to . . . memories. Fantasies simultaneously serve the tendency toward refining the memories, toward sublimating them. (ibid:240)

and in another letter, dated 25th May 1897, he further describes the relationship between fantasy and memory as follows

. . . fantasies arise from an unconscious combination of things experienced and heard, according to certain tendencies. These tendencies are towards making inaccessible the memory from which the symptom or symptoms have emerged or might emerge As a result of the formation of fantasies like this (in periods of excitation), the mnemonic symptoms cease. Instead unconscious fictions are present which have not been subject to defense. (ibid:247)

Despite these quite complex accounts of memories and their relationship with fantasies which the patient might recount in order to block access to memories, in the case of the Wolf Man (1918) Freud seemed concerned to establish that the memories

recalled in the analysis of the Wolf Man were not only authentic but that they provided a better explanation for the neurotic outcome than the family's own explanation of it having resulted from the malign influence of the governess.

Freud's views about memories cast doubt on whether they can be regarded as substantially similar to the chronicles of events, however partisan or biased, which provide the independent basis for historical studies. Further consideration of the nature of recollections in psychotherapy may offer some confirmation of these doubts.

One very evident difference in addition to those discussed above between historical chronicles and memories produced in therapy sessions is that chronicles are, as Vincent remarks, in writing while memories as reported in therapy sessions are verbal. The difference concerns the durability of written records which affords the possibility of some objectivity which can be brought to bear because the chronicle exists independently of the historical observer, whereas the recounted memory is verbal and ephemeral and may be incapable of replication in another session (O'Shaughnessy 1994). A further problem related to the way memories may be recounted is referred to by Bowlby (1980) when he describes the difference between episodic and semantic types of memory storage. An episodic memory seems to have the quality of an image and is described as being

... stored sequentially in terms of temporally dated episodes and events and of temporo-spatial relations between events. It commonly retains its perceptual properties and each item has its own distinctive place in a person's life history. (ibid:61)

By contrast semantic storage of memories involves

. . . . generalized propositions about the world, derived from a person's own experience or from what he has learned from others, or from some combination of the two. (ibid:62)

Examples of episodic memories might be the general recall of repetitious events such as the recollection of the idiosyncratic habits of schoolteachers, or of recurrent family holidays of early childhood. Semantic storage of memories involves the use of words. Both types of memory may refer to the same matter giving rise to the possibility of a discrepancy between them when any particular incident is being recalled¹.

It is also possible that the interplay of transference and counter-transference may influence not only the particular memories recalled by the analysand but also the way in which the memories of the same event may be reported to different therapists. Similarly patients may have the experience of discovering new memories or re-experiencing old memories when they undertake another therapy². The 'chronicle' of the patient's life as produced in therapy sessions may be subject to significant variations in a way that the independently existing historical chronicle is not. It could, of course, be argued that the different considerations and points of view advanced by various historians could lead to new ways of reading the chronicle. This does not compare with the transient nature of memories recounted in the psychotherapeutic session. Nor is it possible to compare easily the different 'readings' of the basic material of such sessions where patients have been treated by different therapists.

Kohut (1979) has provided an example where he discusses his analysis of the same patient in two different time periods. In the interval between the two analyses Kohut had changed his approach and his way of understanding the patient's material. Although Kohut may have had in mind the material of the first series when he embarked on the second series it is not clear how far the patient produced identical material on the second occasion to which Kohut then responded differently because of the new frame of reference with which he was working, or whether the patient, influenced by Kohut's new approach, produced different material. In another example Kohut (1984) offers a different interpretation of another analyst's account of a session. In this case, while the material as reported is the same, Kohut offers his interpretation without having participated in the live session and may not have been working with the same material that the original analyst had at his disposal which the written account may not have been able to convey sufficiently accurately.

The nature of the memory as responded to in the therapy also requires examination. As experienced by the patient the memory may well differ from the way that the therapist experiences it as it is being recounted and upon which he may base his construction. The patient remembers something from the past. Perhaps it is an event in which he participated, or perhaps it was a scene that was observed. Sometimes it may be the recollection of an incident or a characteristic of which there is no actual memory but about which a story has been frequently told³. Whichever it is the patient has to find the words to convey it to the therapist. What then may happen is that an impression forms in the mind of the therapist in response to the words being used by the patient but will almost certainly not be the same as that in the mind of the

patient, partly because the words are a different representation of the patient's image, and partly because the image in the therapist's mind will be formed not only by the words themselves but from his own experience of what the words convey. For example, a patient reported that she remembered being on a beach with her parents when her father picked her up and ran with her without warning into a very cold sea. The memory was a very important one in the therapy and recurred again and again with very little variation. The point for this discussion is that the patient's actual recollection that formed the basis of this account was very much richer than the bare report conveyed. Her impressions of the beach and the day itself, the feel of her father's skin against hers, the shock of the immersion in the cold water were all elements which were not easily conveyed in words and may have produced a significantly different impression in the mind of the therapist. The reality of her father in this incident, as well as the events forming it, may have been very different from the image of them created by the therapist as he listened to the account. Which is then the chronicle of this event capable of being compared with the historical chronicle ? Is it the recollection in the mind of the patient which cannot be conveyed precisely in words ? Is it the words used to describe the incident ? Or is it the impression left with the therapist as he listens to what is being conveyed by the words, the way in which they are being spoken and the emotional impact that they make on him⁴. For the historian the existence of the chronicle, once it has been established that it is not a forgery or a fake, is not in issue although the interpretation may be. Even then some of the controversies about its meaning may be possible to resolve by reference to the chronicle itself. For example, arguments about the legal authority of the Magna Carta might be settled by reference to the status of the

signatories to it and to the processes of law-making in use at the time. No such straightforward method is available to settle disputes about the meaning of material providing the basis of psychodynamic interpretations.

Apart from the problems which arise from the way in which memories are recounted in psychoanalysis, Rose (1992) suggests that memories may be altered as a result of their recounting. Referring to specific memories of his childhood he comments that

Every time I remember these events, I recreate memories anew: in writing these sentences now, they cease to be the recall of episodes of a wartime London childhood of the early 1940's but have been transmuted by thought and writing into memories of today. (ibid:35)

To emphasize the point he contrasts the recording of events with the aid of new technology such as tape and video recorders, and even with written printed form with living memory. Such artificial memories do not reinforce actual memory but freeze it, and impose "a fixed, linear sequence upon it" (ibid:61) and in the process of preserving it prevent the memory from evolving and transforming itself through time. What Rose calls 'declarative memory' is not like an "inscription of data on the wax tablet or silicon chips of the brain" but is an active, living process. Tulving (1983) reaches a similar conclusion and regards memory as differing from an artificial, information-storage system because the human memory can use the information in the interests of its own survival. This contrasts with the historical chronicle which is simply a physical information-storage system without a life of its own, but waiting to be revived by the interaction with the mind of the historian. Although in terms of brain functioning and mnemonic systems Freud often seemed to be thinking of memory

as if it were an unalterable storage system, as in the archaeological metaphor (P102 above), he also held other views. His paper *Screen Memories* (1899), in which memories are treated as if they were creations, accords more with views of Rose and Tulving. It is, of course, this capacity for creative remembering which is an aide to the therapeutic process for what is changed by therapy is not the past but the way in which past may be understood and endowed with new meaning. However, the fidelity of memories as evidence of past events must remain in doubt.

Finally, the comparison of psychoanalytical investigations with historical studies may be illuminated by the controversy about whether narratives produced in therapy are constructions or reconstructions of the patient's biography. Strenger (1991) argues strongly for the reconstructionist position, taking up a similar position advanced by Carr (op cit) in respect of historical studies. Strenger recognizes the difficulty of establishing the truth of any reconstruction, in that it may not correspond with something that really existed in the patient's history. He is concerned to assert that correspondence can be demonstrated, even though he recognizes, as do Sherwood and Spence, that therapeutic effectiveness does not depend upon the truth of the interpretation in that sense (Strenger 1991:115-123). However in pursuing this argument he moves from an ontological basis to an epistemological one. What he calls the chronicle of the patient's life is the patient's stock of memories and he contrasts this with the patient's narrative of his history, which he also calls his autobiography. The patient's autobiography is a construction, and not a reconstruction of the chronicle, which he believes can be compared with the work of the historian (ibid:125). He has overlooked the fact that the historian does not either construct or reconstruct the chronicle but simply uses it as a basis for his

interpretation. Despite that Strenger goes on to argue that the analyst is reconstructing the patient's autobiography with the assumption that it will then correspond more closely to the historical chronicle of the patient's life. Plainly the two views are not concordant and Strenger's espousal of both, and his attempt to reconcile them, attests to the discomfort that he, and others, feel about the absence of a secure, objective foundation for the constructionist position. In discussing the relationship between the new biography as presented in what Strenger calls 'undogmatic' case histories he says

The *interpretations* these authors give of their cases are not necessarily *true* [emphasis in the original]

and he goes on to say that

undogmatic case histories read more like biographies or novella-like stories than technical papers. (ibid:135)

All of this does not demonstrate that the biographies so produced must of necessity correspond with the historical actuality of the analysand's life. Nor would the historian claim that his account necessarily corresponds with the facts of history although it has to deal with the existence of the independent chronicle. It is, as Carr (op cit) says, an interaction between the historian and *his* facts which creates an unending dialogue between the past and the present. While the dialogue may be a significant matter in the psychoanalytic situation it differs from the historical process because there is no independent chronicle to which differing interpretations may be referred.

The Hermeneutic Approach

Carr's view seems very like the hermeneutic understanding of history and according to Palmer (1969), summarising Heidegger and Gadamer,

There is no pure seeing and understanding of history without reference to the present. On the contrary, history is seen and understood only and always through a consciousness standing in the present. (ibid:176)

The 'present' here is understood not as a static point in time but as continuously moving and changing. Pursuing the analogy further it would probably be true to say that the psychodynamic encounter between a therapist and an analysand is a similar process which is epistemological in nature rather than ontological. Strenger (op cit) reaches a similar conclusion despite his hope that psychoanalysis can be established on a more ontologically objective basis. He says that

...because the currently most accepted view of psychoanalysis is that analytic work focused mainly on the patient's *present* mental states and not on the causal relations between the patient's past and his present symptoms, the clinical method of investigation has some degree of epistemological soundness. (ibid:146) [my emphasis]

Although this appears to be abandoning the comparison with historical studies, it may suggest a concordance with the other approach to the use of the understanding of history by the hermeneutic theorists. It may also accord with the acceptance by

historians that the historical 'facts', as contrasted with the historical chronicle, are influenced by, and influence in their turn, the interpretation of the historical chronicle. Moreover, it is evident that in pursuit of the analogy with historical studies the importance of narrative and meaning and the weakening of the claim for psychoanalytical theories to provide covering laws relating to causality have emerged as cardinal elements. So the methodological analogy with historical studies may admit the hermeneutic approach and the study of meaning as relevant to the nature of psychoanalysis and psychodynamics.

Grünbaum (1984) has attacked the hermeneutic construal of psychoanalysis on the grounds that Freud consistently claimed scientific status for his hypotheses, not on ontological grounds but methodologically. He does so on the basis that Freud distinguished between the speculative nature of his metapsychology (the various structural and dynamic hypotheses about the nature of the mind), for which he did not claim any scientific status, and his methodologically scientific observations made of the patient on the couch.

... after 1896 it was the *direct* evidential support he claimed to have for his clinical theory from his office couch - not some fancied explanatory subsumption under the abstract metapsychology - that he saw as authenticating the clinical theory. (ibid:7) [emphasis in the original]

Grünbaum is concerned to establish this position so that he can later demonstrate that Freud's clinical theories are scientific in character, so capable of refutation according to scientific protocols and that he had refuted them. In his discussion of Ricoeur's arguments for the hermeneutic construal of Freud's ideas he says

... Ricoeur evidently recognized that psychoanalytic explanations are both *causal* and are intended to illuminate various sorts of behavior. If so, then their validation, if any, will have to be of a kind appropriate to those avowed features. (ibid:47) [emphasis in the original]

However, he does not notice that, in addition to Freud's claims for the truth of his discoveries according to the canons of scientific methodology, it could also be demonstrated that Freud was making a different kind of claim for their validity. Grünbaum's use of the word 'illuminate' in the above quotation is interesting and suggestive of a different kind of link between 'causes' and behaviour. So that while the accusation of scientific self-misunderstanding (Habermas 1970) may be hyperbolic the assertion that Freud, however ambivalently, was from time to time making a different claim for the truth of his ideas cannot be ignored (Holt 1972; Thompson 1994; Yankelovich & Barrett 1970). It is these alternative ways of thinking deriving from Freud's work, more particularly by Schafer, Spence, Lacan, Thompson & Kohut, and which have also been elaborated in the hermeneutic tradition may lead to a different foundation for the cogency and validity of psychoanalytical and psychodynamic approaches to mental phenomena.

As Grünbaum demonstrates clinical 'observations' for a variety of reasons cannot *scientifically* establish Freud's theories, not only because the clinical hypotheses may not have a wider application than the individual case, but also because clinical theories derived from the patient on the couch cannot escape the taint of suggestion. Moreover, in addition to Grünbaum's argument, the nature of unconscious phenomena renders them incapable of direct observation. They are only manifest in

conscious derivatives subject to interpretations about which there may not necessarily be agreement between analysts and therapists with differing theoretical views. While this may also be true of some of the physical substances examined by physicists which can only be observed by the movement of pointers on a dial or in a cloud chamber, the observing instruments are capable of greater objectivity, replicability and mathematical validation than the observations of the patient by the therapist in the clinical situation⁵. However, Grünbaum's critique of hermeneutic theories is made largely in terms of their misinterpretation of Freud's scientific claims, as well as of the misunderstanding of the nature of science by Habermas, so that he can continue to demolish the theories that he regards as having been derived from empirically unsubstantiated clinical observations.

Both Grünbaum and those he criticizes agree that the significant material that would settle the controversy can only be derived from the verification of clinical observations in non-clinical settings through experiment or through epidemiological research. The difference between them is about how those observations can be translated into objective propositions capable of non-clinical investigation. Clinical experiences like all human *experiences* are ephemeral and subjective so that they may not be capable of being faithfully transformed into impersonal, objective entities which can be observed and analysed without the loss of an important characteristic of them. This may be particularly true of such intangible material as unconscious phantasies which only manifest themselves in conscious derivatives, and may only be designated as derivatives in the light of specific hypotheses which purport to give them meaning.

Although family therapists do not make much use of unconscious ideas in their therapeutic work it may be worth considering briefly the technique they employ in making a video record of their therapy sessions to provide material for an objective study of what occurred. They may, of course, be 'edited highlights' rather than total reproductions of what occurred, but they may give the impression that the viewers can in some way share the experience gained by the therapist in the actual session as if they were also present; or that if there is a difference between these two experiences that it is not significant. While for some purposes it may not matter that the viewing is not a veridical reproduction of the live event, for the question of its fidelity to the reality of the two experiences, the difference may be important. The subjective experience of both therapist and the family in their interaction is missing from the video reproduction and it may be critical for the definitive reconstruction of the original event. The viewers sit outside the event which is made up of both 'objective' behaviours which can be observed, and subjective mental experiences of the participants which cannot be observed. They do not experience the event in its immediacy and they may sometimes see things which went unobserved by the therapist at the time (and sometimes they may 'see' things in the video which did not occur at all - rather like the witnesses of an unexpected happening who interpret what they are seeing and report it as having been seen). The same may be true even where the session was being observed through a two-way mirror. All of which confirms that observation is itself impure and at best is informed by theoretical stances as well as by other biases of the observer.) What they see is a therapist-family gestalt of which the therapist is an integral part and the viewer is a sort of third eye whose different perspective may provide another layer of truthfulness. Although

it may be a faithful record of the event it is so in a different way than the reality of the experience in which the therapist was a subject and not an object, and who may not have experienced himself in that inclusive way suggested by the term 'gestalt' and by his experience as an object in the video record. So, perhaps, in addition to the incommunicability of the intra-subjective and the inter-subjective, the perspective of the viewer creates a reality which differs from the original experience and does not therefore provide an account which can stand as a more authentic report of what happened. It may also be that the inaccessibility of the intra-subjective experiences and the mercurial nature of the interpretations of unconscious material which rest upon them lead family therapists to confine their interventions to the objective and observable behaviour recordable on video. Speculations about the intra-personal reasons why certain kinds of behaviour are being displayed are discouraged and dismissed as pathologising the individual family members. This is not to say that the family therapy approach and practice may not be useful but simply that statements true of the recorded material are not necessarily the same as statements true of the original experience. The truth of the record of those events is as much an interpretation, in a broad sense, as an account of a clinical, analytic session and, no less than in reports of analytic sessions, their authenticity may depend upon the authority of the reporter. This may be even more significant where in family sessions the therapist is being supported by others behind a two-way screen who convey *their* third eye views of what is significant through an audio link.

So if clinical material is to be depended upon as the bedrock on which truthful statements may be founded, then it has to be recognized that the process of converting *clinical experience* into *clinical material* may alter its nature and that the

reality of the experience may be different from the reality of the recorded material. The method of recording the therapy session may produce a different reality than that of the original therapy session⁶. Levy (1996) makes a similar point when, in discussing Grünbaum's view about the objective testing of clinical hypotheses, he suggests that to do so is to change the nature of the material being examined so that its specific psychoanalytical content has been lost. Gadamer (1985) referring to scientific explanations says

Inherent in all modern sciences is a deep-rooted alienation, which they impose on natural consciousness and which, in the form of the concept of the method, has been part of reflective consciousness since the formative stage of modern science. (ibid:289)

Van Eckhardt (1985) refers to Habermas's division of theories of knowledge into three kinds:

- a. Empirical/analytic sciences
- b. Historical-hermeneutic sciences
- c. Critically-oriented science

Each of these three types of theory may be ways of expressing different truthful accounts of the world which are neither mutually exclusive nor final accounts of a unique truth. They exist on different levels of explanation contributing to a more coherent and comprehensive account of the world although not all will correspond with it in an empirical sense. Eagle (1980) dismisses the attempt to apply this kind of thinking to psychoanalytic explanations deriving from coherent rather than

correspondent clinical narratives. In his view explanations relying upon reasons, motives, or intentions are not the whole story. Citing an example of women who in pregnancy were given an androgen-related hormone to prevent miscarriage and whose female children subsequently displayed common characteristics of

tomboyism, lack of interest in playing with dolls and in feminine clothes, greater interest in careers than in marriage and family.

(ibid:351)

he concludes that no explanation involving their conscious reasons for these behaviours would do. Nor would the exploration of unconscious motives or wishes. An explanation in terms of the inter-uterine experience is sufficient, and he suggests that Freud's explanations using unconscious motivations based on instinct and drive theory "operate in the same manner as hypothalamic stimulation and fetal androgenization". (ibid:369) In other words they are unconscious in the same way that other physiological and neurological events are unconscious and do not rely on repressive mechanisms as an account of their unavailability to consciousness. However, Eagle's account does not take into consideration the fact that the girls concerned did not apparently experience any conflict about their condition. So that, if asked, they may have given reasons for their preferences that would not have been the causes of those behaviours. Psychodynamic theories would not have been relevant in such cases because those theories are concerned to understand situations where there is a conflict between repressed wishes and conscious desires which produce consciously unchosen outcomes. Those theories seek to articulate explanations on the level of individual experience or the state of being-in-the-world of

individuals and are not concerned with behaviour whose origin is entirely organic. In seeking to argue for a systematic theory of behaviour Eagle undermines the validity of any kind of psychodynamic explanation which does not claim to be an exhaustive account of all the factors, mental as well as physiological, neurobiological and neurochemical. Freud attempted to do this in his pre-psychoanalytic stage of theorizing and found it too difficult to create such a comprehensive theory. Loch (1977) considered that psychic reality is of a different order from other types of reality and that scientific truth in the sense used by Eagle is not the concern of the analyst. Human behaviour may be constrained but not determined by the neuro-physiological make-up of the body but it is the influence of human agency that the psychodynamic therapist seeks to understand. As Dorothy Rowe (1996) comments

. . . . therapy and counselling are psychological, not medical, techniques Whatever style of therapy or counselling is used, it is based on the idea that what we do results from our interpretation of our situation, and the choices we have made. We are always free to change our interpretations and our choices.

While the last sentence may not be strictly accurate, it is true that our situation with help of interpretations may be able to be changed. It is the nature of that help and how it can influence the totality of the individual's experience that lies at the heart of the discussion. It may be advanced by hermeneutic ideas that rely both on the totality and the idiosyncrasy of that experience, taking for granted the machine-like functioning of the human organism as an aspect of that experience. The state of being- in-the- world, which may also be described by the term 'psychic reality', for

each human being is subtly different while sharing something in common with other individuals. The uniqueness of that experience is contained in the concepts of 'being' and 'being-in-the-world'; both of which are subjective rather than objective. These intra-personal experiences can become inter-personal through the medium of speech and language, which in hermeneutic thinking is the hallmark of the human. Loch (op cit) refers to the need for explanations to make sense to the analysand that then makes them true for that individual. Importantly, however, the making sense "takes place in the symbolic order of language" (ibid:230). For Eagle and others it raises issues about how psychotherapeutic interventions work in producing change if they are not like medical interventions (See discussion in Appendix 2). In providing that explanation a number of theories converge. They include those who like Spence and Schafer think in terms of the fundamental of psychoanalytic facts being related to what can be spoken in clinical sessions; and those like Edelson, Holt, and Lacan who drew attention to the underlying humanistic and linguistic nature of Freud's theories; the theories of Heidegger and Habermas about the fundamental linguistic character of human beings and human experience distinguishing it from the rest of the animal world; the ideas of Chomsky (1972 & 1988) and Pinker (1994) about the fundamental basis of language; and finally Wittgenstein's ideas about language games. The distinction made by Freud himself between what he called thing-presentations and word-presentations in the process of the movement of ideas from the state of repressed unconsciousness to consciousness seems to be in a similar vein. Additionally other theorists such as Austin (1961), Searle (1994 & 1995) and Berger & Luckman (1966) have drawn attention to the significant role of speech and language in the construction of social reality which may resonate with the idea of psychic reality

and its relation to language. The discussion of those ideas and their relation to contemporary ideas in the psychoanalytic discourse has become even more problematic as those disciplines have developed throughout this century.

Notes to Chapter 5

- 1 Rose (1992) suggests that memories when recalled not only may differ from the actual event but may be changed as a result of the process of recall (see discussion on p114).
- 2 An elderly psychoanalyst who was being interviewed by a biographer over an extended period to obtain material for her life story told me that in those interviews recollections were emerging which had never surfaced in her many years of individual analysis.
- 3 Peterfreund (1983) remarking that memories of events are reworked on many occasions quotes from Freud's 1899 paper on Screen Memories where he questions the existence memories from childhood and suggest we may only have memories *relating* to childhood (see also p107 above).
- 4 David L Smith in his paper Freud's First Theory of Retrogressive Screen Memories discussing Freud's interpretation of the material in his analyses of the Rat Man and the Wolf Man, argues very persuasively that the interpretations made might have been unconsciously influenced by his own memory of an occasion when significant matters were apparently coincidentally very similar to the material being analysed. He demonstrates how Freud's interpretations of the material of both patients seemed as relevant to Freud's own memories as to the patients'. "One wonders," says Smith, "whether the construction was influenced by issues personal to Freud, as the theme of a sexual attack on a girl named Gisela is strongly resonant with Freud's (1899) analysis of his own screen memory." In the case of the Wolf Man's memory of a butterfly with yellow stripes settling on a flower, Freud's conjecture that this may have referred to a memory "of similar stripes on a piece of clothing worn by some woman", Smith believes, may have been interpolated from the analysis of Freud's own screen memory of Gisela Fluss wearing a yellow dress.
- 5 Quantum physics modifies this analogy to some extent by incorporating the human observing consciousness into the observing apparatus by questioning whether the observation has been made until the human observer notes the outcome and makes a difference to it. (Davies & Brown 1993; Rae 1994)
- 6 Thompson (1994) distinguishes between truth and reality, claiming that determining whether something is true is not the same as determining that it is real. In that sense the immediate experience of the therapy and the recorded version of it may be seen as two different realities each of which may have their own validity.

Chapter 6

Meaning, Language and Reference

In this chapter I propose to consider a number of views about meaning and intentionality and their relationship to reality, language and to psychoanalysis.

In recent years partly under the influence of hermeneutic ideas and partly from a dissatisfaction with the mechanistic, Freudian metapsychology, the belief has been growing that psychoanalysis and psychodynamics are concerned to understand the meaning of the analysand's distress and symptoms within the discourse with the therapist. Some (McKinnon 1978; Rosen 1969; Yankelovich & Barrett 1970) have claimed that Freud's focus on dreams, parapraxes and jokes was a demonstration of finding meaning within the meaningless. In fact, the idea of discovering the meaning of mental events can be found quite explicitly in Freud's own writings - notably in *The Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis (1916/17)* - when, in discussing parapraxes as psychological acts, he says

Let us pause a moment longer over the assertion that parapraxes are 'psychical acts'. Does this imply more than we have said already - that they have a sense? I think not. I think, rather, that the former assertion [that they are psychological acts] is more indefinite and more easily misunderstood. Anything that is observable in mental life may occasionally be described as a mental phenomenon. The question

will then be whether the particular mental phenomenon has arisen immediately from somatic, organic and material influences - in which case its investigation will not be part of psychology - or whether it is derived in the first instance from other mental processes, somewhere behind which the series of organic influences begins. It is this latter situation we have in mind when we describe a phenomenon as a mental process, and for that reason it is more expedient to clothe our assertion in the form 'the phenomenon has a sense.' By 'sense' we understand 'meaning', 'intention', 'purpose', and 'position in a continuous psychical context'. (ibid:60/1).

The equation of psychical acts with these categories, and, particularly with sense and meaning, removes them from the realm of the physiological into a different, more intangible realm in which different principles might apply. Shope (1973) considers the various ways in which Freud used the concept of meaning and discerns at least four definitions appearing in different places. Some are very like the one quoted above but Shope argues that although the idea of symbols, symptoms, and parapraxes as expressing a meaning which can be verbalized and hence provide a hermeneutic construal of psychoanalytic theory Freud's basic conception was that he

views the relation between - - mental phenomena and their meaning as similar to the relation between the symptoms of measles and its cause. They *express* the underlying states as effects manifest a cause. (ibid:294)

As has already been noted before Freud expressed different views about his concepts at different times, in my view, probably because of his ambivalence about the need to remain within the medico-scientific tradition. Here Shope is arguing that

Freud predominantly adhered to the medical model in his views about meaning and that the other definitions he used were on the whole compatible with that medical model. Shope holds this view because like Freud he wishes to sustain the drive/energy model of symptom formation that underlies the medical model.

In this chapter I propose to consider these ideas and their implications both for the nature of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy as well as for the theories which purport to explain the processes and to suggest that the alternative definitions of meaning open the door for different ways of theorizing about psychoanalytic and psychodynamic hypotheses, and about the nature of psychic reality.

Philosophical Discussions of Meaning

The concept of meaning, like many other ideas in philosophy, has been the subject of considerable controversy without much consensus emerging. The idea of meaning in philosophical discussions is related primarily to speech and language, as well as to the truth of sentences and propositions, and also to the concept of mind itself. Fodor (1987) makes the point, somewhat facetiously, that

Every time a philosopher of language turns a corner, he runs into a philosopher of mind who is pounding the same beat. (ibid: xi)

Meaning may also be ascribed additionally to non-verbal signs as well as to some forms of behaviour, and in psychotherapy psychosomatic symptoms of all kinds can be shown to have meanings which are often capable of being rendered in words or phrases. Road signs in pictorial or symbolic forms have a meaning which is usually readily apprehended by road users without being translated into words, although a

verbal account might easily be rendered for them. For example, the picture, enclosed within a circle, of two children running is readily understood to mean that 'there is a school ahead which children may enter or emerge from, and in doing so may not take care in crossing the road so that special caution is needed to ensure that accidents do not occur'. The graphic portrayal conveys the information effectively, economically, and speedily in a way that the words would not, but it might not be so readily understandable if words were not available to express that meaning (for example in The Highway Code). Moreover the pictorial sign not only has this meaning but is also meant to have it by whoever set it up. Not all signs with meaning have this implication. Bird calls have two kinds of meaning. Firstly, they help the bird to mark out its territory and to warn off intruders. Secondly, and related to the first meaning, they attract females of the species who are likely to be ready to mate. Although the song may be said to have these meanings it would be difficult to claim that they are **meant** by the birds in the same way that the road signs are meant by those who erect them. That is to say, that so far as we know, the birds are not conscious of either the meaning or the intention of their behaviour. Ruth Millikan (1984) makes the same point and says

... instinctive mating displays, bird songs, and (other) ways of marking out territory are quite specific for the various species yet arbitrary in form within broad limits. And, as in the case with language devices but not with tools, these natural devices have not literally been 'designed' by someone to serve their functions. The 'functions' of these natural devices are, roughly, the functions upon which their continued reproduction or survival has depended. (ibid:2/3)

They are a consequence of evolution and she is ascribing the same meaning here to the concept of functions as Moore (1980) had applied to the function of the organs of the body. This is akin also to Shope's understanding of Freud's use of the concept of meaning of a symptom as a clue to the underlying condition in the same way as spots on the skin may mean the patient has measles (Shope 1973).

The signs followed by a tracker, eg broken twigs, crushed plants, hoof or foot marks, left by an animal or people he may be pursuing may be understood in the same way ie that they are about something and not just a fortuitous collection of insignificant manifestations. He will understand their meaning but will not believe that they were meant. As clues they are without intention although they may have intentionality. They do not mean 'I am going this way'; but they will be interpreted by the tracker as meaning that 'It/they went that way'. In other words, although all signs and symbols have meanings the information they convey is not necessarily intended, and in the latter case they are simply pointers to something else. Shope's interpretation of Freud's definitions of meaning suggests that Freud believed that symbols, symptoms and parapraxes were intentional but not intended like physiological symptoms of illness, and the clues followed by a tracker. Rosen (1969) uses the term *signals* to designate signs which of themselves arouse expectations of the materialization of an event and uses the example of a nimbus cloud as a sign of rain in that it gives rise to the expectation that it will rain. Signs on the other hand draw attention to an underlying situation and may be compared to medical symptoms drawing attention to an underlying illness. Litowitz & Epstein (1991) disagree and argue that from the beginning Freud's theory was semiotic involving representations and memory traces

and van Uexkull (1991) asserts that semiotics can provide a bridge between the biological and the psychological.

That a sign is about something is an important feature of its meaning and this includes both 'intended' and 'unintended' aboutness as described above. Brentano (1973) defined intentionality as the mark of the mental and thought that only conscious mental states were intentional. However, intentionality in terms of meaning cannot be confined to mental states since some of the signs mentioned above were intentional in the sense that they were about something even though they may have been neither intended nor mental. Thus a distinction has to be made between 'intended' and 'intentional'. In terms of psychoanalytic thought the difference is an important one. Boudreaux (1977) argues that there cannot be unconscious intentions in the sense of being intended because intended implies purposiveness which is not a characteristic of unconscious ideas since purposiveness means being able to take into account the existence of reality from which unconscious ideas are cut off. So while unconscious ideas are about something they can only be intentional in that special sense of 'aboutness' and Freud's extension of the concept of mental to unconscious states recognised that difference.

Some philosophers deny that all mental sensations are intentional in the sense of being about something. Pain, for example, is said not to be about anything but is nevertheless mental although in the sense that pain may be an indication of a physiological malfunction it is technically intentional although not intended. If intentionality is an aspect of meaning which cannot be ascribed exclusively to mental states, nor even to all mental states, nevertheless important mental states such as desiring, believing, and wishing can be described as intentional and as having

something which they are about, as well as intended. I can wish, believe in, or desire something quite deliberately. It should be noted that these categories of mental events are of special concern to psychoanalytic and psychodynamic theories. Moreover, wishing, desiring and believing may be about something that does not exist in the world. So that the statement '*Somewhere over the rainbow bluebirds fly*' is about something, is intentional, and is a belief about something which does not exist except in imagination. To deal with this problem, which also encompasses abstract and conceptual statements, the concept of *intension* is used and is defined so that

a context or form of words is intensional if its truth is dependent on the meanings, and not just the reference, of its component words, or on the meanings, and not just the truth value, of any of its subclauses. (Rundle 1995:411)

In this way the question of reference is transcended for while meaningful sentences may refer to objects in the world, other such sentences may have no object in the world to which they refer although they may represent something even if it does not exist in reality. Chomsky's well known idiosyncratic sentence '*Green ideas sleep furiously*' is intensional and makes sense, but has no reference to any objects in reality. Frege's (1892) concept of 'sense' is also conveyed by this idea and he makes particular reference to different sentences which may contradict each other although they may actually refer to the same object in the world and in that respect they have the same meaning. It also transcends the idea of reference by citing universals that only exist as concepts. Particular examples of universals are required before a sentence can refer and can name. A sentence may convey the idea of *chairs*, for example, but to refer it would have to specify *these* chairs rather than chairs in

general. As is evident the concept of the intensional provides the bridge over which the idea of meaning can cross into speech and language without being confined to naming, and in particular to sentences described by Davidson (1984) and Ramberg (1989) as sentential (having sense). It may then provide a salient foundation for the consideration of the character of psychoanalytic and psychodynamic ideas whose terms may have sense but no referents.

Signs, Sense and Language

De Saussure (1959) includes language in the general systems of signs, but describes linguistics as a specialist aspect of the general study of signs called semiology. His fundamental idea is that the word is a sign consisting of a *signified* (the object, image or concept referred to) and a *signifier* (the phonic representation of the signified). He emphasises that there is only a conventional connection between the signified and the signifier. It hardly needs adding that the phonic aspect of the sign is not the object itself but a conventional sound or written symbol of it. Thus the word *spoon* in English represents a familiar item of cutlery which is rendered in French by *la cuillère*, in Italian by *cucchiaio*, in Spanish by *cuchara*, and in German by *löffel*. While it may be the case that some of these have been derived from a common source they are all different ways of indicating the same object without there being even an onomatopoeic link with that object. De Saussure also distinguishes between the phonic articulation of the word and the image or concept that it evokes in both the speaker and the hearer and regards the capacity to relate sounds to concepts as what distinguishes speech from a succession of sounds such as the babbling of an infant or the barking of a dog, having no meaning and evoking no concepts or objects. Equally, he regards the sounds of an unfamiliar language as being a

succession of phonic items without meaning to a foreigner. He concludes that meaning arises from the association of the signifier with the signified in the totality of the sign, whether in single words or a succession of words in the form of phrases or sentences, first in the form of speech (parole) and then in language (langue) which is the systematic formulation of ideas and can be expressed in writing.. Jackendoff (1993) demonstrates that the meaning of words or sentences are contained neither in their phonological content (different sounds ie sentences in different languages can mean the same thing, for example 'Please pick up the spoon' means the same as 'Levez la cuillère, s'il vous plait' although they sound quite different) nor in their syntactical structures, although their meanings are expressed through both their sounds and syntax. For both de Saussure and Jackendoff words, especially nouns, are symbols which represent objects to which they may refer, making an important distinction between representation and reference which is also made by Millikan (1984).

Wittgenstein (1953) relates meaning not simply to sentences but to the language and culture as a whole. To know the meaning of something is to know how any word or sentence is used in that culture to which the language belongs. The usage is prescribed by rules that are like the rules of a game, and learning a language involves learning those rules without which the language would not exist. The grammar and syntax of a language are described as a language game by Wittgenstein. *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* discussing the concept of meaning relates it to linguistics in a similar way.

The meaning of the word *tiger*, for example is related to both those things in the world - *tigers* - and to other words with which it combines

to make sentences if one knows the meaning of the word *tiger*, one must have some grasp of how it applies to things in the world, and one must be able to employ the word in an indefinite number of sentences. (Crane 1995)

This account, however, does not distinguish between the idea of reference for which a specific object in the world is required, and the idea of usage which is prescribed by the rules of the language game being used, or the concept of intension which concerns the sense of sentences which do not have an object in the world to which they refer or represent.

However, the concept of meaning and its relation to language is not determined solely by the utterance of the speaker. Many commentators (Carnap 1956; Millikan 1984; Wittgenstein 1953) emphasise that both a speaker and a listener are required to establish meaning. It is not generated by the speaker alone, but is created by a language community and in a sense exists in the 'social space' between the speaker and the hearer. This conjunction of the transmitting function of speech with receiving capacity of hearers is a result of evolutionary development (Dennett 1995; Dunbar 1996), and the implications of this will be considered below.

Meaning and Reference

Millikan deals with question of meaning and its relationship to objects and to the world by proposing that sentences map on to the world, following Davidson (1984) who discusses the variables of the object language mapping on to the entities over which they range. This covers more than the belief that words and sentences have

reference and that they then correspond to things in the world, indeed, she specifically rejects the idea of correspondence in respect of the use of language. She asserts that words and sentences gain their meanings from what she calls their capacity to represent, rather than to refer to, objects in the world. (In this she can be compared to de Saussure who regarded the sign as an arbitrary item which represented in speech the object in the world, without being that object). She borrows from Wittgenstein the idea of words as tools which have a proper function, although they may be misused and made to serve other functions as well, so that meaning concerns the function that the word or sentence performs as well as their mapping capacity. Her concept of mapping is a complex one and in order to explain it she introduces the auxiliary notion of 'intentional icons' which 'stand between producing devices and interpreting devices' (Millikan 1984). By way of enabling the understanding of the function of intentional icons she compares them with adrenalin which stands between the glands that produce it and the organs which respond to it. In the case of language it is the phonic element of speech (the signifier) which first stands in this capacity between the utterer and the hearer evoking the signified which then maps on to the world in accordance with the rules which determine how the mapping occurs. The meaning of the sentence is thus prescribed by its usage in accordance with those rules.

This use of the concept of mapping is an interesting one and seems like an inversion of the usual process of mapping which supposes that the physical aspects of the world map on to - maps. Maps themselves *represent* the geographical reality in such a way that it can be read from the map on to the world. Millikan's idea of language as representational systems using symbols and other customary devices in the same

way that maps use them to provide a guide to the geographical and physical features of the world, as well as enabling the exploration of it, seems especially relevant to the use of speech and language in psychotherapy and to theory making. The definition of *representations as*

. . . .intentional icons the mapping values of the referents of elements
of which are supposed to be identified by the co-operating interpreter
(ibid:96)

suggests that the map consists of words and the sentences of natural languages used in accordance with their syntactical rules when spoken by the utterer and understood by the hearer. Their meaning, understood in this way, correlates with the way in which interpretations are used in psychotherapy through speech to provide another 'map' for the patient to offer meanings for the symptoms which might otherwise appear meaningless. So in this construction the symptoms are not simply a guide to an underlying condition, but an expression conveying a meaning which has become distorted and requires translating into another language so that it can be better understood. In further exploration of the question of meaning and its relation to language Millikan also distinguishes between knowing the meaning of something (a word or sentence) and knowing *how to mean* something. In other words, knowing how to mean in speech and language is the equivalent of being able to draw a map from which the speaker and the hearer can then understand a new meaning. Just as there are rules that apply to the ways maps can be drawn and which may differ according to which projection is being used, so there are rules applying to the ways in that natural languages may be spoken and written. In terms of language these rules determine the way in which the world at large is understood, defined and represented rather than determining the way that it is. In respect of the social and psychological

worlds language may actually create them as well as representing and defining them (Berger & Luckman 1966; Searle 1995).

Speech Acts and the Creation of Psychic Reality

The work of Austin (1961) and Searle (1979, 1980, 1994, 1995) is particularly interesting in respect of the ways in which language can add qualities to objects without altering their basic characteristics. Both Austin and Searle call these 'speech acts' and although they do not make the reference, the term refers back to phenomenological thought at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th Centuries. Crosby (1990) claims that Searle ignored earlier theorizing about speech act and that his thinking has much in common with Reinach's *social acts*. Barratt (1991) suggests that Husserl was the originator of the idea and that Austin and Searle rediscovered what was already known.

To establish the significance of language in this respect Searle distinguishes between what he calls *brute facts* and *institutional facts*. Brute facts exist independently of the human mind and human agreement, while institutional facts are constituted by human agreement and language.

Brute facts require the institution of language in order that we can *state* the facts, but the brute facts *themselves* exist quite independently of language or any other institution

Institutional facts, on the other hand, require special human institutions for their very existence. Language is one such institution; indeed, it is a whole set of such institutions. (Searle 1995:27)

To illustrate the former he gives the example of the summit of Everest being covered in ice and snow which exists independently of human thought or perception. However, the capacity to think and communicate about Everest being capped with ice and snow requires language and in this respect brute facts per se cannot independently enter into human discourse. Institutional facts are quite different and while they may supervene on brute facts they are additional to them and bring a new quality in terms of their use. A simple example is a screwdriver which consists of metal and wood but is constituted not by those brute facts but by the use to which it may be put, its function (implying the existence of a screw needing to be driven), which is recognised by collective agreement. Moreover, screwdrivers as well as other artifacts do not exist in nature qua screwdrivers. Searle made a general statement to explain this point as follows

Since there is nothing in the physics of the X element [the wood and metal in my example] that gives it the Y function, [screwdriving in my example] since the status is only by collective agreement, and since the status confers deontic properties that are not physical properties, the status cannot exist without markers. [ie the term 'screwdriver' in my example.] (ibid:72) [my interjections in square brackets.] {see P142 below}

This use of the concept of function links with Wittgenstein's and Millikan's use of similar concepts. Searle asserts that the function of screwdriving does not occur naturally but is assigned 'relative to the practical interests of conscious agents' (1995:20). Millikan would regard this as a *proper function*, which it was selected to perform, distinguishing it from the other functions to which a screwdriver may be put without changing its basic function. A more complex example is money which may

exist in the form of metal, paper, ink marks in bank ledgers, pieces of plastic, or magnetic traces on computer disks or tape. They only become money however because there is agreement that these entities are money. Without it none would be money. The collective agreement, expressed through language, that such entities are money adds a quality to them without altering their physical characteristics. The important issue is that they are given through the use of language a function not inherent in their independent reality. Searle explains this capacity of language to assign new characteristics to natural objects by a general statement that 'X counts as Y in C' where X is the object to which a function Y is ascribed in the social context, or language, C. Functions are always assigned or imposed since they are not part of the naturally occurring matter. Functions may be agentive or non-agentive (which is similar to the distinction between intended and intentional). Non-agentive functions are not intended but are assigned; for example, that the function of the heart is to circulate the blood and is assigned "because it is a naturally occurring process to which we have assigned a purpose, e.g., the function of the heart is to pump blood".(ibid:23) [This differs from Millikan's definition describing the assigning to the process of natural selection.] Agentive functions are imposed and are intended so that the function of this piece of metal as money is imposed and it is intended to function in this way until it is superseded by some other material.

Fundamental to all these distinctions is language without which it would be impossible to refer to the existence of brute facts or to create institutional facts, or distinguish between agentive and non-agentive functions. For this study the latter capacity is of great interest and relevance. Berger & Luckman (1961) and Searle(1995) all agree that a social reality is constructed by language which is then experienced by

individuals as if it were an independently existing reality. In respect of money the words 'I promise to pay the bearer the sum of five pounds' signed by the Secretary of the Bank of England makes this piece of blue and white paper five pounds and if presented to the Bank of England the owner would receive either another similar piece of blue and white paper or an entry in a bank account. Similarly an utterance, *Le Roy le Veult*, made by the Lord Chancellor on behalf of the Sovereign makes a document having been passed by the majority of votes in the Houses of Commons and Lords the law of the land capable of being enforced by the appropriate courts and other regulatory authorities. In this example one form of words has been endowed with a new status by another form of words. The idea of incest, which occupies a central position in the psychoanalytic interpretation of the concept of the Œdipus Complex, is also in this form since incest takes different characteristics in different cultures and does not always mean the sexual relationship of parent to child, or between siblings, but may mean a sexual relationship between two members of the same totem not necessarily related by blood. It marks a distinction between kinds of sexual acts that without it would be the same.

Searle distinguishes between social facts which may resemble brute facts (eg, a herd of deer or a nest of ants) which exist independently of language, although the concept of the 'herd' or the 'nest' is assigned by language, and institutional facts, for example the idea of a 'football team', are essentially created by language. The new quality created in this way is intensional and does not exist as a physical reality. The members of a team are physical realities - but the concept of a team is not. Sentences like 'I declare this meeting open' convert an assemblage of individuals into an organised collective operating under appropriate rules, and the sentence 'I declare

this meeting closed' returns them to their former status, without making any material change in the characteristics of the individuals themselves. Although Searle does not make the comparison, psychological words and concepts may be like this and may of themselves constitute what may be understood as psychological entities. The capacity to create qualities and meaning through the use of language is important both in the practice of psychotherapy and in the creation of psychoanalytic and psychodynamic theories.

In discussing the difference between language-independent thoughts and language-dependent thoughts Searle appears to be making a distinction similar to that which Freud made between primary process and secondary process thinking without accepting that there is an unconscious process to which the former belongs. He says

The most obvious cases of language-independent thoughts are noninstitutional, primitive, biological inclinations and cognitions not requiring any linguistic devices. For example, an animal can have conscious feelings of hunger and thirst and each of these is a form of desire. Hunger is a desire to eat and thirst a desire to drink, and desires are intentional states with full intentional contents; in the contemporary jargon they are 'propositional attitudes'. Furthermore, an animal can have prelinguistic perceptions and prelinguistic beliefs derived from these perceptions. My dog can see and smell a cat run up a tree and form the belief that the cat is up the tree. He can even correct the belief and form a new belief when he sees and smells that the cat has run into the neighbor's yard. Other cases of prelinguistic thoughts are emotions such as fear and rage. We ought to allow

ourselves to be struck both by the fact that animals can have prelinguistic thoughts and by the fact that some thoughts are language dependent and cannot be had by prelinguistic beings. (1995:62)¹

While Searle's distinction refers to prelinguistic beings, contrasting them with other, linguistic beings, Freud's distinction refers to different processes as part of the same individual and all are mental events even though most are unconscious. Moreover, Freud says that the instinctual impulses can only exist in a state of unconsciousness (Freud 1915b:177). He wrote

An instinct can *never* become an object of consciousness – only the *idea* that represents the instinct can. Even in the unconscious, moreover, an instinct cannot be represented otherwise than by an idea. If the instinct did not attach itself to an idea or manifest itself as an affective state, we could know nothing about it. (ibid) [my emphasis]

The impulses that Searle attributes as being conscious for his dog Freud believes can only become conscious in humans through their connection with ideas or wishes which themselves may become subject to repression. This seems to be something of an overstatement since it seems hardly likely that either somatic impulses of hunger or basic sexual impulses could be unconscious. Unconsciousness on Freud's theory of sexuality would attach to *tabooed objects*, and the wishes about them would be repressed, in accordance with the processes described by Freud, and thus become unconscious. There would seem to be no reason why sexual impulses attached to untabooed objects should be repressed in linguistic beings any more than in the non-linguistic animal. It however might be necessary in some social situations for them to

be denied access to motility and that would usually be possible to do consciously without invoking the process of repression. Laplanche & Pontalis (1973) assert that the association between ideas and verbal images as 'the specific mark of consciousness' was used in *The Project for a Scientific Psychology* and was never abandoned. Elsewhere Freud (1923 & 1926) claimed that in respect of the dynamic unconscious only something that has already been a conscious perception can become conscious and that presentations originate from perceptions. Since Freud in *The Unconscious* (1915b) hypothesized that in psychoanalytical terms conscious mental events were characterized by the association of thing-presentations with word-presentations appropriate to them, then it may follow that repressed unconscious mental events by virtue of their potentiality to reconnect with words and language of which they have been stripped do not differ in any other way, as Freud claimed, from their conscious counterparts. Other somatic impulses, such as those experienced by Searle's dog, in linguistic beings may become fully conscious by association with language without necessarily having been repressed. The repressed wish is an unconscious presentation whose intentionality and mental characteristics remain linked with its potentiality to reconnect with language, and primary process thinking might be seen as an endeavour to make that reconnection in ways not dictated by secondary process thinking. The difference between the two ways of thinking about unconscious processes is that for Searle since alingual animals have no reflective capacity that would be provided by language they do not have the capacity to repress (a concept he describes as incoherent) so that basic organic processes are never unconscious; for Freud, as his distinction between thing-presentations and word-presentations makes clear, the capacity to repress unwelcome thoughts arising from the organism may be repressed after they have entered consciousness by stripping

them of their connection with words and language.(ibid) In this way an important distinction is made by Freud between a general state of unconsciousness and the dynamic or repressed unconscious which is the proper concern of psychoanalysis (Perlow 1995).

I shall consider that issue and its implications for the concept of psychic reality in the next chapter.

Notes to Chapter 6

- ¹ The essential difference Searle is referring to in this quotation is the distinction between having a gut feeling of hunger which induces food-seeking behaviour, and having the same feeling accompanied by the thought 'I want some food'. In Freud's terms the gut feeling of hunger might evoke the image of a particular item of food (the visual thing-presentation) which in its turn would evoke the thought 'I want to eat that piece of food'.

Chapter 7

Language and Psychic Reality

The argument in this chapter begins with the discussion of the distinction between primary and secondary processes and their relationship with Freud's formulations of thing-presentations and word-presentations as representing a shift from unconscious to conscious meaning. Repressed, dynamically unconscious presentations differ from other unconscious mental events because their potentiality for reconnecting with words and language adds to their intentionality. Freud's hypotheses about 'the unconscious' in psychoanalytic terms may have been unnecessarily complicated by the attempt to incorporate ideas about the somatic origin of some mental contents which are not essential to a psychodynamic theory of dynamic unconscious mental states. In *The Interpretation of Dreams (1900)* Freud demonstrated in respect of his own dreams that the verbal symbols of dreams as reported in the manifest content were capable of substantial expansion by the method of free association into other sentences which expressed memories, wishes and phantasies of all kinds which were previously unconscious and not necessarily related to instinctual processes originating in somatic impulses. The concept of psychic reality in Freud's theory is inextricably bound up with language and his attempts to incorporate into it other

hypotheses about unconscious states has been a source of unnecessary complexity and confusion.

I shall distinguish between the place of language as an important aspect of the therapeutic process and the theory as itself as a language or 'language game' that creates the domain of psychoanalysis and psychodynamics. I will argue using ideas drawn from hermeneutic thought, archaeology and linguistics that language itself is a distinct characteristic of the human species distinguishing it from rest of the animal world (Lieberman 1998). It also structures the social world the reality of which influences the psychological domain within which Freud created his metapsychology to explain the functioning of the mind, creating the language dependent idea of psychic reality as a consequence. By extension the same argument may be made about each of the successor theories arising from the original theory.

Unconscious Contents, Unconscious and Conscious Processes and their Relationship with Verbal Representations

Freud distinguishes between primary and secondary processes as characteristic of different qualities of thinking which were not coterminous with the distinction between unconscious and conscious thinking. The ego was redefined as having unconscious aspects and the preconscious was conceptualized as lying outside consciousness although both were characterized by secondary process thinking. Primary processes, assigned to the *system ucs* in the topographical theory and in the *id* in the structural theory, did not conform to rational or logical principles; were unaffected by the passage of time; were subject to condensation and displacement; and were inherent in the dreamwork translating the latent content into the manifest content of the dream first in pictorial form and then as a verbal account. Secondary processes on the other hand were logical, rational, and characteristic of conscious, waking life. They

controlled the access to motility of repressed instinctual impulses and enabled the postponement of gratification under the pressure of reality but their operation in those respects were themselves unconscious (Freud 1920:19). In the creation of the dream images the primary process disguises the latent content representing the basic impulse which may be uncovered by free association to the verbal description of the pictorial dream images which are then replaced by the undisguised wish in the form of words (Edelson 1973). In equating the primary processes with the syntax of the dreamwork Freud introduced a distinction between unconscious processes and unconscious contents in the shape of thing-presentations which primary process thinking works upon to allow them access to the preconscious in a disguised form. The nature of unconscious contents is difficult to understand and was a matter of great dissension in the Controversial Discussions (King & Steiner 1991). As Freud makes clear their fundamental characteristic is that they have been either prevented from attaching themselves to word-presentations or have had their word-presentations stripped from them. What is left is not so clear as it is hard to think that pictorial representations could themselves be intrinsically unconscious when pictorial dream images are not unconscious. What such unconscious images might be if they were stripped of their pictorial quality, as Lacan's idea of the inversion of the signified and the signifier suggests, as well as being stripped of their verbal associations would be hard to know. One possibility is that they would be in the form of non-propositional entities. They might also be compared to mathematical notation in which the symbols do not refer to any concrete object but may be related to reality in two ways. Mathematical notations may be regarded as abstract generalized descriptions of reality, and a kind of structure providing a foundation for it. They may also be related to reality by adding objects to them. So $1+1=2$ is an abstract statement which may be grounded by referring directly to things eg $1 \text{ apple} + 1 \text{ apple} = 2 \text{ apples}$, and the same

application of complex abstract formulae to material reality can result in the production of complicated objects of all kinds. The spacecraft and its trajectory round the earth results from the application of abstract mathematical equations to a physical reality. The comparison of these abstract formulae with thing-presentations is not precise, because the abstract formulæ are not unconscious, but it may be illustrative of the process by which unconscious contents may become conscious in verbal form. Lacan's notion that the unconscious is structured *like* a language has a similar implication that dynamic unconscious contents are potentially verbal and in that condition have a linguistic structure.

For Freud the links between the primary and secondary thought processes and the concepts of thing-presentations and word-presentations in the transition from unconscious to conscious thought are significant and draw attention to the importance of language for the psychoanalytic enterprise. In his 1915 paper *The Unconscious* Freud says

...the conscious presentation comprises the presentation of the thing plus the presentation of the word belonging to it, while the unconscious presentation is the presentation of the thing alone. The system *Ucs.* contains the thing-cathexes of the objects, the first and true object-cathexes; the system *Pcs.* comes about by this thing-presentation being hypercathexed through being linked with the word-presentations corresponding to it. It is these hypercathexes, we may suppose, that bring about a higher psychical organisation and make it possible for the primary process to be succeeded by the secondary process which is dominant in the *Pcs.* Now, too, we are in a position to state precisely what it is that repression denies to the

rejected in the transference neuroses: what it denies to the presentation is *translation into words* which shall remain attached to the object. A presentation which is not put into words, or a psychical act which is not hypercathected remains thereafter in the *Ucs.* in a state of repression. (1915b:201/2) [my emphasis]

The thought expressed in this extract is complex and some of it derives from Freud's neurological studies of speech disorders published in *On Aphasia* (1891). In this work, concerned with the functioning of the speech centres of the brain, he was following Hughlings Jackson's views about aphasia and was aware of Jackson's idea that thinking involved the capacity to form propositions which are related to words, sentences and language (Prior 1976). Freud developed the idea by claiming that this process required a symbol system in the shape of language. In an early formulation of the progression from a somatic impulse to a mental representation in a letter to Fliess dated 6th December 1896 (Masson 1985:208) he refers to 'registrations'. The first registration is of perceptions and that registration is quite incapable of consciousness¹: this is followed by unconscious registration arranged according to causal relations and corresponding to conceptual memories incapable of accessibility to consciousness; finally, the third registration (*transcription* in the letter) is an attachment to a word-presentation in the preconscious able to become conscious (called *thought consciousness* by Freud) according to certain rules. These rules may have been the process of the dreamwork which enabled the repressed unconscious presentations to gain access to consciousness in a disguised form. He thought at that time that thought consciousness was probably linked to 'the hallucinatory activation of word presentations'. He later connected object-presentations ('thing-presentations' in later works) with visual, acoustic, tactile, and kinæsthetic presentations and word-presentations with aural (sound) presentations although it is

difficult to think of visual and other presentations as being unconscious (Freud 1915b:213)². He may have been influenced in his thinking about dreams and the rendering of visual images into words as part of the process of translating their meaning from unconscious to conscious ones³, even though dream images although occurring in sleep are conscious and subject to recall in waking life⁴. At this stage of his thinking he was still making attempts to relate psychological to neurological processes and the process of translating the thing-presentations was complicated by his wish to incorporate in it ideas of energy and what he called 'cathexes'.

These concepts of thing-presentations and word-presentations are similar to de Saussure's idea of the signified and the signifier with the signified being analogous to the thing-presentation and the signifier to the word-presentation and to Searle's concepts of language-independent and language-dependent thoughts. Neither Searle nor de Saussure make use of the notion of the unconscious even as a metaphoric place where unverballed objects exist and they seem to be saying that conscious representations and meaning emerge through the association of speech and language with other non-verbal manifestations of mental events. For Freud too the association of the non-verbal unconscious event with language was the condition of its becoming conscious although it is not clear whether the process is one of naming or whether the thing-presentations can somehow prefigure their verbal representations. The meaning of a symptom or a dream image, however, becomes conscious through the verbal free associations of the patient and they usually lead to a verbal statement providing a different understanding of the non-verbal symptom and the pictorial dream image. In that respect they seem also to be approaching the position of hermeneutic thinkers for whom language is the locus of meaning. Habermas defines repression in a similar way to Freud (the detachment of word-presentations from thing-presentations) when he describes it as desymbolization

(Habermas 1985:310). Some hermeneutic thinkers go further to claim that language is the essence of being itself (Palmer 1969:153). Consideration will be given to this claim later, but the question of the transition of the somatic phenomena into unconscious experiences that may then become available to consciousness as verbal images is of interest and relevance.

When Freud says that

A presentation which is not put into words or a psychical act which is not hypercathected, remains in the unconscious in a state of repression. . (1915b:202)

he does not adequately describe all unconscious states and may be defining what is meant by a repressed dynamically unconscious state of particular relevance to his theories. Not all unconscious states are repressed or exist as thing- presentations in the unconscious; the system *pcs* is also unconscious and Freud hypothesised that a further censorship existed between it and consciousness. Sandler et al (1997) describe the development of the idea of the relation of unconscious thinking to consciousness from the earliest formulations of the unconscious/conscious dichotomy, through the first topographical theory of the *system ucs*, *the system pcs* and *pcpt-cs* to the structural theory of *id*, *ego*, *superego* and the *ego-ideal*. With each successive reformulation the realm of the unconscious was expanded and in the structural theory included aspects of all the structures. The significance of the translation of somatic impulses into mental events became less important than the conflict between dynamically unconscious states subject to repression and the reality principle of the ego. Perlow (1995) defining what is important for the whole range of psychoanalytic theories about the idea of the unconscious says

. . . many concepts refer to unconscious experiences. However, not every aspect of mental functioning inaccessible to consciousness should be considered 'unconscious'. The term 'unconscious' should be reserved for experiences which are not conscious for dynamic or other reasons, and which could conceivably attain consciousness, as during an analysis, or otherwise.

He extended this distinction by referring to hypothetical psychoanalytical structures which cannot be brought to consciousness and exist like rules of syntax in linguistics.

The significant process for repression and the dynamic unconscious is the relationship between the repressed material, word-presentations and their importance in designating what is to be repressed. For Freud these were presentations primarily associated with sex. However, a further distinction could be made, although Freud does not make it himself, between simple sexual arousal arising from the perception of an untabooed sexual object and the repression of sexual impulses arising from the perception of a tabooed object, say, by virtue of its incestuous implications. How that distinction is marked in the dynamic unconscious is not evident but it may be by association with preverbal symbols of words meaning 'incest' or 'incestuous'. When this association becomes apparent at the boundary to the *system pcs* it may become subject to repression. So there might have to be a distinction made between sexual wishes and incestuous wishes which, although based upon primary sexual impulses, are different and may be treated differently in the process of becoming conscious.

An additional factor that Freud considered important was the access to motility and assumed that part of the motive for repression was to bar accessibility to motility. In sleep, when the sleeper was unlikely to become active in response to an impulse, then repressed wishes in a disguised form could have access to consciousness in the

shape of the pictorial images in dreams. To be barred from access to motility, however, need not imply that an impulse must also be barred from consciousness. For example, a basic sexual wish may be conscious and acted upon if an appropriate sexual object is available or it may be simply held in consciousness without being acted out in reality if it seems inappropriate to do so or if the perceived object is not real as in a film or photograph. On the other hand incestuous wishes may be completely repressed from conscious awareness, although they may also be able to enter consciousness without any compulsion to act them out. An example may be found in Freud's *Hella Dream* in which he dreamed of a sexual wish involving a niece and on waking recognised it as an incestuous wish about one of his daughters, although it is arguable that he had to disavow it by describing it as a wish to find the father (not himself) guilty of incestuous wishes in order to confirm the seduction theory. He says in his letter to Fliess

The dream of course shows the fulfillment of my wish to catch a *Pater* as the originator of neurosis and thus [the dream] puts an end to my ever-recurring doubts. (Masson 1985:249)

The distinctions between conscious and unconscious representations I am making are twofold. On the one hand they are importantly verbal as between the description of wishes as sexual and/or incestuous and in the case of the latter being usually barred from access to consciousness and motility; and on the other hand the difference between acting and not acting upon a sexual or incestuous impulse or wish even after it has become conscious. For Freud that access to motility had to be denied through repression and he appears not to have considered that such access could be barred consciously.

Litowitz & Litowitz (1977) have criticised Freud's account of the thing-presentations and word-presentations by reference to linguistic theory and semantic meaning which does not restrict meaning to the process of naming and the function of individual words, and to his neglect of a theory of language acquisition. At this stage Freud was not considering a theory of language, but he was considering how unconscious ideas could become conscious and was conceptualising a way in which a boundary between one psychic location and another could be crossed in either direction and the process referred not just to naming but thinking. The term 'word-presentations' suggests that the idea could encompass more than naming.

Searle (1995) offers another way of thinking about the transition between unconscious and conscious processes. He considers the instinctual impulses as experienced by non-linguistic animals as being conscious in themselves as language-independent thoughts and perhaps similar to Freud's thing-presentations. In this context non-linguistic animals have no dynamic unconscious or pre-conscious processes which tailor their basic impulses which may thus have immediate access to motility. Sexual arousal may lead directly to mating and hunger to a search for food and although they are language independent it does not make such impulses unconscious. Searle does, however, believe that in sleep and other states of unconsciousness neuro-physiological *states* may exist in the brain which are mental and are not in themselves conscious until they are activated in waking life. For linguistic beings there are also ideas which do not originate in an instinctual source, such as the belief that the Earth is round, which are held in that same neuro-physiological state.

The situation seems to be different for conscious instinctual impulses. A further element is added by the capacity to express them in words as wishes or desires and through images of those things by which the impulses could be gratified. Searle has no concept of *the unconscious* in which these impulses exist awaiting the transition to consciousness apart from their lower level neuro-physiological condition. Unconscious mental *states* for Searle have the potential to become conscious because of their intentionality, even while they are in that neuro-physiological condition (Searle 1994:152-159;1995:6/7)⁵. Brain *events* in the shape of synaptic firings and other activities (which give rise to both somatic and mental phenomena) are neither intentional nor capable of becoming conscious and are therefore not themselves mental events (ibid:158-60). The distinction being made is between neuro-physiological *states* and neuro-physiological *events* such as synaptic firings and other neuro-physiological activities which are incapable of consciousness. If all mental events have to be located in the brain it does not seem inconsistent to make the assumption that the condition of unconsciousness may be a neuro-physiological state while its entry into activity involves brain functioning which is itself neither conscious or unconscious but *non-conscious* like many other physical functions. In this Searle does not seem to be differing very much from Freud's position in his 1915 paper where he says

we are obliged to say of some of these latent (unconscious) states that the only respect in which they differ from conscious ones is precisely in the absence of consciousness. (1915b:168)

The difference between Searle and Freud lies in the distinction Freud makes between the two states of unconsciousness as preconscious and unconscious. Searle believes in the existence of 'objective features of the brain capable of causing conscious thoughts' (Searle 1994:160), as did Freud⁶ It is not easy to see whether

Freud thought that there was a neuro-physiological difference between these two states of unconsciousness since he disavowed any neuro-anatomical mapping between the topographical and structural theories and brain physiology except when he assigned the *system cs* to the cerebral cortex (1920:24). When he extended his concept of unconsciousness to include the structural concepts of the *id*, *superego* as well as parts of the *ego* it is difficult to see how these states could have different neuro-physiological counterparts since they are concepts. If they are simply ways of thinking about mental events unrelated to corresponding brain states then their status may be quite different and related more to models and metaphors with the necessary connection of those abstract ideas with language.

This distinction between Searle's notion of unconsciousness as simply a somatic state, with mental events being dormant, but intentional neuro-physiological brain states and Freud's concept of the unconscious as a space which contains somatic impulses translated into mental events by virtue of Freud's concept of instincts is an important one and opened the way to the unnecessary reification of mental concepts. Freud had begun his pre-psychoanalytic theorizing in the *Project for a Scientific Psychology (1895a)*⁷ by attempting to provide a complete neurological theory for the working of the mind. Although he gave up that attempt he nevertheless continued to use neurological concepts analogically, although not consistently, and continued to hope that psychology could be reduced to neurology. Archard (1984), however comments that

Freud frequently slips back into the language of neurology - the psychic and the central nervous system are occasionally carelessly employed as synonyms (Ibid:30).

The creation of a new way of thinking about psychology needed the creation of a new language and it is hardly surprising that in developing that language Freud was not always consistent in his usage.

Sandler *et al* (1997) refer to Freud's use of the term 'the unconscious' as a source of confusion, and this confusion arises from the modifications in his theories to meet perceived inconsistencies in each successive formulation. It may also be related to his confusing use of the term 'instinct' (See note 6). The first two topographical theories modified the simple division of the mind into conscious and unconscious to a division between the unconscious, preconscious and conscious and created two different qualities of unconsciousness. The structural theory with its division of the mental into three systems, id, ego and super-ego, with the two latter agencies sharing aspects of unconsciousness with the id, may have been devised to show how each of the systems *ucs*, *pcs/cs*, and *cs* would be able to influence each other and to diminish the possibility that these new terms might imply a too sharp distinction between them in their definition of a psychic reality.

In all formulations Freud used the same concept of *libido* to describe both the physical energy of the somatic sexual impulses and the mental energy which the sexual instinct possessed in the unconscious but as his ideas changed so the concept of libido changed. From being both a source of energy and a progenitor of anxiety when dammed up or incompletely discharged it was detached from the process of the creation of anxiety in *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1926a). In a passage in *The Introductory Lectures No.XXVI* (1916/17) he says

I should not be surprised if it turned out that the power to produce pathogenic effects was in fact a prerogative of the libidinal instincts, so that the libidinal theory could celebrate its triumph all along the line from the simplest 'actual' neurosis to the most severe alienation of the personality (ibid:429-30)

Macmillan (1992) points out that the actual neuroses by Freud's own account were disturbances of patients' current sexual life calling for some changes in their sexual practices to provide a cure. This suggests that actual neuroses were primarily physiological in origin and that the dammed up libidinal energy was also somatic as well as noxious. The state of 'alienation of the personality' is not necessarily a neuro-physiological condition. In fact the concept of 'personality' is an abstraction. In the passage from *The Introductory Lectures* above it might be inferred that Freud thought that the libido might make the transition from soma to psyche without changing its nature and that the account of energy in the unconscious was not just an analogy with physiological energy but the same, even though in a discussion in the Wednesday meetings of the Vienna Psychoanalytical Society he described libido as a concept⁸. The attempt to adapt the language of neurology and physiology to mental usage in order to sustain a scientific approach which requires the observation and description of independently ontological existing entities may have distorted meanings in a way which might have been avoided if that attempt had not been made. However, thinking in terms of Searle's formulation of X counts as Y in C it can be seen that there is no need to make the assumption that the physical manifestation has been transformed in any way, so that even though neuro-physiological energy is no longer conceived as flowing hydraulically in a way that Freud believed it did, it does not need to be transformed into a mental phenomenon to function mentally.

Davidson's view of mental events as physiological events that have not been transformed but have been established under different descriptions also suggests how the effects of physical energy can be considered under a mental description without changing its physical characteristics⁹. However Freud conceptualized mental processes he remained embedded in a cast of thought resulting from physiological and neurological formulations of his early hypotheses about the aetiology of neurosis. Seeking alternative formulations to try and find better explanations and resolutions for the difficulties created by those basic assumptions he never abandoned he hypothesised the topographical, structural and energetic theories all involving the concept of *the unconscious* which he usually thought of as the source of energy as well as wishes and intentions¹⁰.

Muller (1996) asserts in a new commentary on *Studies on Hysteria* that Freud's basic concept was that symptoms were 'a function of disturbances in the network of symbolizations' (ibid:173), and he believes that this view is confirmed *On Aphasia*, the *Project for a Scientific Psychology*, and by the correspondence with Fliess. Muller also claims that Freud believed that 'language structures human experience in ways that are completely out of conscious awareness' (p161). This, he thinks, was the disturbing message of Freud's contribution to *The Studies in Hysteria* which was later overshadowed by the claims for the role of sexuality in the aetiology of neurosis.

Notes to Chapter 7

1 In making the distinction between being 'incapable of consciousness' in the first registration and in the second registration as 'unconscious' Freud seemed to be suggesting that the first registration might be an organic process rather than a mental process.

2 Laffel (1964) has pointed out that the association of the thing-presentations with the word-presentations also appeared in *The Project for a Scientific Psychology* (1895). Although the attempt to reduce psychology to neurology was abandoned the idea of the importance of speech in the transition from *ucs* to *pcs/cs* was consistently affirmed in later works (Freud 1900, 1911, 1915b, 1917, 1923) in *An Outline of Psychoanalysis* (1940) he retracted, at least in part, when he wrote

It would not be right, however, to assert that the connection with the memory traces of speech is a prerequisite of the preconscious condition. On the contrary, that condition does not depend upon any such prerequisite, although the presence of speech gives a safe clue to the preconscious of the process. (ibid: 42)

In *A Metapsychological Supplement to the Theory of Dreams* (1917) he drew the distinction between the pictorial images of dreams, which are conscious per se, with the processes which have occurred to strip them of their word-presentations. So that the issue of the relation of thing-presentations to consciousness is not straightforward and may be requiring a further distinction between consciousness and conscious thought. The latter may be where the association of the thing-presentations with the word-presentations properly belong.

3 In his 1915 paper 'The Unconscious' Freud refers to the dreamwork as an example of the primary process by which the latent thoughts are translated into visual images.

4 Edelson (1973) makes a similar point but challenges the idea that the latent content of the dream is the visual content, but that it is expressed in the unexpressed words derived from the visual content which have been disguised by the dreamwork becoming the manifest content. That then becomes the verbalized dream report given in the therapy session.

5 Searle provides as an example the belief that the Eiffel Tower is in Paris. This belief exists even when it is not present consciously and exists unconsciously as a brain state lying dormant, as it were, until consciously recalled. The neuro-physiological state in which it is held in the brain is an intentional state and may become conscious through brain activity, such as synaptic firings. Those brain activities are neuro-physiological events which are not capable of consciousness.

6 When Freud makes the claim in *The Unconscious* (1915b:177) that an instinct can never become conscious he is presumably referring to the somatic stimulus itself rather than the concept which by virtue of being a mental fact might be capable of becoming conscious. Strachey, in his Editors Note to the 1915 paper, refers to the concept of the instinct which is sometimes thought of as a psychical fact and sometimes as a somatic one. He concludes that the concept is itself ambiguous which may lead to contradictory usage in Freud's opus. Searle does not make this distinction between the somatic impulse and the instinctual impulse experienced as a mental condition. He regards the latter as being conscious without further modification.

7 In the Standard Edition *The Project* is included as a pre-psychoanalytical work although it is evident from the letters to Fliess that it very much part of Freud's thinking as he was developing his psychoanalytical theories. The concept of libido which continues to be a part of one strand of psychoanalytical thought, rests upon a neuro-physiological model of mental functioning appears as an element in *The Project*.

8 Freud, in a discussion in the famous Wednesday meetings (Nunberg & Federn 1967), claimed that the libido was a concept which had to be judged according to its consequences rather than in its own right, ie it is a theoretical entity. He did not always conform to this usage.

9 Rycroft (1975) considered that if Freud had been formulating his theories in the latter part of the 20th Century

... he could have formulated a paralinguistic science, which might perhaps have been called oneirics, with iconic, structural, and semantic branches. He might have formulated sets of rules governing both the translation of oneiric, iconic statements into phonetic, verbal utterances and the setting up of obstacles against translation. (ibid:28)

10 Freud had some difficulty in sustaining this image of libidinal energy as belonging to the id and, as the Editor's Appendix B in the Standard Edition v19:63 indicates, Freud described both the ego and the id as the Great Reservoir of the Libido in different papers without reaching any final conclusion.

Chapter 8

Language in Clinical Practice and Metapsychology

I shall distinguish between the place of language as an important aspect of the therapeutic process and the theory as language or 'language game' that creates the domain of psychoanalysis and psychodynamics. I will argue using ideas drawn from hermeneutic thought, archaeology, and linguistics that language itself is a distinctive characteristic of the human species distinguishing it from the rest of the animal world (Lieberman 1998), and that this gives it particular significance for psychology and psychoanalysis. It influences the psychological domain within which Freud created his metapsychology to explain the function of the mind and to create the idea of psychic reality. By extension the same argument may be made about each of the successor theories which have arisen from Freud's original ideas. In this sense a different status may be created for these theories which will abstract them from the sterile discussion about their scientificity. In contrast to my emphasis on linguisticity I will also discuss Fonagy's concept of 'proto-language' to describe the interaction between mother and infant in the preverbal stage; and I will consider whether it can properly be described as a language in its own right and its relation to linguisticity.

Clinical and Metapsychological Languages

There are two levels on which the issues of language and psychoanalytical theories may be approached. The first is the clinical theory which concerns the understanding of a patient's material in the therapeutic sessions in terms of speech, verbalization and phonetics (McKinnon 1978; Pulver 1987; Schafer 1976, 1983; Spence 1982, 1987, 1994) and through understanding the unconscious nature of the communication by deciphering the semantic code in which it is being expressed or distorted (Gadamer 1985; Habermas 1970; Thompson 1994). Although clinical material may include non-verbal expressions and silences the meanings of these forms of communication have eventually to be understood in terms of language so that they may enter the discourse between the patient and the therapist. While the implications for the understanding of individual material is interesting and may lead to an enhanced understanding of the therapeutic process in the clinical discourse (and it is on this level that most of the discussion of language and psychodynamics has been conducted within the psychodynamic community), there is a more fundamental level on which the importance of language may be considered. This is the role of language itself in representing and mapping the world of reality and its function in constituting the particular nature of humanity. As the capacity for language may be such a fundamental characteristic I contend that it is a basic element in the formation of the psychology of human beings. On this level language may be seen as providing a metapsychology which structures the context in which the clinical discourse may occur and constructs a domain which offers a meaning to formerly meaningless symptoms. The dissatisfaction with Freud's metapsychology has grown because it has been considered that it does not provide an adequate framework for the clinical discourse and that its basic concepts, relying on an outdated concept of neurological energy, cannot be operationalized to support a clinical theory (Magid 1993; Modell

1990). Loewald (1980) suggests that the attempt in Freud's metapsychology to conform to the subject/object polarization typical of and essential to of the traditional sciences makes its application in the clinical context problematic because the effect of transference and counter-transference is to blur the subject/object configuration. So metapsychology has not generated rules which can be applied directly to clinical practice although it may sanction a mode of discourse allowing for the uncovering of hitherto unknown meanings.

If metapsychology in Freud's formulations offered a linguistic framework enabling the discussion of mental processes but in so doing did not simply describe them but transformed them into apparently objective phenomena by the use of nominal rather than an adjectival usage of the language. In this sense Freudian and other metapsychologies may be considered to be a language which reifies mental processes and regards them as discoveries rather than constructions. It is on this aspect of metapsychology as language and its consequences for psychodynamic theorizing that I propose to concentrate, and I will consider the specific issues arising from Freud's metapsychological language in a later chapter.

Language as a distinguishing characteristic of the Human Species

a) Philosophical views

Two streams of investigation about the nature of language and its fundamental contribution to the essence of humanity seem to converge. The first is philosophical and appears in the work of the hermeneutic thinkers. Palmer (1969) discussing the work of four major hermeneutic thinkers refers to Gadamer's views on the fundamental nature of language in the constitution of humanity. He says

Experience is not so much something that comes prior to language, but rather experience itself occurs in and through language. Linguisticity is something that permeates the way of being-in-the-world of historical man. As we have observed, man has a 'world' and lives in a world because of language (ibid:207).

In this sense language constructs and continually reconstructs the social and psychological worlds defining and redefining man's place within them as well as enabling him to become reflectively conscious of his own experience. Moreover, as Searle has argued, the language-independent brute world becomes capable of entering into human thought and discourse by virtue of language as well as becoming the basis of some symbolism. For example the Earth can be symbolized as the mother and the painting *The Garden of Earthly Delights* can be interpreted as a symbolization of the relationship of mother and infant as well as of the pleasures of the sexual relationship through the reflective process and the symbolic capacity enabled by language. Later, discussing the work of Heidegger, Palmer quotes his statement that '...the human is in its essence linguistic', and even more affirmatively 'For to be a man is to speak' (ibid:153).

Gadamer (1985) refers to human linguisticity as being a universal phenomenon; to the essentially linguistic character of human experience, and presumably of the experience of self; and to the linguistic character of man's relationship with the world. History, experience and being seem to be saturated with linguisticity and the concept of the world of the individual as contrasted with the unknowable world of reality is constituted by language. Gadamer looks back to Plato's *Phaedrus*, in which it was hypothesized that there was a correspondence between the soul and speech,

to support his own views about linguisticity as the essence of humanity. In summary Gadamer says

. . . the universality of human linguisticity proves itself to be an intrinsically limitless element which carries everything within it - not merely the cultural heritage transmitted through language, but *everything* pure and simple; for nothing that is can remain outside the realm of interpretation and intelligibility in which we have our common being (Gadamer 1985:279).

Palmer puts the importance of language a little differently but equally powerfully when he writes

Language shapes man's being and his thought - both his conception of himself and the world . . . His very vision of reality is shaped by language. Far more than man realises, he channels through language the various facets of his living - his worshipping, loving, social behaviour, abstract thought; even the shape of his feelings is conformed to language. If the matter is considered deeply, it becomes apparent that language is the 'medium' in which we live and have our being (1969:9).

This is a very strong claim asserting, as it does, that all that is important about humans exists through language. It oscillates between the ideas that the human world is shaped by language and that man himself is so shaped.

Smith J H (1991) poses the question

Are humans different from other animals because of language, or do humans have language because they are different ? (ibid:15)

His answer is speculative and rests upon the early preverbal state of the human infant, whom he believes is born without the instincts of other species and is therefore dependent on its mother for a long time. How does the nature of representations in the preverbal period differ markedly from the conscious representations of desires and wishes in verbal form which develops later? Since evolutionary and epigenetic developments always have precursors and are incremental rather than disjunctive, something which Fonagy refers to as 'proto-language' must have preceded language in its secondary form and, perhaps primary process thinking was an aspect of it. Smith proposes that there has to be a representational system which he calls hallucinatory wish-fulfilment enabling the differentiation of hallucination from perception as well as from 'imaged memory' and anticipation and characterized by primary process thinking. Citing Lacan, Smith describes this development as a diversion into language and argues that in the preverbal state desire is known by representations in the form first of images which produce a differentiation from the object which would gratify that desire even if incompletely. That is to say there is a difference between imaging and perceiving although the nature of the imaging in the preverbal period is not clear. It may also be that neonatal perceptions are different from perceptions when the brain has achieved a more mature state. Some people born blind and who gain their sight much later in life at first have great difficulty in interpreting the visual information and have to learn what it means. It is possible that the new-born, whose immature brain takes some years to reach mature development, may initially perceive objects, visually as well as with other senses, differently than it does later.

Framing a rather unusual definition of desire¹, Smith asserts that representation brings desire to light because the 'object' is a 'representation' rather than the real

object and thus not capable of gratifying the desire. Following Lacan he believes that the desire is for the real object which has been lost in turning away from reality to the image or representation. The gap between the mental object and the object in reality forms the lack that the infant desires to fill. It is not clear how this turning away from the real to the hallucinatory object involves a 'diversion' into language or the permanent sense of the loss of the object, unless those hallucinatory objects were not pictorial but symbols perhaps like mathematical or musical notation. He is drawing on Lacan's (1978) notion of the unconscious as containing signifiers which have been stripped of their signifieds which would require unconscious contents to be like symbols rather than the non-verbal images of objects in Freud's formulation. He constructs the argument in the following way

Hallucinatory wish-fulfillment is already an experience of the object in its absence. Condensations and displacements are never really random; directional (dynamic), they carry meanings that though consciously unknown to the infant, reflect the organization of and further organize the presubject and his or her world. A positive consequence of hallucinatory wish-fulfillment is that the human has the opportunity and is compelled to sort out the difference between wish-fulfillment and actual satisfaction, between the idea of the object and the actual object.

In the ordinary reading of Freud on these matters it is understood one gets one's bearings by overcoming the primary process mode of thinking in order to find, to refind, the object as such. But if primary process thinking can be taken as a manifestation of language in the broad sense, if imagery *is* a language in the narrow sense, then, like any language it is complete; it says it all, even at the initial point

where the 'lexicon' is limited to one image. The image is still the manifestation of a signifying system. (Smith 1991:33/4)

It may be doubted whether any language says it all, but the question is whether this signifying system can be plausibly conceptualized as a preverbal linguistic system structured like a language. It may be that, because the brain is not fully formed at birth and it takes several years before the neuro-physiological network in the brain has been fully established (Wills 1994), the neonate has to develop over time the capacity to think in verbal terms and to form phonic utterances in the form of words or sentences. In that neonatal condition of undeveloped neuro-biological networks the preverbal thought processes might be hypothesized as consisting of images or representations which could be understood as primitive precursors, characterized by the primary processes, to the system of representation in language. If these images or representations are somehow like pictorial images it is difficult to see how these could become readily translated into conscious or unconscious verbal representations given that conscious language must have some kind of pre-linguistic precursor during that non-verbal stage of neonate development. In fact the notion of there being signifiers, which in the Saussurean construction are the phonic representations of the real object, suggests that they cannot be pictorial representations of that object since they would then have to be described as 'signifieds'. If they were in some sense similar to either abstract mathematical or musical notation which seems implied by the concept of 'signifiers', their transformation into language might be like the transformation of musical notes in written form into the sounds made by musical instruments as they were being played by musicians.

It is hardly necessary for this process to be called a diversion into language and a consequence of extended neonatal dependency upon the mother, and neither Smith

nor Lacan offer any empirical evidence for this construction of the development of language. It might be argued that the formation of an hallucinatory object is a way of dealing with the sense of separation and difference resulting not from the perception of a difference between the reality and the internal image or representation but from the development of autonomy in which language plays an important part alongside the increasing control over bodily functions of all kinds, and which originates in proto-language, or in what Chomsky and Pinker describe as the language instinct.

Some evidence for a prelinguistic foundation for language seems to be provided by the observation of infants interacting with their mothers and displaying a capacity to initiate as well as to respond to behavioural and phonic cues, although that does not offer any clues to the nature of the mental images which accompany that behaviour. Additionally, some very recent research (Saffran et al:1996) suggests that infants have an ability to understand sounds and grammatical formations even before the ability to speak develops.

Fonagy has focused upon the preverbal interaction between mother and infant which he calls a proto-language. This is an application of a term used in linguistics to describe a primal language believed to be used by early humans as speech developed, and from which other languages grew (Trask 1999). The original proto-language was believed to be verbal so that Fonagy's use of the term is unusual and, perhaps, inaccurate. What he is describing is the very early interaction between mother and infant which is partly somatic body-language and partly phonic babbling. It is undoubtedly a communication and of a very significant kind whose importance cannot be over-emphasized in the development of humans. There are some very

interesting issues arising from these studies which are not relevant to the theme of this thesis. Two things are relevant, however. These are

1. Can this 'proto-language' properly be called a language ?
2. Is the distinction between psychoanalysis and psychotherapy relevant to the understanding of the way material from this stage of development can be used ?

Without diminishing the significance and value of the work being done by Fonagy and his colleagues a number of questions arise about the use of the term language, even when qualified as 'proto', to describe the communication taking place. It may be a prelingual survival from the days before speech developed evolutionarily and perhaps resembles the interaction between infants and mothers in an ape community. Blackburn (1995) questions whether these and other forms of communication can be thought of as languages. He writes

Are signalling systems of animals properly regarded as languages ? If a chimpanzee can associate sound with things, and put sounds together in simple ways, is this acquiring the essence of linguistic behaviour ? Is computer language a kind of language ? Does it make sense to posit a 'language of thought', or background language, like the machine code of a computer, whereby human beings process their first natural language ? And is there a language of music, or art, or clothes ? These questions are not so much troublesome in themselves, since we just might posit a criterion that marginal cases do or do not meet. The problem is that we cannot discern principles. (1955:454)

Blackburn also questions whether it is an essential element of language that it exists to communicate. Language is more than a system of communication, which Fonagy's proto-language undoubtedly is. Language is essentially is a system of symbolic representation, organized in terms of grammar and syntax, and is usually expressed phonically in terms of Saussure's concept of parole. It seems uncertain that 'proto-language' as a precursor of verbalization could meet these characteristics. That it is important in the development towards verbalization as well as in the mental growth and development of the infant is not at issue.

Equally the development of methods of psychotherapy using the interactions of this stage of growth are very important. But they do not depend upon verbally interpreting the communications of the infant in the way that psychoanalysis does, nor do the interactions between mother and child convey the *phantasies* or the *subjective experiences* which are the basis of the psychoanalytic method. Hurry (1998) seems to be making this distinction when she defines developmental therapy as other than classical interpretation. Classical interpretive work she says can only be used when the child is capable of symbolic representation. This seems to make the point that proto-language is not the same as language used in the classical system to provide interpretations of subjective states and phantasies. To make this distinction is not just hair-splitting nor denigrating of the psychotherapy for children who have not reached the stage of symbolic representation.

A definitive response to Smith's question whether this language ability is a consequence of human difference from the animal world or whether it is itself the difference can probably only be answered by evolutionary or archaeological evidence. Such evidence as there is (Falk 1990) suggests, firstly, that the development of

bipedalism may have led to a number of cortical, cognitive and physiological changes giving an evolutionary advantage to larger brained species and to the development of vocalization and a social language (Mithen 1996). The relevance of the long neonatal dependency for the development of language, Mithen suggests, may have been the need of the female to rely on the male to supply her with food during this period of neonatal growth particularly because the requirements for large inputs of energy to fuel the rapidly increasing infant encephalization during the first four years of life. Knight et al (1995) claim that females may have succeeded in persuading males to undertake the provision of high quality food for them and their infants in a variety of ways. Mithen (1996) suggests that an important aspect of that persuasion resulted in the development of language from its early function as a social communication (Dunbar 1991) to one in which the communication of non-social information about food and its sources became more important.

While there can be no direct evidence about what may have been happening subjectively in infant minds in early history it seems likely that the human capacity for speech and language developed independently of neonatal dependency. The beginning of its change from a primitive communication system to a more fluid representational system coincided with evolutionary development of increased encephalization and the consequent dependence for food of females on males. Neanderthals whose speech was probably more primitive than Modern Humans had infants whose dependency on maternal care and encephalization was still lengthy if less prolonged than in later human species. Neonatal apes also have a period of complete dependency for some time after birth without attaining more than a very primitive form of vocalization. In evolutionary terms the developing capacity for

speech and language may have led to self-reflection and conscious self-awareness, and eventually to psychoanalytical awareness.

a. Evolutionary and Archæological Studies

Support for the view of speech and language as an important distinguishing characteristic of humanity, if not of the essence of being, can be provided by evolutionary studies. Although the evolutionary evidence is subject to considerable interpretation in its current state it can provide some underpinning for hermeneutic theories about the significance of language in the structure of the human psyche.

Our nearest relative in the animal world is the chimpanzee with whom we share a common ancestor and from whom we differ only a very little in genetic terms. According to Gribbin M & J (1993)

Impeccable modern chemical techniques show that the difference between the genetic material, the DNA, of a human being and a chimpanzee is just 1 per cent. . . . It is the 1 per cent difference in our DNA that has made human beings out of African apes;. . .
(ibid:1/2)

The biological characteristics resulting from this genetic difference might be considered to be brain differences together with vocal equipment which enables the production of sounds which can articulated into speech and meaningful language and, more importantly, the capacity to think cognitively (Donald 1991). In respect of speech and language the differences are immense. Donald (1991) drew attention to the magnitude of the difference in this respect, claiming that

. . . despite our close genetic relationship to apes, the cognitive distance from apes to humans is extraordinarily great, much greater than might be imagined from comparative anatomy. (ibid:3)

It may be that the anatomy is the foundation for this cognitive difference rather than its cause. Neonatal dependency might by itself require no more phonic capacity than a lamb's bleating when separated from its mother. How and why the phonic capacity was elaborated both physiologically and mentally and in conjunction with each other is more obscure.

Both Donald (1991) and Mithen (1996) consider how such a difference could have occurred in the course of human evolution. Each proposes solutions, drawing on evidence from a number of evolutionary and other studies, which plot the pathway from the earliest evidence for mental processes in human development to the complexities of the modern human mind. Both agree on the importance of the enlargement of the human brain which began between 2 and 1.5 million years ago, and was followed by a further enlargement between 500000 and 200000 years ago. Donald considers that primitive speech may have begun in that latter era and that there was a slow but accelerating development as one advance built upon another in accordance with the traditional view of the way in which evolutionary processes occur. In a sense this development began the differentiation of the human from the animal world and was the precursor of reflective thinking requiring language and with it the capacity to postpone action in response to organic or external stimuli. Mithen considers that the critical development in the use of speech and language took place more recently and independently of the brain enlargement which preceded it, even though a more basic form of language may have existed earlier. The archaeological record of artifacts appears to show that there was a cultural 'explosion' in very recent period (60K-30K years ago) which he relates to the mental development of cognitive

fluidity which did not depend upon encephalization but a change in the nature of the structure of the mind and of mental processes. Mithen says that

. . . there is no reason to expect Early Humans to have had an awareness about their own knowledge and thought processes concerning the non-social world But if, via the mechanism of language, social intelligence starts being invaded by non-social information, the non-social world becomes available for reflexive consciousness to explore. (1996:190)

For Mithen the critical element is the use of language as the vehicle for this change and with it the capacity to think reflectively and pandemically across the variety of modular mental processes he believed to have existed in the various hominid species preceding *homo sapiens sapiens*, or Early Humans. The archaeological evidence to date the emergence of language is scanty and opinions differ about the meaning of that evidence (Leaky 1998). There is less doubt about what Knight, Powers & Watt (1995) call the symbolic revolution, providing evidence for the capacity to think reflectively.

The differences between Donald and Mithen spring from the type of evidence they use to support their views. Donald relies upon anatomy and the use of comparative psychological studies of infants showing that the development of the infant mind seems to recapitulate what he claims to be the course of the evolutionary development of the human mind. He believes that the infant functions as if it has isolated mental modules which only later become generalized. Mithen, although making use of some of the same material, relies more heavily upon archæological material and the kind of conclusions that can be drawn from the creation of tools, weapons, artefacts and other similar material about the mental processes that may

have gone into their manufacture. Both rely upon the inferences that may be made about the evidence they assemble but reach similar conclusions about the significance of the development first of speech and then of language (in the Sausurrean sense of the difference between *parole* and *langue*) with the earliest evidence of the latter appearing only as recently as between 5000 and 10000 years ago. Dennett (1996:147) has described this development as being like our species stepping into a slingshot which has taken it far beyond all other earthly species in the capacity to reflect and think ahead. The ability to render spoken language first in hieroglyphics and then in the direct rendering of phonic representations into written words, and with it the capacity to store information, has in the opinion of some thinkers, Dawkins (1976), Donald (1991), Dennett (1990), Medawar (1977), Rose (1998), produced a new form of inheritance and evolution which is now more significant than inheritance through biological genetics².

Donald concludes that

Our genes may be largely identical to those of the chimp or gorilla, but our cognitive architecture is not. And having reached a critical point in our cognitive evolution, we are symbol-using, net-worked creatures, unlike any others that went before us. . . . Our minds function on phylogenetically new representational planes, none of which are available to animals. We act in cognitive collectivities, in symbiosis with external memory systems. As we develop new external symbolic configurations and modalities we reconfigure our own mental architecture in nontrivial ways. The third transition has led to one of the greatest reconfigurations of cognitive structure in mammalian history, without genetic change. (ibid:382)

This leads to a recognition that language and representational systems interact with the social world in which they have been developed and on which they depend. Perhaps also intentionality and meaning were first socially created and then incorporated by individuals into their way of experiencing the reality of the world. More importantly Donald's comment about the reconfiguration of our mental architecture (or psychic structure) applies equally well to the reconfiguration of mental structures as defined in psychoanalysis.

Dunbar (1996) in a particularly interesting study bringing together material drawn from a variety of sources argues that for humans speech has replaced physical grooming as the basis of social bonding. Physical grooming has to be on a one-to-one basis, and the achievement of social interaction in a wider social group requires a different basis of interaction. The one-to-one form of social interaction he calls 'first order interaction'. He observed that that social interaction for modern humans took place in larger groups than this. To keep track of immediate social interactions was only possible if the social group was not larger than four. He described this as a 'second order interaction' and was facilitated by the development of speech and language. That development meant that it became possible to keep track of more distant interactions between up to 150 people. So he believes that language developed because it is more efficient in the use of time since it replaces the one to one limitation of physical grooming by the ability to include more individuals simultaneously, although he believes that there is a maximum of four at this second order level³. This capacity to track more than one interaction simultaneously permits a more detailed exchange of information among our networks; and it enables reinforcing effects of bonding at a distance. So that for humans the approximate number of first, second and third order interactions which can be sustained is 150⁴.

These advantages, he claims, were a consequence of energy being freed to support a larger brain that was accompanied by evolutionary changes in the structure of the brain facilitating the perception that other minds exist; and of physical evolutionary developments such as the structure of the larynx to enable more precise vocalizations. Berne (1964), thinking in a different context, drew similar conclusions about the function of language as a form of social grooming which he called stroking, although he made no comparison with general primate studies. Dunbar has formed a similar opinion as Mithen and Donald that the very recent development of speech and language is a consequence not only of encephalization of the brain but of other cognitive developments. The point being made is that language in all its modes is a social phenomenon and that the social interactions it facilitates lead to a variation in and amplification of brain and mental configurations.

Speech not only requires speakers but also hearers able to understand the phonic production of the speakers, and these capacities had to develop in combination. Reading and writing requires the more difficult task of rendering the phonic symbols of speech into visual symbolic form which can be understood by readers so there has to be some agreement socially about what the symbols mean. Early writing could be understood only by very few but in evolutionary terms that understanding has spread very rapidly even though a substantial proportion of the world's population still cannot read. The capacity to store and disseminate information and language has developed even more rapidly with the progress of computers which in a few decades have changed from machines only understood by a few into an increasingly common method of communication with the development of convenient and relatively simple personal computers, usable by large numbers of people, and able to transmit and receive information transforming words and sentences into electronic signals and back again into words, sentences and messages. All of this emphasizes that speech,

language and the generation of meaning are not individual creations but are socially constructed. This suggests that the psychic may not be developed primarily from organic and somatic sources and the flow of impulses within the individual, but from the social meanings constructed by language itself.

Implications of the development of language for psychic reality

Bickerton (1995) makes similar claims to the foregoing about the importance of language in the development of cognition and recognizes its sudden emergence in archaeological records. He makes the interesting suggestion that in hominid species before *homo sapiens sapiens* a representational system existed which was related to the direct and instantaneous expression of needs and responses to stimuli which may be compared with the untransformed somatic impulses. He calls this both on-line and episodic thinking and it accords with the ideas of Donald and Mithen about primitive mental development. Donald in fact uses the same term, episodic, to define the earliest mental processes. He believes that episodic thinking characterizes the capacity of primitive humans to react only reactively to stimuli. The capacity to reflect before acting Bickerton believes relates to the development of representational modes of thinking primarily mediated by words or linguistic representationality. 'Human cognition', he says, 'came out of language' (1995:160), and by language he means not simply the phonic system but the infrastructure of the system of neuron ensembles and nerve fibres which made possible the only symbolic system for transmitting objective information on earth. This ability to think reflectively through the use of words and syntax he regards, as do Chomsky (1957) and Pinker (1994), as being an inherited and heritable aspect of human development. He refers to this capacity as off-line thinking. It has not taken the place of the earlier pre-linguistic on-line thinking but has been added to it so that modern humans are able to make use of

both. He concludes that modern humans have two kinds of consciousness which he calls Cs_1 and Cs_2 . Bickerton (1995) says that language puts a spin on the ways we execute biological imperatives of hunger and sex so that the modes of gratification of each is characterized by allocation of verbal symbols to describe food which gratifies hunger, and by ascribing the adjectives normal, perverse, adulterous, incestuous, or masturbatory to gratifying sexual behaviour. What this means is that

. . . human behavior is driven to a very large extent by internal representations, sex isn't, for the most part, about breeding anymore . . . Quite other factors - factors that involve concepts that couldn't even arise in an ailing species - have long since placed their unavoidable stamp on our behavior (ibid:158/9).

For Bickerton the basic biological imperatives remain as they were for our predecessors but the ability to postpone their gratification through the use of mental representations involving words and syntax means that while those representations are saturated with basic impulses our behavioural responses are quite different from the direct on-line responses to those stimuli. What is controlled is the access to motility which may be postponed in accordance with the factors that are contained in the verbal representations of the impulse itself. While Bickerton does not make any use of the concept of the unconscious it perhaps may be inferred that, in describing on-line and off-line thinking, he had in mind some similar process as Freud proposed in his account of the transition of instinctual impulses from unconsciousness to consciousness (or to the capacity to become fully conscious).

Freud's idea of there being such a transition depends upon concepts of mental space, flows of energy and the nature of psychic reality. Barratt (1991) questions whether the concept of mental space can be upheld and criticizes Freud's ideas about the

transitional processes depending upon the association of thing-presentations in the unconscious with words and raises questions about the relationship between the two systems in both the topographic and structural hypotheses. The concept of each as metaphoric containers presents difficulties about the way consciousness may be affected by unconscious influences that might be resolved through the use of semiotic theory. Barratt argues that so far from being contained in spaces mental representations whether conscious or unconscious exist only in time and may be expressed in words or sentences. His concept is a complex one briefly conveyed in the following extract from his 1991 paper

By attending to the movement of consciousness (exhibited by free-associative discourse as the 'I' moves from one construction and communication to the next), it is discovered that consciousness always conceals-reveals, concomitantly and concurrently (in every moment of its instantiation, in every production and reproduction established), something other than what it is manifestly enunciating.

and

I suggest that while consciousness always reveals-conceals something else, the 'returning repressed', this does not imply that there is something repressed that is, so to speak, 'there', 'now', existent in the temporality of the present enunciation but somehow dislocated spatially outside of consciousness, as if exiled to another region but existent in the unity of the same time. That is to say, that the dynamic unconscious is not a place of storage for repressed signification; there are not latent thoughts, feelings or wishes, hidden 'behind', 'beneath', or 'beyond' the domain of that which is

manifested: Rather, I would argue that all signification is 'within' this domain actually or potentially available to the 'I' of consciousness , and that the dynamic unconscious is not 'outside' of the semiosis of consciousness but always alienated or estranged within consciousness itself, as the incomprehensible 'otherwise' of the semiotic law and order. (ibid:149)

There are some problems with this formulation although the idea that neither consciousness or unconsciousness are spaces in another spatial entity called 'the mind' accords with some of Searle's thought about the creation of symbols (X counts as Y in C so that X and Y exist together in C but are nevertheless distinguishable and the X may have been repressed or become dissociated from Y) and with his concept of the characteristic of unconscious ideas that they have the potential to become conscious⁵, and to some extent with Bickerton's concept of Cs₁ and Cs₂ (see p180). In these constructions the status of unconsciousness and particularly of the status of the dynamic unconscious is unclear. For Barratt it is an aspect of consciousness (the 'I') unknown to itself. The idea of mental representations as words saturated with latent verbal meanings not all of which may be immediately available to consciousness seems to be consonant with the idea of free association where words and ideas following one another apparently randomly reveal a thought in words not previously available to consciousness and resembles Edelson's (1973) view of the relationship between unconscious and conscious ideas⁶. Basch (1991) agrees that Freud's metaphorical concept of the unconscious as topographical and structural is not tenable, and argues that the brain is an information processing and generating organ most of whose operations are in fact unconscious and analogous to the functions of a powerful computer. Only a small portion of its activities become conscious, but of the large number of those potentially capable of becoming

conscious some generate anxiety which, through the quality of self-consciousness, can be prevented from reaching consciousness, or if reaching consciousness will be repressed. Although Basch does not say so, the self-conscious process, reminiscent of Bickerton's off-line thinking and Freud's *pcpt/cs*, may be associated with the development of the language capacity which allows for word representations bearing multiple meanings some of which may be related to the repressed impulse and only allowed expression through the process of symbolization.

A further jigsaw piece in establishing the fundamental importance of language in the human mental structure is the hypothesis of Donald that a precursor to language was the capacity to develop rule governed behaviour in motor skills. As an example of such rule governed behaviour independent of speech he cites children's repetitive games. These he thinks provide some evidence for a primitive, rule-regulated thinking ability which language subsequently incorporates. He disagrees with Chomsky (1965, 1980) who advances a case for a basic instinct for language independent of any other innate capacity. Both are agreed that the capacity to follow rules, whether grammatical or other, is an important aspect in cognitive functioning. Wittgenstein (1958) goes further claiming that languages are like games which are constructed from the rules which determine their meaning in contrast to the realist position that languages are denotative deriving their meaning from their relationship with a reality.

So it may be argued that psychic reality and mental phenomena, both conscious and unconscious, are closely bound up with speech and language and perhaps are a more significant aspect of psychic reality than the instinctual processes on which Freud laid such emphasis, although an alternative formulation in terms of language may also be discerned in his theories.

Language as the Basis of the Psychoanalytic and Psychodynamic Modes of Thinking

A strong case can thus be made for language not only as a fundamental quality of Modern Human psychological constitution, perhaps an innate capacity in its own right as Chomsky claims, but also as an important modifier of basic impulses so that their expression in action becomes capable of multiple transformations giving rise to direct as well as to indirect and displaced gratifications. More importantly because of its representational capacity and its function as a locus of meaning language creates both social and psychological realities rather than simply representing them. Barratt (1991), relying on semiotic theory, has made out a case that language is the psychic reality, and this is also implied in hermeneutic theories of the linguisticity of humans. This has been challenged by Basch (1991) who nevertheless concedes that psychoanalytic method may well be semiotic in character. The existence of psychoanalytic entities in a temporal rather than a spatial context might mean that the unconscious significations were unconscious because of their abstract character that represented the phonic and verbal qualities of conscious thought. Freud's use of the term 'mnemonic system' and the idea of 'memory traces' and the notion of registrations and re-transcriptions may be akin to this idea of unconscious significations.

Archard (1984) has argued that Freud in his original use (in *The Interpretation of Dreams*) of the term *unconscious* as an adjective rather than as a noun was conforming to a monist position in the mind/body problem by not reifying the concepts of mind and mental events, but that his use of the nominal version of the concept of *the unconscious* in his 1915 paper⁷ marked an abandonment of that position, although whether intentionally or unintentionally is not clear⁸. In *The Ego and the Id* (1923) although Freud refers again to an adjectival use of the term 'unconscious',

and may perhaps have been referring to the 'repressed unconscious' when he did so, the use of the nominal 'the id' in the title and throughout the work may emphasize an important distinction in his thinking about the two different descriptions of unconsciousness. I want to argue that the interaction between unconsciousness and consciousness may be best understood by placing language at the centre of the problem. The claim of Davidson that mental events are the same as physiological events but under a different description offers a basis upon which a different understanding could be erected. Moving from the representational and mapping function of language through its role as the locus of meaning to its capacity to create new realities in the way that Searle has demonstrated, and to its ability through metaphor and metonymy to represent several layers of meaning at the same time, not all of which would be conscious, I would claim that language is well placed to provide links between physiological and mental events without establishing the latter as independent realities. I want to examine in the next chapter the way in which Freud's theories were formulated and to show how they provide a language which constructs a psychological theory capable of providing meanings for behavioural and mental events which until then had been considered to be meaningless.

Notes to Chapter 8

1 Smith (1991) says that

Desire I take to be the indestructible remainder of want that exceeds the fulfillment of gratification or any particular wish. (ibid:22)

Much of his succeeding argument flows from this definition and assumes that the nature of desire is of this kind which suggests that wants can never be wholly sated. He is contrasting it with need or demand that can be imaged or articulated. What seems to be at stake here is the definitions and meanings of words and representations rather than the actual state of need of the infant. The discussion is thus removed to the realm of the semantic, of descriptions rather than realities.

2 Dawkins proposed the concept of *memes* to enable the discussion of this new evolutionary process, but there is not sufficient agreement about this term yet.

- 3 Dunbar cites his observation that at parties conversational groups sustain themselves at a level of four people. If an additional person joins such a group another leaves quite soon afterwards.
- 4 Dunbar considers the consequence for this proposition that modern humans live in much larger communities than 150. The capacity of memory allowed villages to grow by multiples of 10, but the fact that modern cities consist of many millions relies on a different capacity. He draws attention to the fact that for the most part city dwellers live in complete ignorance of the vast numbers of other inhabitants of those cities, and that the limit of the relatively intimate relationships they form of close friends and more distant acquaintances is stable at about 150.
- 5 D L Smith (in press) has criticized Searle's concept of unconscious ideas as having the potential to become conscious by reference to Freud's continuity argument.
- 6 An interesting but simple illustration occurred during a session with a patient who was thinking about her mother telling her that babies were brought by the stork. The associations were to stork/stalk/penis and to the bird with the phallic beak, making sense of the apparently nonsensical traditional answer and revealing a denied reality present in the statement that babies are brought by the stork.
- 7 In fact, Freud had made the same transition from the adjectival unconscious to its nominal form in his 1912 paper A Note on the Unconscious in Psychoanalysis.
- 8 Wallace(1992) discusses Freud's consideration of the mind/body problem and says that although he was basically monist he was not averse to thinking of psychology as a separate domain. He says
Freud was not ashamed to think psychologically, let the metaphysical chips fall where they may. At the same time, his was a psychology of human embodiment - of the body as imagining, experiencing, remembering, repressing, communicating, and interacting. For him the mind-body problem was the 'body-brain-environment problem. Psychoanalysis. . . is a branch of biology studying the meaningful, motivational, and historical aspects of the human-organism-in-its-world. (ibid:264)

conscious some generate anxiety which, through the quality of self-consciousness, can be prevented from reaching consciousness, or if reaching consciousness will be repressed. Although Basch does not say so, the self-conscious process, reminiscent of Bickerton's off-line thinking and Freud's *pcpt/cs*, may be associated with the development of the language capacity which allows for word representations bearing multiple meanings some of which may be related to the repressed impulse and only allowed expression through the process of symbolization.

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Chapter 9

Freud's Theory as Language

Concepts are merely the results, rendered permanent by *language*, of a previous process of comparison (my italics).

Sir W Hamilton Shorter Oxford English Dictionary

In this chapter I will consider Freud's theory as an example to show how his ideas were generated from his own experiences rather than from objective medical treatment and scientific research, and demonstrate that the resulting corpus of work may be seen as a language. In his theorizing he generalized these personal concepts into a language so that the theory became epistemological rather than ontological. His theory and its developments have been regarded as an attempt to account for the functioning of an entity called the mind and its function in the formation of mental illnesses and their cure. To this end efforts have been made to claim scientific authority for those ideas so as to establish their validity as well as to provide a dependable foundation for the therapeutic practice of psychoanalysis. In the preceding chapters I have considered these claims in detail as well as the alternative explanations intended to provide other kinds of validation of psychodynamic hypotheses. Although these alternatives have some features which offer a

comparison with psychoanalysis none seem to provide an adequate foundation for the theories. I have offered an alternative view that unconscious mental events enter the various psychoanalytic and psychodynamic discourses as an aspect of the fundamental linguisticity of the Modern Human species and these discourses may be regarded as languages, or language games, themselves.

Although Freud regarded all mental events, with the exception of perception, as beginning in an unconscious phase or stage (1916/7:293-6) he also thought of some mental events as being unconscious in a different way from others. Innocuous unconscious mental events were able to enter consciousness without hindrance, but others could not because they were repressed and it is these repressed items which are significant in the formation of symptoms in the psychoanalytic discourse. The repressing factor inhibits their association with word-presentations. All, however, require language to endow them with the potential for conscious *thought in* addition to consciousness. Freud did not describe the repressing agent as always having the same place in the psychic structure sometimes regarding it as being between the system ucs and the system pcs (1916/17:293-6) and at others conceiving it as being between the system-pcs and the system-cs (1900:615,617-18: 1915). To describe these unconscious mental events he coined the terms 'phantasies' and 'psychical reality' [the latter term appears to have been used by Freud on only one occasion in the papers collected in The Standard Edition (at V15:70)] which contrasts with material reality, or as Freud terms it himself, the practical reality. These unconscious mental entities are unconscious because they have been stripped of their word-presentations. The theory which formulates the nature of the phantasies and the

psychic reality so produced may be regarded as a language game, to use Wittgenstein's term, whose rules embodied in the grammar of the language (eg the dreamwork and the defences in psychoanalysis) create the game which exists only by virtue of those rules.

In this chapter I propose to examine the various theoretical formulations proposed by Freud to show how they may be fruitfully understood in that way. I will consider, firstly, the way in which Freud's personal experience and personality was often determining in the creation of many of the fundamental elements of his theories. Secondly, that his formulation of the oedipal and castration theories was an effort to preserve sexuality as the prime aetiological factor in neurosis after the loss of the apparently empirical basis provided by the seduction theory. The elaboration of that basic set of hypotheses into the complex theories of psychoanalysis underpinning and supporting that aetiological factor creates a concept of psychic reality which can only exist in terms of those assumptions which appear to be without empirical foundation. Finally, I will examine the metapsychology to show that it can be understood as a coherent language constituting and creating the psychoanalytic realm and discourse.

Freud's theory drawn from his creative illness, self-analysis and personal experience.

Ellenberger (1970) makes the claim that during Freud's most prolific period, 1894-1899, he was preoccupied with a creative illness which provided the stimulus for his self-analysis; with his relationship with Fliess; and with the neurosis accompanying the elaboration of his psychoanalytic ideas. He says

A creative illness succeeds a period of intense preoccupation with an idea and a search for a certain truth. It is a polymorphous condition that can take the shape of depression, neurosis, psychosomatic ailments, or even psychosis.(1970:447/8)

After demonstrating by reference to Freud's letters to Fliess¹ that for a period of 6 years from 1894-99 he suffered from some of these conditions

which would undoubtedly be classified as neurotic, and at times as psychosomatic,(ibid)

accompanied by a sense of isolation, for which Ellenberger asserts that there was no evidence in reality, he continues

Intellectual speculation, self-analysis, and work with his patients occurred in a kind of desperate search for an elusive truth. Repeatedly he felt he was on the verge of discovering a great secret or to be now in its possession, only to be again seized with doubts.

(ibid)

Ellenberger refers to the similar experiences undergone by shamans, religious mystics of various religions, philosophers and some creative writers, leading to the proclamations of 'truths' which may owe more to the personal nature of those experiences than to 'truths' established by objective study and empirical testing. Ellenberger concludes that sufferers from such creative illnesses emerge with the conviction that they have discovered a grandiose truth that they feel compelled to proclaim to mankind. For Freud this was the belief that he had 'discovered' a new theory of the mind and that the psychoanalytic method was the pathway to this truth which he then defended strongly against its detractors. Although he believed that

his theories were consonant with other scientific theories of his day, as those theories changed he did not modify his own to accord with those new ideas (Kitcher 1992) nor did he seek other independent support for them.

Anzieu (1986), while not going so far as Ellenberger, describes Freud as having a mid-life crisis exacerbated by his reactions to the death of his father as the precipitating cause of his self-analysis and the discovery of the majority of the concepts which he used in the development of psychoanalysis. Newton (1995) takes a similar view and attributes the various phases of Freud's thought as being his way of resolving the developmental and transitional crises he experienced in his own life. Those crises Newton regards as being relevant not only to Freud but to everybody and thinks of his (Newton's) account of Freud's life as one example of a general theory. It is not quite clear whether Newton believed that Freud's theories gained general relevance because of his role as an example, or whether they were ways which Freud used to understand his own particular manifestations of general experiences. Krüll (1986) goes even further and attributes the particular emphasis of Freud's theory of the oedipal complex and its ramifications to powerful unconscious wishes about his father evoked by his father's death. Anzieu seems concerned to diminish the possibility that Freud suffered from a serious neurotic illness, referring to it as a transference neurosis of the kind common in psychoanalytic treatment.

Freud's basic condition was

never worse than those a normal person would expect to face, [and]
may be described as neurotic to the extent that any so-called normal
person always has to face. . . (ibid:231/2)

He seems to be unsure about this, however, and later in the same discussion refers to Laing's concept of the self-curing nature of psychotic episodes as if by way of asserting its self-curing capacity the normalcy of Freud's mental state can be demonstrated. While some psychopathological states may be discovered in otherwise 'normal' individuals it is doubtful whether this redeems the psychopathological nature of those states. Vitz (1988:141) comments that what was remarkable about Freud's mental conditions was not that he suffered from them but that he used them not only to create his own particular theories but to establish a new conceptualization of psychology, which suggests that his theories were new ways of thinking rather than new discoveries.

Other commentators have drawn attention to the importance of Freud's self-analysis as a source of his development of psychoanalytic hypotheses. Vitz notes, citing Brody (1970), that Freud's conceptualizations applied to four male patients in his published case material displayed a remarkable similarity to some aspects of his own personal life history. Kanzer & Glenn (1979) have discussed various aspects of Freud's self-analysis in relation to some of the ideas he formulated in developing his theory. Buxbaum (1951) and Grinstein (1980) have correlated Freud's dreams and their analysis with his correspondence with Fliess, and with other papers by Freud, to show how the dreams analysed in *The Interpretation of Dreams* may have been influenced by his life events and how in turn both dreams and events may have influenced the development of concepts and theories. Mahl (1980) has studied Freud's dreams to examine father-son themes occurring in them and their relationship with Freud's own experiences. Schur (1972) has amplified the account of the dream

of Irma's Injection to show how Freud's associations related to some actual events in his life. This dream is regarded by many as the most important of the dreams reported by Freud and Schur describes it as *The Specimen Dream of Psychoanalysis* although Freud himself refers to it only as *A Specimen Dream*. Anzieu goes even further and claims that it not only disclosed Freud's wish to carry out a self-analysis but also that this dream

is a programme dream for the whole series of subsequent discoveries that were to constitute psychoanalysis. (1986:155)

That is to say that the foundation for all Freud's 'discoveries' was contained in the latent content of a single dream. However, it has to be said that his version of the latent content of the dream cannot be corroborated by Freud's own associations that have been imaginatively and exuberantly supplemented by Anzieu.

In a letter to Martha in October 1892 Freud wrote

I always find it uncanny when I can't understand someone in terms of myself. (Jones 1954:352)

This attitude seemed to underlie much of his theorizing and in particular many of his generalizations and Holt (1989) noted that Freud had a tendency to present things 'with sweeping universalism and generality' (Ibid:51) and that he tended to become so accustomed to his own ideas that he considered 'them indispensable and finally as established' (ibid:39). Freud later described psychoanalysis 'as my creation' (1914:7) and not as his discovery. Although he had been a little more modest in *Five Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (1910) ascribing its 'being brought into being' by Breuer, it is interesting that on these occasions he does not describe it as a discovery but as a

creation.² Jones (1953) also remarks that psychoanalysis 'was peculiarly and intimately' involved with Freud's personality. Fromm (1959) agrees that the origin of psychoanalysis is to be sought in Freud's personality and demonstrates that a number of key concepts and particularly that of the importance of sexuality are related to Freud's own personal characteristics and beliefs. He claims that they influenced many of his hypotheses and the 'evidence' which he uses to support them. For example, his concepts of women as castrated men and of penis envy may have been influenced by his views about the weakness and inferiority of women by comparison with men, which he had held long before he began to formulate his hypotheses about sexuality. As early as 1883 in a letter to Martha (Jones 1953), discussing views about the equality of men and women Freud wrote

. . . Nature has determined woman's destiny through beauty, charm, and sweetness. Law and custom have much to give women that has been withheld from them, but the position of women will surely be what it is: in youth an adored darling and in mature years a loved wife. (ibid:193)

These views at that time may well have been part of his belief system and drawn from his cultural milieu. Many years later (1934/5), arguing the case with Dr Wortis for the inequality of men and women, he is reported as saying that 'There must be inequality and the superiority of man is the lesser of two evils'.(Wortis 1954:98) So his view of the inequality of men and women seems to have been held consistently and may well have been influential in his theorizing about female psychology.

A passage in the *Three Essays on Sexuality* (1905:201/2) about the sexually exciting effect on the child of the motions of a railway carriage may have been drawn from his experiences when, aged 4³, he was travelling in a train with his mother and recalled

. . . that later (between two and two and a half years) my libido towards *matrem* was awakened, namely, on the occasion of a journey with her from Leipzig to Vienna, during which we must have spent the night together there must have been an opportunity to see her *nudam* . . . (Masson 1985:268).

It is interesting that this memory (even though its significant parts are not described as a memory but as a speculation) occurred to him only a week or two after he had announced to Fliess on 21st September 1897 that he no longer believed in his seduction theory and not long before he began to move towards the conceptualization of the Oedipal theory⁴

The pleasure principle, taken by Freud from Fechner and Exner (Sulloway 1979), was in his earliest formulations an unpleasure principle emphasizing the importance of reduction in excitation and the flight from painful stimuli. Gratification or satisfaction lay in the discharge of excitation and its replacement by a state of equilibrium. In Draft K enclosed in his letter to Fliess dated 1st January 1896 he refers to defences as 'an aversion to directing psychic energy in such a way that unpleasure results' (Masson 1895:163). Pleasure was to be found in a state of quiescence. This position may have been prefigured in a letter to Martha dated 29th August 1883 when he said

Our striving is more concerned with avoiding pain than with creating enjoyment. (Jones 1953)

The avoidance of pain and the reduction of tension were also the basis of the conceptualization of the constancy principle, and of the death instinct in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920:36).

Throughout Freud's theoretical papers there are generalizations which seem to be derived from his own experience as much as from his work with patients. His masterpiece, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, as he recognized in the Preface to the 2nd Edition, was a part of his own self-analysis provoked by the death of his father. That event and his reaction to it may have profoundly affected the whole of the metapsychology of psychoanalysis. Many of the dreams he most carefully analysed in it are his own. Some of the material presented as being derived from a patient or some other person has later been shown to be part of his own experiences. The paper on Screen Memories (1899) has been claimed to be a disguised reference to his own self-analysis (Bernfeld 1944; Bonaparte et al 1954; Swales 1983) and was first referred to in a letter to Fliess; and the second chapter of *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901) - the aliquis incident - is believed by Swales (1982) and Kerr (1994) to be about Freud himself. In his 1908 paper entitled 'Civilized' Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illnesses he describes the consequences of civilised morality on marriage as follows

Fear of the consequences of sexual intercourse first brings the married couple's physical affection to an end; and then, as a remoter result, it usually puts a stop as well to the mental sympathy between them which should have been the successor to their original

passionate love. The spiritual disillusionment and bodily deprivation to which most marriages are thus doomed puts both partners back into the state they were in before their marriage, except for being poorer by the loss of an illusion, and they must once more have recourse to their fortitude in mastering and deflecting their sexual instinct. (ibid:194/5)

This sounds very like an account of Freud's own sexual relationship with his wife as conveyed in his correspondence with Fliess and as interpreted by Fromm. It was not simply a generalization from his own experience providing support for his view of the damaging consequences of modern civilised sexual values but seems to be a continuation of his views about the noxious consequences of the interruption or inhibition of the discharge of sexual products in normal sexual intercourse, provided by contraception, coitus interruptus, abstinence and masturbation. These views, which provided material for the support of the seduction theory, preceded the abandonment of that theory.

Additionally, a number of writers have commented on the way that Freud's own thoughts and experiences appear both in his clinical and theoretical papers as if they were independently derived. Smith D L (in the press) has drawn attention to a possible repetition of aspects of Freud's personal memories in his analysis of The Wolf Man. Spence (1982)⁵ also demonstrated that in respect of the Wolf Man one significant memory and its analysis owed as much to Freud's counter-transference as to the patient's associations and that Freud's own responses to the patient's account are treated as if they were actually part of that material. In that example Freud's

assertion of the symbolic association of urination with masturbation and sexual excitement seems to have been important. It is one which Freud may have taken as almost axiomatic, may have been drawn more from the orthodox Jewish traditional prohibition of masturbation, as well as from 19th century medical concern about its harmfulness (Webster 1995:191/2), than from independent evidence. Krüll (1986), in study of the relationship of Freud with his father, makes the claim that very important and central aspects of Freud's theory can be understood as an attempt to resolve the psychological problems created for him by that relationship, and specifically by the emotions precipitated by his father's death. In particular, it may have been an unconscious reason for the abandonment of the seduction theory on which he had erected his early ideas. I shall consider that claim in Appendix 1.

What seems to be common to these views is that Freud's own personality, psychopathology and life events were crucially involved in the development of his ideas, hypotheses and concepts. To establish them as more than hypotheses requires that they be tested apart from the life experiences that led to their creation.

Anzieu says of Freud that

His main aim was knowledge not so much of the self as of general, normal psychological processes. (1986:568)

While this may have been his aim, in order to realise it Freud would have had to assume that his account of his individual experiences conformed to what was general and normal. Holt (1989) concludes that

...the means Freud used in his search after truth is that he relied heavily on all the classical devices of rhetoric. The effect is not to

prove, in any rigorous sense, but to persuade, using to some extent the devices of an essayist but even more those of an orator or advocate, who writes his brief and then argues the case with all the evidence the eloquence at his disposal. (ibid:58)

In a number of his theoretical discussions it seems then as if the supportive evidence he cites is drawn more from his own life experience, rather than from independently collected evidence, from which he then argues his case.

Did Freud provide independent evidence for his theories?

The question of extra-clinical evidence and the absence of other empirical support for Freud's theories has been discussed in an earlier chapter. For the purposes of this chapter it will suffice to look at what may have been the only occasion on which he referred to epidemiological evidence. In February 1893 he wrote to Fliess that

I have begun a collection: one hundred cases of anxiety neurosis; likewise I would like to collect a corresponding number of male and female cases of neurasthenia and the much rarer periodic mild depressions. A necessary counterpart would be a second series of one hundred cases of nonneurotics. (Masson 1985:44)

It is not clear whether these collections were ever completed, or, if they were, how they might have supported the conclusions that Freud subsequently drew from his self-analysis⁶. Macmillan (1992) concludes that no comparative studies were made⁷. Even at that very early stage of theory formation Freud did not take steps to ensure that there was a serious attempt to seek independent validation of his ideas⁸. Additionally, a careful reading of Freud's papers show that often where he appears to be citing support drawn from case material he is actually generalizing rather than

citing evidence of a specific kind. Claims such as 'Investigation then leads us back..' (Freud 1910:170) or 'Now analysis enables us to infer without difficulty that . . .' (Freud 1918:202) occur regularly without supporting material. Willcocks (1994) makes a similar point in discussing the 'middle mode of discourse' in Freud's works. Where specific case material is cited, as in the five major case studies (Freud 1905a, 1909a & b, 1911, 1918) it tends to be anecdotal or simply illustrative of particular issues rather than an attempt to establish proof in an independent sense.

Although Freud claimed that he made use of observations as an aspect of his scientific method, it is noteworthy that he only seemed to discover confirmatory evidence for his theories, whatever they were. When he had espoused the sexual aetiology of neurosis and with it the remembered scenes of seduction he regularly 'discovered' confirmation of those scenes in his clinical work. His letters to Fliess contain many examples of confirmation of the hypotheses - but apparently none which might disconfirm them (eg Masson 1985:43, 149, 212/15, 219, 221/31, 238, 240, 242). The same is true of his later theoretical works. An example from a later period occurs in Freud's discussion of female sexuality in 1931. Answering his own rhetorical question about what the little girl desires of her mother he replies that

The answer we obtain from the analytic material is just what we
should expect. (ibid:235) [my italics]

A similar example is contained in his 1898 paper, Sexuality in the Aetiology of the Neuroses, when he says

. . . one also gains the conviction that, so far as the theory of neurasthenia is concerned, *there are no negative cases*. (ibid:269)

[my italics]

More usual, however, was the absence of any reference to counter-examples. When his hypothesis changed from attributing a central role to sexual seduction in infancy to attributing it to the repressed sexual phantasies as the pathological factor in hysteria and neurosis he discovered only the evidence for the repressed memories of phantasies. Even in the case study 'A Case of Paranoia Running Counter to the Psychoanalytic Theory of the Disease' (1915c) he discovered that the aspects of it appearing to be contrary to the theory could be satisfactorily disposed of so that the psychopathology of the persecutory phantasies could be shown to be in accord with his basic hypothesis. Grünbaum (1984) discussed this example in support of his view that this and some of Freud's other theories 'have a high degree of empirical falsifiability' (1984:110). When a specific pathogen is proposed for a particular condition it involves the prediction that in its absence the condition will not appear and the retrodiction that in all instances where the condition is manifested then the specific pathogen will also be found. Freud did not himself, as this example shows, seek for falsification but for confirmation in that he showed that the specific pathogen, repressed homosexual wishes, was present in this case of paranoia despite its apparent absence.

It is equally interesting that although Freud also refers to the work of other analysts as the psychoanalytic movement grew they too did not observe material which failed to

conform to the basic theories. Isaacs (1952) referring to Freud's theory of infantile sexuality comments that it

has not only been fully confirmed with *every patient* analysed, but, as in the case of every sound generalization of observed facts, has proved to be a reliable instrument of further understanding of new data. (ibid:77) [my italics]

Those who did disagree, for example Stekel, Adler and Jung, were likely to be regarded as dissidents by Freud or Jones (McGuire 1979:164, 213, 218, 222, 224, 229, 277; Paskauskas: 93, 107, 147, 155, 182, 707) and were either denigrated or described as neurotic or worse. They usually felt unable to stay with their colleagues, and even the members of the 'Committee' were eventually unable to contain their differences although it was founded in 1912 for that purpose (Jones 1953)⁹. In that respect psychoanalysis is unlike other scientific theories about which anomalies regularly arise from observations which may then lead to their radical revision or even their abandonment. The structure of Freud's argument was directed towards creating a coherent and self-consistent theory rather than one that corresponded in a rigorous way with reality.

I suggest that in amassing examples, gathered in an *ad hoc* rather than a systematic way, from his own life and clinical experience Freud was in fact creating a language through which mental suffering could be represented, understood and applied to others who might be suffering in the same way. Natural languages may be understood as symbolic systems creating media in which abstract entities may be understood. Chase (1994) comments that

Symbolic culture requires the invention of a whole new *kind* of things, things that have no existence in the 'real' world but exist entirely in the symbolic world. (Cited in Knight, Power, & Watts 1995:75) [Italics original]

Such entities do not require empirical confirmation, and Freud's theoretical concepts and hypotheses may be better understood as a linguistic symbolic system.

The consequences of the abandonment of the Seduction Theory

It has been recognised by Freud himself (1925:33) Anna Freud (Masson 1984:113), Jones (1953-70), and Gay (1988) that the creation of an essentially psychoanalytical theory, as well as other subsequent theories which diverged from it, became possible when Freud abandoned the seduction theory of the aetiology of neurosis in favour of a theory of causation by repressed memories of sexual phantasies about the parent of the opposite sex and their consequences for normal sexual development. I propose to examine the reasons offered by various thinkers, including Freud himself, for the overthrow of the seduction theory in Appendix 1. For my present purposes I will focus the discussion on the implications for the status of the theory of this conceptual shift.

The seduction theory had two advantages in that it could, in principle, account for the development of neuroses by reference to an actual infantile trauma or traumas, operating as a necessary but not sufficient cause, and to the patient's remembered experience whose repression and displacement could explain the cause of the neurotic symptom. Secondly, it could be claimed that the recovery of the repressed

memory of the event in the analysis would enable the symptom to be given up, as he believed had occurred in the case examples referred to in the *Studies on Hysteria*. In addition, by linking the neurosis to actual, physical, sexual events it would be reasonable to seek for explanations for its cause not only in the recovered repressed memory but also in the functioning of the relevant physiological and neurological apparatus. Throughout his correspondence with Fliess, and in 'The Project for a Scientific Psychology', until the announcement in the letter dated 21st September 1897 that he no longer believed in the seduction theory Freud had made every effort to substantiate these ideas. He had even gone so far as to claim before a medical audience that he had established the ætiology of hysteria in the seduction theory (Freud 1896), describing it as the equivalent of discovering the source of the Nile. In giving up this hypothesis, in which he had been so confident, he cut his theories loose from their foundation in potentially empirically verifiable historical events.

The letter to Fliess on 21st September 1897 was not the last word however and he seemed quite reticent about announcing his departure from the position taken in 'The Ætiology of Hysteria' (1896). His ambivalence about the abandonment of the idea that neurosis was caused by the repressed memories of sexual seduction by the father is attested by the facts that

- a) he did not publicly declare that he had changed his view until the publication of *The Three Essays on Sexuality* (1905b:190) when he says cautiously that he overrated the importance of seduction. Although he was more explicit in papers published between 1908-1910 (Forrester 1980:232n19) he continued to make a number of

references to seduction as a factor in neurosis in several of his later papers;

- b) his continued to rely on the idea of experiences rather than phantasies as the basis of neuroses in later works including the account of the Wolf Man (Freud 1918) where the primal scene is sometimes
- c) regarded as a phantasy and sometimes as an actual event. His 'seduction' in infancy by his sister is also claimed to be a reality
- d) and he continued to hope that the physiological and neurological foundations of hysteria and neurosis could be established.

Even in the *Three Essays on Sexuality* his ambivalence is evident in that the developmental theory of the erotogenic zones is primarily physiological and relies for its psychological element on the pleasure to be derived from the physical stimulation of those zones. Sulloway (1979) demonstrates how much Freud may have depended upon the studies of others in his formulation of these ideas but interestingly Freud denies that he was so influenced when he said

I must, however, emphasize that the present work is characterized not only by being *completely* based upon psycho-analytic research, but also by being *deliberately independent of the findings of biology*.

(Freud 1905b:131) [my italics]

The erotogenic zones, and their accompanying repressed infantile memories of their stimulation, do not gain their fully characteristic sexual qualities until puberty by the operation of the principle of deferred action (*nachträglichkeit*, Freud 1895 & 1918) as well as the pubertal production of 'sexual substances' (*ibid*:212-214) which, in a

sense, endows those pleasurable or unpleasurable memories with their authentic, genital, sexual characteristics. It could be said that this principle of 'deferred action', as it became in the Strachey translation, was to enable the *sensual* experiences of infancy to be sexualized so that they could then support a theory based upon repressed *sexualized* memories or phantasies of infancy, including phantasies of the seduction of the father by the infant, rather than repressed phantasies of seduction of the infant by the father. It should be noted, however, that Freud also described phantasy as a defence against memory (Masson 1985:240, Freud 1900:491-3) so that it is not entirely clear whether he continued to believe that an actual experience was the foundation of the process. The wholly psychological aspects of the developmental theory of sexuality do not arrive until the account of the œdipal phase and its implications for future object choice after the trauma of castration fears.

However, without giving up the seduction theory the Œdipus complex could not have been established. Anna Freud acknowledged this not only in her collaboration in the *Origins of Psychoanalysis* (1954) but in a letter to Masson dated 10th September 1981 in which she said

Keeping up the seduction theory would mean to abandon the Oedipus complex, and with it the whole importance of phantasy life, conscious or unconscious phantasy. In fact, I think there would have been no psychoanalysis afterwards. (Masson 1984:113)

Anzieu (1986:179) describing metaphor as a vehicle for phantasy refers to 'the notion of phantasy' as being an invention. It may be concluded from these comments that psychoanalysis does not depend upon the discovery of realities which exist

objectively, like radio waves awaiting the discovery of the radio receiver, but is a construction resulting from a particular conceptual perspective. So the abandonment of the seduction theory, while attempting to preserve sexuality as the important element in the aetiology of neurosis, involved the replacement of memories of real events with imagined scenes or phantasies. This process effectively altered the evidential base of the theory which had relied upon potentially empirically verifiable memories of actual sexual experiences and replaced them with unverifiable imaginary and unconscious sexual wishes which did not gain their fully sexual quality until puberty with the production of sexual substances and actual adolescent sexual experiences (Freud 1905b:207 *et seq*).

Freud (1913) went even beyond psychoanalysis in his claim for the significance of the Œdipus complex and asserted that

At the conclusion, then of this exceedingly condensed inquiry, I should like to insist that its outcome shows that the beginnings of religion, morals, society and art converge in the Œdipus complex. This is in complete agreement with the psycho-analytic finding that the same complex constitutes the nucleus of all neuroses, as far as our present knowledge goes. It seems a most surprising discovery that the problem of social psychology, too, should prove soluble on the basis of one single concrete point - man's relation to his father.
(*ibid*:156/7)

So, because it no longer relied on any physiological or neurological basis or on actual, sexual experience but upon repressed memories of phantasies rather than incidents,

psychoanalysis was, and is, characterized by the œdipal theory (later complex). That central concept had then to be supported by all the other elements of the theory. Freud's theorizing in his seminal works on dreams, errors, sexuality and jokes might be seen as the creation of an essential language with the œdipus complex as its central representation which subsequent theorizing supported, reinforced and developed. By 1920 Freud was claiming that the œdipal complex was not only universal, repeating the comment he had made in the letter to Fliess in October 1897, but that

its recognition has become the shibboleth that distinguishes the adherents of psycho-analysis from its opponents. (Freud 1905:226n1, added 1920)

A *shibboleth* according to the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary is defined as

A catchword or formula adopted by a party or sect, by which their adherents or followers may be discerned, or those not their followers may be excluded.

The link with the use of language may be more apt than Freud consciously intended.

The œdipal theory itself depended on a particular reading of the story of Œdipus¹⁰ which Freud applied in that form to his own recollections in a letter to Fliess dated 15th October 1897, about a week before the first anniversary of his father's death (Masson 1985:270/3). He wrote

A single idea of general value dawned on me. I have found, in my own case too, [the phenomenon of] being in love with my mother and jealous of my father, and I now consider it a universal event in early

childhood, even if not so early as in children who have been made hysterical.

. . . If this is so, we can understand the gripping power of *Œdipus Rex*, in spite of all the objections that reason raises against the presupposition of fate,but the Greek legend seizes upon a compulsion which everyone recognizes because he senses its existence within himself. Everyone in the audience was once a budding Œdipus in phantasy and each recoils in horror from the dream fulfillment here transplanted into reality, with the full quantity of repression which separates his infantile fate from his present one. (ibid:272)

He buttresses this claim by reference to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. It is not clear what evidence Freud was relying on in making this generalization since it does not seem to have been satisfactorily established that he found that his patients could remember either scenes of actual seduction or of imagined phantasies about sexual wishes towards their parents in their associations in therapy. (Esterson 1993: Macmillan 1991) His assumption of the universality of the œdipal complex may simply have arisen from the belief that what was true for him must also be true for others. In the example of Dora (Freud 1905a), his deduction that her jealousy of her father's relationship with Frau K was a manifestation of Dora's incestuous wishes to replace her mother, as well as Frau K, seems to have been based upon his theory that it must be so rather than on recollections either of incestuous phantasies in her associations or symbolic material that could be interpreted unequivocally in that sense. He reports

If we have rightly *guessed* the nature of the imaginary sexual situation which underlay her cough, in that phantasy she *must* have put herself in Frau K.'s place. She was therefore identifying herself both with the woman her father had once loved and with the woman he loved now. The *inference is obvious* that her affection for her father was a much stronger one than she knew or than *she would have cared to admit*: in fact, that she was in love with him. (1905a:56)

[my italics]

It is evident that these were Freud's, no doubt, ingenious constructions and he did not support them in this paper with any confirmation from Dora's associations. Apart from the specific reading of the story of Œdipus there is very little evidence in Freud's own associations to his dreams recorded in *The Interpretation of Dreams* and elsewhere, of his incestuous wishes for his mother, but there is a great deal about his ambivalent feelings for his father. Anzieu (1986) and Grinstein (1980) make much of oedipal material and incest in those dreams but depend on their own expansions of Freud's associations which in themselves are derived from the concept of the oedipal theory. Anzieu, commenting on Grinstein's discovery of oedipal wishes in the account of Freud's dream of *Irma's Injection*, says

... surely it must be possible with a little determination to detect an Œdipal problematic in virtually any dream. (1986:137)

Or, indeed, almost anything which will help to support the theory.

Freud himself, in *Totem and Taboo*¹¹ in the section quoted above (p207), emphasizes that the single concrete point which solves the problems of social psychology, and, presumably, encompasses the domains of religion, morals, society and art, is not the incestuous wishes for the mother but man's relations with the father. The story of Œdipus involves the intense rivalry of the father with the infant and begins with the father's murderous feelings and actions towards the infant. Freud reconceptualized this rivalry into the infant's fear of the father because of their *mutual* hostility. The castration complex, which was first given that name in the case of *Little Hans* (Freud 1909), was constructed to give the appropriate sexual colouring to make it relevant to the Œdipus complex. The problem then was not simply to make it universal in terms of masculinity but how it could also be applied to women. In order that it should be capable of being applied to girls who, apparently, were already castrated, the idea had to be displaced on to another organ of the body of which girls may have been aware, namely the clitoris (Freud 1917:318, 1925:253/5; 1931:232). In 1924 Freud speculated that girls regarded the clitoris as a little penis which would one day grow into one comparable in size to boys, although he cited no specific evidence or material from patients' associations, to support this claim. Although other analysts, notably Abraham, claimed to have found such material in their patients those claims suffer from the defect of not referring directly to the evidence. So Abraham's 1920 paper, 'Manifestations of the Female Castration Complex', refers rather generally to what 'psychoanalysis shows' and cites, but does not quote, evidence from direct observation

'which shows *unequivocally* that at a certain stage of their development they feel at disadvantage as regards the male sex on

account of the inferiority of their external genitals. (ibid:339) [my italics]

Some of the material in Freud's later works, including *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1926), were attempts to shore up this concept by linking it with occasions when both sexes experienced similar primal anxieties. The original trauma of separation from mother at birth, experienced by both sexes, could then be displaced on to subsequent experiences which might be perceived either as threats to body parts or of their absence and, in girls, to the loss of love (Freud 1933).

The story of the application of the castration complex to women is convoluted and proceeds via the equation of the clitoris to the penis in the phallic phase; the realization that it is inferior to the penis and the theory of penis envy; followed by the wish to obtain father's penis as compensation for the absence of their own; and entry into the oedipal phase of sexual love for father as the only way of realizing this wish (1931:129). In this way the castration complex could then be applied to the process of female sexual development even though its characteristics had been significantly changed in the process. This elaborate construction enabled Freud to preserve the application of the concept of the oedipal complex to both sexes. As Laplanche and Pontalis say

. . . the part assigned by psychoanalysis to the castration complex cannot be understood if it is not related to the basic - and constantly restated - Freudian thesis of the nuclear nature and structuring functioning of the Œdipus complex. (Laplanche & Pontalis 1983:59)

The Œdipus complex then requires the castration complex which in its turn requires the Œdipus complex before it can be understood and the account of female sexuality had to be adapted to sustain the centrality of the oedipus complex. These two concepts are self-referring and reinforcing and may be better understood as part of the construction of the language Freud was creating rather than as independent realities.

The castration complex itself has a complicated derivation (Anzieu 1986), even without the manipulations to make it relevant to women. Anzieu argues that it may have had its origins in some of Fliess's ideas about periodicity based upon the 28-day female menstrual cycle. There are many references to Fliess's complex calculations in Freud's letters to him (typically in one dated 16th April 1896). Fliess extended this idea of periodicity to men as well as women which Anzieu suggests was the expression of Fliess's 'phantasy of the suppression of sexual difference' (1bid:165). Anzieu describes Freud as enthusiastically following this idea by attributing to men 'characteristics of supposed feminine castration' (ibid:165). In other words the fear of castration arises from the supposition that the sexes were originally fundamentally alike and the female is the model for both rather than the male, and the male might easily return to his original condition. This may well have been an implication of Fliess's theory of bisexuality which was borrowed by Freud, originally without acknowledgement. In his formulation of the castration complex Freud reversed this notion of the foundation of sexuality being female, and claimed that his male patients took it for granted that the ownership of a penis was universal (Freud 1905b:195), although it is not clear why his female patients should have made a similar assumption but that they had lost theirs. Moreover, he claimed that libido, the force

underlying the sexual instinct, was masculine (ibid:219) and that the difference between masculine and feminine, psychoanalytically speaking, was that masculinity was active and femininity was passive (ibid:219n1). It might be argued that this definition provides a foundation for Freud's theories about men and women from which they all flow without the need for confirmatory independent evidence. But the original hypothesis was that men and women were born the same but became different (ibid:195n2). When they became aware of the absence of the penis in girls and women then boys conceptualized that they (females) had once possessed it and had subsequently lost it, fuelling the anxiety that the same fate might befall them. Girls on the other hand wished to obtain this valued object for themselves once they had discovered its presence in boys.

Apart from those anxieties, the ideas of bisexuality and of the similarity between men and women allowed that both sexes could follow the same sexual developmental pathway up to the indispensable Œdipus complex. Once the oral, anal, and phallic phases were passed with some adjustment to fit the phallic phase to the development of girls¹² difficulties arose from the need to adapt the Œdipus complex to them. Girls it was claimed entered the œdipal phase by becoming aware of the absence of the penis. Boys on the other hand left the oedipal phase because of the threat of castration by the father. So the notion of castration had undergone some massaging to fit both sexes, although it might reasonably have been thought to be a different for each sex

There are a number of things that might be said about this process. The first is that when the different developmental paths followed by men and women at this phase

were recognized Freud could not abandon the idea of a castration complex for girls and women because of its importance in the architecture of the theory ? Freud's exasperated and later question 'What do women want ?' might be taken as some dawning recognition that women's psychological development might not be congruent with what he had expected and needed in order to underwrite the foundation of his theory of the Œdipus complex. Macmillan (1997) comments that

Given a 'masculine' starting point, the changes were more or less demanded by the end point, and failure to confirm them was almost inevitable. Freud's account of the psychosexual development of the female is not so much wrong as totally unnecessary. (1997:533)

His prolonged attachment to the idea of bisexuality and the subsequent idea that both sexes followed the same developmental path might be seen as the final aspect of his transference to Fliess whose ideas of sexual synonymity Freud had taken over.

The second is about the nature of infantile sexuality. When the seduction theory was given up what was lost was the reference to actual and premature sexual experience, which although forgotten or repressed Freud believed could be recalled via free association. In that process it was unnecessary to consider whether the infant had sexual impulses itself, only that it had been subject to a traumatising, real, sexual experience¹³ the emotional consequences of which it would have been unable to deal with. The construction of infantile sexuality took place in Freud's highly creative and innovative period from 1897 to 1905 and may have been an attempt to preserve the fundamental basis of sexuality in the ætiology of neurosis which was in danger when the seduction theory and all its implications were given up. The nature of infantile

sexuality is plainly bodily and *sensual* rather than sexual in a genital sense, which Freud recognised in the hypothesis that those sensual experiences become sexualized by a reverse projection of pubertal sexual development and their accompanying genitally sexualized experiences as well as the pubertal production of 'sexual substances' (Freud 1905b:212-214). However, he was not able to rely wholly on that explanation and in the *Three Essays in Sexuality (1905b)* he is much more explicit about the actual physical and auto-erotic nature of the experiences rather than on phantasies generated in the infant's mind. The importance of the erotogenic zones is that they are capable under stimulation of providing a particular kind of physical pleasure which is sought for itself in auto-erotic behaviour such as sucking and masturbation (ibid:207). Additionally, he says in describing the nature of the erotogenic zones that they can acquire the same susceptibility to stimulation as is possessed by the genitals¹⁴, but the essential nature of the similarity is the idea of libido as the sensation, comparable to the sensation of hunger in respect of eating, which drives the experiences in infancy as well as adulthood. When the erotogenic zones in the phallic phase become focused on the genitals themselves then the pleasure derived from their stimulation becomes much more like the pleasure experienced in the pubertal phase. However, Macmillan (1997) argues that Freud was uncertain about the nature of infantile sexuality and at different times argued that it was the same as and different from adult sexuality.

The difficulties arising from the need to distinguish between sensual/sexual experiences in infancy and the later pubertal and adult aspects of sexuality are conveyed in the papers entitled generically *Contributions to the Psychology of Love* (Freud 1910c, 1912c, 1917) in which words used synonymously with sex and sexual

are *love, love-object, passionate feelings, the art of love* (in adult women), *tender feelings, and affectionate fixations*. All of these suggest that what is being established is a way of speaking and thinking about infantile experiences which will eventually subsume them under a rubric of sexuality in the common usage without their being sexual in the full adult sense before the pubertal changes occur.

The oedipal theory suggests that the infant may be able to perceive itself not simply as the rival of the parent of the same sex for the *love* of the opposite sex parent, but the rival for the *sexual love* of that parent (Freud 1900:257ff; 1905a:56; 1905b:227). This seems to presuppose that the infant is capable of forming a mental image of what that state might consist of, particularly in the case of girls who are hypothesized to be able to phantasize about the possibility of having father's baby in place of the absent penis. If the pathogenic and traumatising sexual experiences before the age of two of the seduction theory were to be replaced by traumatising sexual phantasies as the pathogenic factor then those phantasies would be unlikely to be created by pleasurable auto-erotic experiences comprising the content of infantile sexuality as hypothesized in *The Three Essays on Sexuality* (1905b) although Freud deals with these problems by the concept of *nachträglichkeit* as described above. In fact, there are few references to sexual phantasies in those essays and what there are seem to have been added much later in 1915 and 1920 and are largely concerned with pubertal developments. Freud claimed in his Preface to the *Third Edition* (1914) that the account of infantile sexuality was based 'entirely upon everyday medical observation' supplemented by psychoanalytic research (1905b:130). However, he also asserted that those who wished to challenge his views about the existence and

significance of infantile sexuality could not have access to the evidence unless they were psychoanalysts (ibid:133). He also claims rather contradictorily that

If mankind had been able to learn from a direct observation of children,
these three essays could have remained unwritten. (ibid:133)

suggesting that what he was calling infantile sexuality might be recognized as sexuality in the ordinary sense of the term by simple, direct observation. But in general the evidence Freud offers is of a particular kind and is not subject to ordinary medical or direct observational investigation. He does not offer any specific empirical support for these views, and tends to offer supporting psychoanalytic observations only in general terms. The importance of Freud's emphasis and re-emphasis of the idea of infantile sexuality may be that it locates sexual development and its vicissitudes firmly in the autoerotic bodily processes and the epigenesis of the erotogenic zones apart from actual experiences. The infant is no longer the innocent victim of the predatory father¹⁵, repressing memories of 'coitus-like acts' which must be recognized as 'traumas which lead to hysterical reaction to events at puberty and to the development of hysterical symptoms' (Freud 1896b:206/7) as the seduction theory claimed. Instead it is the creator of a predatory wishful phantasy about sex with the parent. The various considerations in support of the theory he advances in default of hard evidence seem more like the manipulation of language than anything else. They include discussions about what may be defined as sexual; how the sexual instinct may be described; and the differentiation of masculinity and femininity, which for the purposes of his theory he says is the difference between activity and passivity (Freud 1905b:219). Similarly, the utilization of the notion of the castration complex so that it would apply equally if differently to both sexes seem

more like an attempt to adjust the reality to the hypotheses and their language rather than to provide empirical or objective evidence for its existence. In the *Introductory Lectures (1916/17)* discussing the pre-genital organization of infantile sexuality Freud says

These are nothing but constructions, to be sure, but if you carry out psychoanalysis in practice, you will find out that they are necessary and useful constructions. (Freud 1916-17:326)

This may suggest that the hypotheses are examples of an alternative way of thinking and speaking rather than being drawn from and applying to autonomous realities capable of independent investigation. As Freud suggests they may nevertheless be useful in their own right and be subject to a different kind of cogency than that offered by scientific, historical or other realms of learning.

The domain of psychoanalysis created by Freud from his personal experience and self-analysis and the terms he used in his attempts to generalize them

A domain in this sense is one that has been created by the terms used to define it as has been described above. In the sense that Wittgenstein (1953) uses it psychoanalysis may be described as a *language game*. The meaning of a term or proposition, according to Wittgenstein, is not given by its relation to reality but the rules which govern their use. These rules are the grammar of the language and in Wittgenstein's terms they constitute the language game. Commenting on these claims Hacker (1995) says

Concepts are not correct or incorrect, only more or less useful. Rules for the use of words are not true or false. They are not answerable to reality, nor to antecedently given meanings. Rather they determine the meanings of words, are constitutive of their meanings.

and he continues

The apparent harmony between language and reality is merely the shadow cast upon the world by grammar. Hence too, the puzzles about the intentionality of thought and language are not to be resolved by means of relation between word and world, or thought and reality, but by the intragrammatical connections within language.

(ibid:914)

Since Freud removed his conceptualizations from the world of material reality to that of the psychical reality then its nature might be better described, as Wittgenstein (1953) says, as a language game in this sense and its relation to the world "merely as a shadow cast by its grammar" (ibid:1914). The idea of a game as Searle shows is that it is created by its rules and can only be understood within that context and without it the moves and actions of the players are meaningless. To shift the metaphor the notion of the shadow might be replaced by the idea of a map. Indeed, one map projection is created by imagining the globe being lit from the inside and the shadows of the landmass being projected upon a containing paper cylinder. Just as maps can be drawn with different purposes in mind and with different modes of representation so that a map of the London Underground bears no relation to an Ordnance Survey map of the same terrain, so psychodynamic theories may be created which serve different purposes. Freud's is only one such theory.

Vitz (1988), describing the creation of psychoanalysis, says that Freud began with understanding the neurotic conditions from which he himself suffered in common with others and went on to conceptualize them not only to create his own theory 'but to establish a major new conceptualization of psychology' (ibid:141). As Freud's letters to Fliess make evident he began by trying to create a theory which he hoped to be able to validate by normal scientific processes by formulating the Project for a Scientific Psychology. Following the death of his father in 1896 and the beginning of his self-analysis in mid-1897 Freud's thinking took a rather different turn so that he gave up the style of explanation characteristic of the Project. He began to replace it with a system that did not depend upon its terms having realistic, empirical referents. He relied upon their internal coherence rather than anything else to affirm their truth. At first he also made attempts to make them cohere with other scientific ideas of his day. As scientific thought developed, as Kitcher (1992) has shown, Freud did not alter his thinking to conform to those changes. The detachment from any extrinsic empirical referents meant that the system he was 'creating' (Freud 1914b:7) was not realistic and, as he says of infantile sexuality later in the same paper "The firm ground of reality was gone". (ibid:17) It is my contention that this warrants the recognition that the system may be better understood as a language which offers a foundation for the understanding of the conceptual entities as being under a particular verbal description (see Davidson 1980 & 1984) which is established by psychoanalysis and other psychodynamic theories. A number of passages in his letters to Fliess lead to a similar conclusion. Referring to the draft of *The Interpretation of Dreams* in February 1898 he says

All the new formulations are at the philosophical end; absolutely nothing has come at the organic-sexual end. (Masson 1985:300)

and again in July 1898 he says

Consciousness is only a sense organ; all psychic content is only a representation; . . . (ibid:325)

So psychoanalysis may be compared directly with a language that may, on one definition, be described as a system of representations (Bickerton 1995, Wittgenstein 1953). Other similar comments may be found at pages 301 and 347 of Masson's (1985) edition of Freud's letters to Fliess. Finally, commenting on his difficulty of connecting the organic with the psychological factors, he felt disinclined 'to leave the psychology hanging in the air without an organic basis' (ibid:326). He bemoans his inexplicable inability to connect the two without perhaps appreciating that in establishing a *psychic reality* he was creating a realm of thought which was a new language and epistemological in nature rather than ontological.

Forrester (1980) claims that Freud recognized that symptoms are structured like a language, and they are the equivalent of a spoken message. Cure consists in translating the disguised linguistic message into speech and this process is like

a boot-strap pulling operation, straining to bring into a coherent account the little incomprehensibilities that open up to him the possibility of secreting his meaning inside a 'symptom'.(ibid:131/2)

If the symptom is to be translated into speech then that speech must be located in psychological idioms which provide the terms with which the unspoken message of the symptom can be translated into consciousness and its meaning understood.

Freud created those idioms whose central concepts are the œdipal and the castration complexes and their subordinate terms of instinct, infantile sexuality, libido, supplemented by the concept of repression and the various defences against the undoing of repression. All of these are constructions around which the other concepts were built. They are mutually reinforcing, and were modified over time (Greenberg & Mitchell 1983) to ensure that consistency between them was maintained. That no further empirical evidence was provided to support those changes is perhaps further evidence that what was being created was a language. As with other languages the addition of new terms or the modification of old ones do not require the support of empirical evidence. Although 'observations', in general rather than specific terms, made in the course of psychoanalytic practice were cited as the reasons for the modifications to the theory those changes seem to have been made in order to rectify inconsistencies which had been recognized in discussion and through criticism rather than to make them conform to independent empirical realities. The theory created the referents with no independent existence into which the unspoken message of the symptom could be translated, and the lynch pin of these was the Œdipus complex whose creation enabled the prized concept of sexuality as a fundamental aspect of the neuroses to be preserved.

The issue of sexuality and sexual aetiology of neurosis was something that Freud set great store by and it was the issue which from the earliest days had begun to divide him from those who left his strictly defined psychoanalytic fold to establish their own versions of psychoanalysis. As he had made it a distinguishing mark of his

understanding of hysteria he could not abandon it when he gave up his reliance on the actual experiences since he had been so confident about them. He claimed that

. . . the ætiological role of infantile sexual *experience* is not confined to hysteria but holds good equally for the remarkable neurosis of obsessions, and perhaps also, indeed, for the various forms of chronic paranoia and other functional psychoses. (Freud 1896:219)

[my italics]

Despite indicating that he had only a little evidence from his clinical experience for this claim he nevertheless went on to assert that what he had discovered was reliable and gave him confident expectations for other cases (ibid:219).

Such certainty expressed before an experienced medical audience could not easily be given up. So when he found it necessary to forsake his reliance on sexual experiences as the aetiology some other way of including sexual factors had to be found. The crucial hypotheses in the primary theory had been sexual experiences and incest in infancy in their readily understood form in which the father or some other adult was the seducer; that those experiences were traumatising so that they and the memories of them had to be repressed; that their presentation occurred in a disguised form in dreams, and in symptoms which had arisen in puberty; that the understanding of those disguised forms could be obtained through the transference; and that their recall and entry into consciousness through interpretation enabled the defusion of the trauma and the dissolution of the symptom. With the abandonment of idea of the reality of the premature, actual sexual experience (not usually of seduction, but rape) and its replacement by the concept of the repressed phantasy of the sexual seduction

not *by* but *of* a parent the realm of psychoanalysis was no longer defined by reality but by symbolism and phantasy, and the use of a particular language to describe that realm.

In the first edition of *The Interpretation of Dreams* Freud did not include much material about symbols and their importance. His first substantial discussion of the subject did not occur until 1909 with further material added in 1911 and 1914. In his introductory remarks to the place of symbolism in dreams he drew attention to its connection with language. He claimed that symbols 'are generally known and laid down by firmly established linguistic usage' (Freud 1900:342). Later he stated that

Things that are symbolically connected today were probably united in prehistoric times by conceptual and *linguistic* identity. The symbolic relation seems to be a relic and a mark of former identity. In this connection we may observe how in a number of cases the use of a common symbol extends further than the use of a common language, . . . A number of symbols are as old as language itself, while others (e.g. 'airship', 'Zeppelin') are being coined continuously down to the present time. (ibid:352) [my italics]

Symbols In Freud's view may derive from language and are often linguistic as well as pictorial. Additionally, as the last example shows, the language is continuously capable of generating new symbols. Moreover it is evident that the interpretation of symbols was used more and more to illustrate the theories Freud was developing about the sexual origin of neurosis and the nature of infantile sexuality. Whether the symbolism could somehow be taken as evidence for those theories is arguable. To

begin with the symbols were dominatingly sexual. Freud (1900:84-7) cited in support of that view Scherner's earlier discussion of symbolism in dreams as representing the body or parts of the body and, in particular, Scherner's consideration of sexual symbolism. At a later date to support his view of the sexual nature of symbolism he referred to Sperber's theory that all primal words had a sexual reference which they later lost through being applied to other things which were compared to sexual ones (ibid:325). In his book *Freud's Rules of Dream Interpretation* (1983) Grinstein makes it evident that Freud's interpretation of symbolism was very arbitrary. For example, he quotes a passage in which Freud discusses the appearance of robbers, burglars and ghosts in dreams and states quite unequivocally that these images relate to infantile experiences and that

In every case the robbers stood for the sleeper's father, whereas the ghosts corresponded to female figures in white night-gowns (Freud 1900:403/4).

Despite this didactic statement Grinstein succeeds in finding other meanings for these symbolic figures (Grinstein 1983:80/1). On the whole, however, Grinstein follows Freud's detailed account of the meaning of symbolism and it becomes quite evident that for both the theory dictates the meaning of the symbol. In discussing the meaning of fire, for example, Grinstein refers to Freud's comment that 'flame is *a/ways* a male genital, and the hearth is its female counterpart' (Freud 1916:162) [italics added]. It would be quite possible to think of other interpretations but this one is prescribed by the characteristics of the phallic stage of infantile sexuality. Grinstein adds others and says that

many dreams of fire, especially in men, refer to the emergence of urethral erotism or are the symbolic expression of homosexual conflict. (Grinstein 1983:127)

He goes on to add that the same material may be connected with the oral or anal stage. What this suggests is that any symbolic expression may be applied to illustrate any aspect of psychoanalytic theory but such illustrations do not constitute proof of the theories since the symbol may have been chosen because one of its many meanings may simply match the theory and are in fact a way of speaking and thinking. More importantly it is evident that symbols share two characteristics of language, namely metaphor and synonym, as well as being filled with archaic and unconscious meanings. As Virginia Woolf put it in 1937

Words, English words, are full of echoes - memories, associations-naturally. They have been out and about on peoples' lips, in their houses, in the streets, in the fields for many centuries. . . They are stored with other meanings, other memories, and they have contracted so many famous marriages in the past.

Words had to be associated in sentences to have meaning and a word was "not a word until it was part of a sentence" (ibid).

A metaphor is very like a symbol in that it is a figure of speech in which one term can be applied to another in a way that expands its meaning or provides an alternative meaning. (Searle's formula X stands for Y in C is a generalized statement of this kind.)

A synonym is a term which can be used interchangeably with another and as Roget's Thesaurus shows many words which have a substantial number of synonyms which

may appear in successive free associations of patients as manifestations of unconscious meanings. As Freud indicated in *The Antithetical Meanings of Primal Words* (1910b) antonyms may also be significant in the determination of unconscious meanings. So the word, sentences, propositions and structures of language are saturated with unconscious meanings only some of which will correspond to the unconscious contents required by psychoanalytic theories. Language then provides a rich, symbolic, verbal soup from which meanings can be drawn to provide support for a variety of theories.

An interesting example of Freud's manipulation of symbols to substantiate his theories occurs in the paper entitled *An Evidential Dream* (1913b). In that paper Freud uses a dream told him by his patient who was not herself the dreamer whom Freud never met. He claimed that his knowledge of dream-symbolism enabled him to understand the deep meaning of the uninterpreted portions of the dream which he believes refer to 'the complex of giving birth, of having a child' (ibid:275). In the dream there is a reference to an expanse of water for which he offers two interpretations

1. It 'was certainly the water out of which children come' (ibid:275).
2. That the dreamer (a nurse) came to the water to search for a lost child.

Additionally, and to add further weight to this view, the patient reported that the dreamer had remembered that the patient had read her the story of Jonah and the whale and Freud interprets this too as adding to the idea that the dream relates to the idea of the complex of birth. He goes on to pile Pelion upon Ossa by referring to an

image (allegedly appearing in the dream) of a nurse who had thrown herself into the Rhine and drowned. He says

. . . the nurse who threw herself into the Rhine out of mortification found a sexual-symbolic consolation for her despair of life in the mode of her death - by going in to the water (ibid:275).

Unfortunately, Freud had overlooked that he had manufactured this material as he had confessed in a footnote on page 271. Without the benefit of any associations from the dreamer Freud makes an extended and detailed interpretation as follows

the wish 'I want to have a child seems therefore to have been the dream-creator from the unconscious; no other would have been better calculated to console the nurse [the dreamer] for the distressing state of affairs in real life. 'I shall be discharged: I shall lose the child in my care. What does it matter? I shall get a real child of my own instead.' The uninterpreted portion of the dream in which she questioned everyone in the street about the child may perhaps belong here; the interpretation would then run: 'And even if I have to offer myself on the streets I know how to get a child for myself.' A strain of defiance in the dreamer, hitherto disguised, suddenly declares itself at this point. Her admission fits in here for the first time: 'I have shut my eyes and compromised my professional reputation for conscientiousness; now I shall lose my place. Shall I be such a fool as to drown myself like Nurse X? Not I: I'll give up nursing altogether and get married; I'll be a real woman and have a

real child; nothing shall prevent me.' This interpretation is justified by the consideration that 'having children' is really the infantile expression of a wish for sexual intercourse: indeed it can be chosen in consciousness as a euphemistic expression of this objectionable wish. (ibid:276)

Every thing fits together neatly, even the material about the drowned nurse which Freud has interposed from his own imagination. Since this an 'evidential dream' then as Freud claimed it provided 'plenty of confirmations as well as plenty of new problems' for his theory although some of them stretch credulity very fine, eg the sections in quotations purporting to be the thoughts of the nurse whom Freud never saw. Since the evidence does not arise directly from the dreamer the 'confirmation' derives from the application of the theory to the material and cannot be regarded as confirmation at all. Some of the other confirmations are equally incredible. For example, it is far from clear why the conscious or unconscious wish for a child in an adult woman of child-bearing age should be regarded as an objectionable infantile wish for sexual intercourse. That Freud so regarded it is a consequence of the application of the theory of the Œdipus complex in which he hypothesized that all children wish to have sexual intercourse with the parent of the opposite sex. Without the associations of the dreamer herself the dream material does not warrant this interpretation but it is clearly being used to accommodate it to the language of psychoanalysis in which the Œdipus complex is a central term. The latent content of dreams is claimed by Freud to be derived from infantile sources so without the warrant of any of the dreamer's associations he can assign the manifest content to

his specific hypotheses about infantile sexuality. In some of the other interpretations he was relying on some basic synonyms so

water (always)= amniotic fluid = birth

coming out of/going into the water = birth = death (by an antonymic connection and by association with the classical belief that dying involved crossing a river, The Styx)

being in the streets = being *on* the streets = prostitution = the infantile wish for sexual intercourse with the father

a dream wish of a sexual kind = an unconscious infantile sexual wish

a strain of defiance = infantile defiance over potty training = an anal-erotic wish to retain the faeces = the infantile anal phantasies of birth (in respect of this final element Freud rather gilds the lily by claiming that 'it may be surmised that this trait had a close connection - in regard to both time and content - with the wish for a child and for sexual enjoyment' [ibid:276]).

None of these ideas are necessarily wrong, but they are tailored to support the theory from which they have been derived and to exclude others that do not support the theory. It can be seen that Freud is employing the language of psychoanalysis which he has created to translate the dream symbols into another language which he believes makes better sense of them, but he does not consider whether any other language would have made as good sense. Perhaps he need not have done so

except for his wish to claim the sole truth of his theory against other contenders such as Adler and Jung.

The functions of a Language

Crystal (1987) defines the characteristic functions of a language as follows

1. Emotional expression
2. Social interaction
3. The power of sound
4. Control of reality
5. Recording of facts -particularly in written form
6. Instrument of thought
7. Expression of identity

Most of these characteristics can be applied to Freud's psychological concepts. One of their primary purposes was to enable the patient to find ways of giving emotional and conscious expression (factor 1 above) to repressed memories of phantasies which were believed to underlie the neurotic symptom, through the translation of the symptom or symbolic dream image. The concepts described how that repression had come about and the mental structures to whose hypothetical existence the process could be attributed. The discharge of the wishful energy (emotion) locked up in the symptom or the dream image enabled the symptom to be given up.

It can be seen that the development of the description of the mental world from a simple account of the difference between the unconscious and the conscious in the earliest formulations, through the tripartite account of *systems ucs, pcs, and cs*, to the structural theory of id, ego, and super-ego and their relationship with the

characteristics of unconsciousness and consciousness suggests that these successive formulations may be understood as 'instruments of thought' (factor 6 above). Although all thought is not necessarily linguistic (Vygotsky 1986), it is language which gives its capacity for reflection and for the expressions of many abstract qualities not easily expressed in other ways, as Freud's discussion of 'considerations of representability' in dreams demonstrated (Freud 1900:339/49). So concepts like repression, incest, the Oedipus complex, and the sexual instinct make thought about them less difficult than if those concepts were not available in language. In fact, the theories of psychoanalysis may have provided words and language to matters which previously had none. Crystal (1987:15) remarked that some experimental evidence had shown that recall was facilitated if the thing to be recalled corresponded to readily available words or phrases. Both Breuer and Freud laid great emphasis on the recapitulation of memories in the therapeutic process and the availability of new and appropriate concepts may have aided that process.

Similarly, the concepts create a social world within which the interaction of psychoanalysts with each other and their patients is promoted (factor 2 above). The purpose of the language of psychoanalysis is to bring unconscious and unrealistic, mental entities into conscious control. The object is that they should be governed by the reality principle rather than the pleasure principle (factor 4 above). To enable this objective to be achieved the world of psychic reality is created. It also creates an identity which differentiates psychoanalysts in general from other psychologists and psychiatrists (factor 7 above), and through the development of different conceptual emphases, the differentiation of one school of analysis from another.

In the sense that language can be considered to be a mapping function of the world (Millikan 1984) then the language of psychoanalysis constitutes a map of the world which it has created. Since maps can be drawn using different projections to suit different needs then the different 'dialects' could be compared with different types of map projections of the same psychic reality (see p220 above). Steiner (1991) remarks, in passing, on the necessity of safeguarding an identity as a factor in the Freud-Klein controversies. He does not comment on the fact that although during those discussions there were frequent appeals to the need for evidence to be used to validate either or both of different theoretical positions none was ever produced. It seems more likely that protagonists could not do so because they were arguing about different ways of talking about the same issues and that those languages were important to their definition of themselves and their identities when the empirical evidence was not available to provide a more secure foundation. The compromise chosen, that they would all exist together in relative harmony within the same institutional boundary, leads to the conclusion that they had recognised that there was no basis in reality to prefer one theory to another and that, perhaps, they were in fact different dialectics of the same language.

Notes to Chapter 9

- 1 See also Anzieu (1986) and Krüll (1986) for further discussion of the same connection between Freud's neurosis and the theories he developed.
- 2 Smith D L (1996) claims that all theories are creations and not discoveries and in this respect Freud's theories do not differ from any others. However the major difference is that Freud did not subject any of his theories to independent testing which might have given them a different empirical status. Without that independent examination Freud's theories remain as creations and constructs. Subsequent attempts to seek independent support for them have only produced indifferent or trivial results where they have not been actually negative (Fisher & Greenberg 1993; Kline 1981).

- 3 Jones (1953) records that Jacob Freud and his family did not move from Leipzig to Vienna until 1860 when Freud was four years old and that he may have telescoped this memory with a previous one when the family moved from Freiburg to Leipzig in 1859 and he was frightened by seeing the gas lamp flames at Breslau. See also Kanzer (1979).
- 4 Forrester (1980) argues that Freud did not fully formulate the concept of the Œdipal complex until as late as 1909.
- 5 Spence (1982:116/122). He also refers to Jacobsen & Steele (1979) who commented on the same material.
- 6 Holt (1989:53-4) drew attention to the fact that Freud was formulating his theories before the theory of statistical sampling had been developed and that he may have been operating under the influence of neuroanatomical procedures where conclusions were drawn from samples of one, studied under the microscope.
- 7 Macmillan (1992) argues that without the collection of a non-neurotic sample for comparison the confirmation of Freud's theory of the sexual aetiology of neurosis made by Gattel (Sulloway 1979) in a sample of one hundred neurotic patients was of no value.
- 8 Sulloway (1979 Appendix C) considers the collaboration of Gattel with Freud. Over a period of six months in 1897 Gattel systematically undertook the examination of one hundred consecutive cases of anxiety neurosis and neurasthenia at Krafft-Ebing's Clinic at the Vienna General Hospital for the purpose of testing Freud's theories on actual neuroses. There appears to have been no attempt to assemble a control group for comparison. According to Sulloway, although attempts were made to exclude hysterics from this study, a surprisingly large number, 17%, of those studied were suffering from a mild form of hysteria as well as from an actual neurosis. Since actual neuroses were said by Freud to be a consequence of a sexual malfunction, and in these cases an infantile sexual activity, that finding in the cases of hysteria, Sulloway concludes, may have had relevance to Freud's announcement of the abandonment of his seduction aetiology.
- 9 The list of dissidents is lengthy beginning with Adler and Stekel and continuing with Jung, Tausk, Rank, Reich, Ferenczi, Karen Horney and others.
- 10 The history of Oedipus, according to Sophocles, begins not with an incestuous wish but with a murderous attack upon him by his father, Laius, following a prophecy that Oedipus would grow up to kill his father, and this is plainly Laius's phantasy rather than that of his son, Oedipus. The account of this by Jocasta is as follows

His (Laius's) fate it was, that he should have a son
By me, that son would take his father's life.
In consequence of that phantasy of being violently displaced by his son
 Laius fastened both its feet together and had it cast over a precipice.
 (Sophocles, Œdipus the King)

When the fateful meeting at the cross roads between Laius and Œdipus occurred it is also clear from Sophocles's drama that it was his father who launched a murderous attack on Œdipus after Laius's attendants had tried and failed to push him off the road, and which then resulted in retaliation by Œdipus who killed the whole party.
- 11 I feel that I should express the following idea which forces itself on me, namely that your judgement of the value and correctness of the theory is affected by your being the author - far more than is generally the case in your work, which suggests that this one has an unusual personal significance for you. (Paskauskas 1993:206)
- 12 According to Abraham (1924) there was an embryonic prototype of an undifferentiated genital disposition which was the same for both sexes. He went on to derive the origin of the Œdipal complex to the intra-uterine period too, apparently thus putting beyond doubt the existence of both the castration and oedipal complexes !
- 13 The terms used by Freud to describe the sexual experiences in infancy which he claimed produced

neurosis varied. The theory is generally known as the seduction theory which seems to imply a rather gentle and passive experience. However, in the early formulations he describes it as 'sexual shock' (Masson 1984:144/5,149). Holt (1989:54) says that by seduction Freud meant 'literal child abuse' and the stimulation of the genitals, although he later expanded it to include stimulation of the other erotogenic zones. In Further Remarks on the Neuro-Psychoses of Defence (1896a) Freud wrote

The event of which the subject has retained an unconscious memory is a *precocious experience of sexual relations with actual excitement of the genitals, resulting from sexual abuse committed by another person;* . . .(ibid:152)
[emphasis original]

and

My thirteen cases were without exception of a severe kind . . . The childhood traumas which analysis uncovered in these severe cases had all to be classed as grave sexual injuries; some of them were positively revolting (ibid:164)

Similar comments can be found in The Ætiology of Hysteria (1896b:214). The sexual experiences in puberty which re-arouse the unconscious memories of the original sexual abuse could be passive and often quite trivial (ibid:200/1)271.

- 14 Macmillan (1997) has challenged the idea that these allegedly auto-erotic experiences are sexual at all in that they do not lead to orgasmic discharge as genuine sexual experiences would, and they are not self-closing.
- 15 Although Freud made reference in various places to seducers other than fathers and in particular did not make it a particular feature of The Aetiology of Hysteria (1896), nevertheless, throughout his letters to Fliess there were regular references to seductions by fathers both before the 1896 paper and after (Masson 1985:212, 220, 224, 226, 228, 230/1, 237/8, 264, 286/7/8, 411). On one occasion he referred to 'paternal ætiology', after he had declared his disbelief in the theory, on 12th December 1897 (ibid:286). In later papers and in the various studies of the history of psychoanalysis he spoke of his abandonment of his theory being a result of the improbability of paternal seduction being as frequent as the memories of the patients led him to believe. (See Appendix 1)

Chapter 10

Conclusion

In this thesis I have argued that Freud's metapsychology may be better understood as a language which creates the domain of psychoanalysis and psychic reality rather than as a science describing an objectively independent reality. Freud made two very important attempts in *The Project for a Scientific Psychology* and in Chapter 7 of *The Interpretation of Dreams* to establish psychoanalysis on a scientific foundation, both of which have proved to be unsatisfactory. Freud was convinced that a scientific basis for psychoanalysis founded in neurophysiology was essential but the scientific principles of his day were inadequate for the purpose. He was right to believe that the functioning of the mind and the domain of psychoanalysis could not be divorced from the functioning of the brain but he was unable in his theorizing to establish the connection. So in his work two explanations run side by side. The first is the neurophysiological explanation together with the theory of instincts whose somatic expression has to be translated into ideas, and the second is concerned with meaning in which language played an important role through the translation of thing-representations into word-presentations.

To this day science has been unable to provide a convincing explanation of how the brain generates mental events that cannot be wholly explained in terms of brain activity. Crick (1994) confidently claims that mental events

. . . are in fact no more than the behaviour of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules. (1994:3)

Rose (1997:279) describes this reductionism as being based upon a faulty reductive sequence and argues for a variety of conceptual levels of explanation which may be translated into each other; in particular he distinguishes between causal explanations and explanations through reasons. These distinctions may resemble those being made by Freud in his two modes of explanation based on neurology, physiology and the play of forces operating in the structure of the mind (Freud 1900:511); and those based on meaning, verbal associations and reasons.

Explanations in terms of meaning in psychoanalysis rely on language even though meaning may also be conveyed by signs in every day experience. As Freud describes it the important process of repression, particularly significant for psychoanalysis (Perlow 1995), involves the denial to the thing-presentation a translation into words (Freud1915b: 202) so that it is rendered, and remains, unconscious until the interpretations of the patient's verbal free associations enable it to regain consciousness. The interpretations offered by the analyst are framed within the context provided by the metapsychology. The Freudian theory, which many of his successor's theories incorporate, contains a theory of instinctual development, an account of the structure of the mind, a description of unconscious processes and their interaction with consciousness, and an account of the kinds of unconscious fantasy which determine both the content of dreams and the meaning of neurotic symptoms. I have argued that the metapsychology does not simply describe those concepts as if they were objectively independent but that the language of the theory creates the psychic reality it purports to describe.

Two strands of thought underlie this claim. The first is Davidson's (1984) contention that all mental events are physical events but under a mental description. To a degree this conforms to Crick's claim that the mind is 'no more' than a neurophysiological function, but Davidson is claiming that there is something more which he describes as a mental description. I would go further and suggest that the functioning of the neurophysiological apparatus in fact generates the mental description. It does so because of the fundamental linguisticity of the human being (Chomsky 1957; Donald 1991; Mithen 1996; Palmer 1969), itself an aspect of brain functioning. The second derives from Searle's argument (Searle 1994 & 1995) that language has the capacity to frame meaningful sentences and thoughts creating the reality to which they refer. Searle is mostly concerned with the social institutions and the social reality that he and others claim are constructed by language. In a sense the social realities created by language may become objectively independent particularly when they are describing a game in which the rules are language dependent but the event which the rules generate is a mixture of objectively independent matters, such as the bodies of the members of the team and the pitch on which the game is played. The meaning of the events taking place on the pitch are language dependent and the reality of the game is created by language. Meaningful sentences may also be linguistically created having no objective referents unlike the social reality of a game. The following sentences are examples.

1. Fragmentarity of the subject and fragmentarity of the world beckon to each other and lavish mutual assurances on each other. (Bauman 1993)

2. 'Twas brillig and ye slithey tove did gyre and gimble in ye wabe.
(Lewis Carroll)
3. When the ego assumes the features of the object, it is forcing itself , so to speak, upon the id as a love-object and is trying to make good the id's loss by saying: 'Look, you can love me too – I am so like the object.' (Freud 1923)

The choice of these sentences illustrates that over a wide range of possibilities it is possible to create meaning without there being an objective reality to which they correspond. All these are ways of talking about something having no objective existence except as it is created by the sentences themselves. To put it another way, these are all significations which have no signifieds. The important thing about them and many other similar sentences is that they are generated by brain activity providing the essential somatic foundation for mental events. Chomsky has commented on the way that an infant is capable of generating an infinite number of sentences, all conforming to the rules of grammar and syntax, and all a consequence of neurophysiological activity in the brain. I contend that this hard-wired linguistic capacity provides the somatic foundation for Freud's version of psychoanalysis and for those of his successors. As Bickerton (1995) has argued this capacity has modified both instinctual goals and the way in which they are achieved. Language has enabled the control of motility, which Freud believed was an important aspect of sleep, and the postponement as well as the modification of instinctual gratification. So that for psychoanalysis linguisticity provides an essential basis both for its theory and practice.

It has been suggested (Tuckett 1994) that a different scientific tradition, namely, social science with its emphasis on observation and probability would provide a more appropriate scientific basis for psychoanalysis than can be provided by natural science. The kinds of observations made by psychoanalysts are of rather a different order than those made by social scientists. Social scientists tend to observe mass phenomena through direct observations, by the administration of questionnaires or other conscious methods. Psychoanalysts are attempting to observe individual unconscious phenomena not directly available to the senses. These observations are dependent on inferences often relying on the theory which individual analysts espouse and for which there can rarely be independent validation.

Social theory in the shape of postmodernism makes the claim that the psychic world, the self and subjectivity, is not a mirror of reality and is a construction, and with this I concur. However, postmodernism could be thought to be claiming that the self and subjectivity are not simply constructions but that under conditions of the postmodern culture they have been fragmented and demolished (Elliott 1996:95). Elliott, however, wants to argue the opposite that

If the postmodern proliferation of signs and languages entails a radical trans-mutation of the deep structures of human subjectivity, perhaps this marks a positive point between identity and politics, the creation of a reflective, discursive space for the mapping of individual and collective autonomy. (ibid:95/6)

Whatever else this may mean it is surely claiming that mental realities are not simply constructions unrelated to the social reality but are indeed mirrors or creations of that reality. It also seems to imply that the signs and languages are independent of the self and are not an aspect of the embodied self whose brain activity creates those signs and languages. This contrasts with what I am arguing which is that they are constructions made possible by the linguisticity of human beings and of language and that both the psychic and social realities are creations of that linguistic capacity, rooting the psychic in the body. The postmodern self and subjectivity as described by Elliott and others seems in contrast to be rather disembodied.

This is not the place to make a critique of postmodernism but Elliott's use of psychoanalysis calls for some comment. In taking up the position he does Elliott wishes to differentiate himself from the pessimistic implications of much postmodern thought with its emphasis on the fragmentation of the self and the destruction of subjectivity. If this were really so then it might be wondered how anybody could escape from madness and be available to stand outside the destructive process so as to offer support for the damaged and fragmented selves of others. In pursuit of that objective Elliott calls in aid some psychoanalytic theories and appears to be citing them as independent realities capable not only of providing some independent corroboration for his position but also providing evidence for the existence of undamaged selves above the fray of the postmodern world. He depends particularly on the idea advanced by Klein and others that what is in the mind of the analyst (or of the mother as Winnicott claims) is the same as what is in the mind of the analysand or infant. Moreover, he accepts uncritically the claim that the analyst, or

mother, somehow processes these affects and objects and mystically hands them back transformed to the other. Sand (1983) has cautioned against the assumption that the mind of the analyst contains what is in the mind of the analysand unless there is sufficient corroborative evidence in addition. Geha (1988) has gone even further in his discussion of Freud's narrative of the Wolf Man, claiming that

In Freud's consulting room the magical mirror set to exhibit the Wolf Man himself reflected only the mind of Freud. The recent inundation of studies on Freud the man has increasingly traced the incredible extent to which Freud's own personality winds through the body of his work. (ibid:112)

So what Geha is arguing is that what Freud discovered was his own mind in the patient and not the patient's mind in his. Even without going so far, and assuming that sometimes the analyst has evidence that he and the patient are mentally in accord and that it is the patient who is determining the content, the interpretation of that content may well be a construction derived from the metapsychology, trying to provide a meaning or a context for what is being experienced by both. The ambiguity of the term 'object' in psychoanalysis leads to a confusion about the meaning of the concepts of projection and projective identification which Elliott, in common with others, uses to establish the idea of the identity of the contents of the minds of the analyst and patient, as well as the mother and baby. In psychoanalytic terms the 'object' usually refers to the mental object in the mind of the patient or infant which can be split, or have qualities attributed to it internally so that the external object is then treated *as if* it has two different realities, or has the attributes of the mental object without there being any real correspondence between them.

This is the essence of transference in psychoanalysis and the analyst helps the patient to understand that the analyst in reality is *not* like the patient's internal objects which are, indeed, phantasies. The confusion arises from the use of the same term, 'object', for both the psychic images in the mind of the infant or analysand and for people in the external reality. In the psychoanalytic process the analyst attempts to avoid responding to the patient in the way expected by the patient and in that sense is outside the turmoil experienced by the patient. In the Classical, as well as the Kleinian, model the analyst, standing aloof from the patient, resembles Elliott's implied model of the self unaffected by the chaos of the postmodern world leaving him available to contain and heal the selves damaged by that chaos. It is difficult to see, however, how the analyst could stand aloof from the destructive, self and subjectivity demolishing, influences of the hypothesised postmodern world shared in common with the patient and the inhabitants of that world.

In common with hermeneutics, post-structuralism and postmodernism emphasize the importance of the possibility of multiple meanings to be derived from the same text or the same utterance. Freud's metapsychology seeks to contain the meanings within its framework and provides a language determining the meanings to be derived and to create the reality they express. Unlike postmodernism, which seems to claim that psychic reality in the shape of the self and subjectivity is destroyed in the postmodern culture, hermeneutics lays emphasis on linguisticity as the foundation of human experience and that the reality of life is created by it. So hermeneutics is creative demonstrating not only that unlimited meaning can be derived from the same text and utterance but the capacity for linguisticity establishes the basis from which those

meanings can be derived. Postmodernism, on the other hand, is sceptical and destructive of meaning and psychic reality.

In this thesis I have attempted to establish the importance of linguisticity for psychoanalysis and in the creation of Freud's metapsychology. It could be argued that I have not paid attention to the prelinguistic, preverbal stage of development or have diminished its significance. The importance of the very earliest stages of life cannot be underestimated in the psychological development of individuals. It is the case that preverbal experiences cannot be recalled in later life although the imprint of them is always significant. In a sense they may be like Searle's alingual brute facts which have to be brought in to human discourse by language even though they exist independently of it. When patients come to know something of how they have been affected by these preverbal experiences they do not remember them in the same way that they remember forgotten or repressed memories recovered in therapy. The understanding of something about those early experiences nevertheless seems to leave the subject detached from them. It is more like understanding why patients feel something in the present but remaining detached from the primal experience itself. More importantly about the preverbal stage of experience is the question of communication between mother and baby. This communication has been described as a proto-language. Preverbal communication cannot really be described as language which involves symbolic representation, grammar and syntax, metaphor and metonymy, as well as speech. None of this appears in preverbal communication. But whether or not it can be described as a language may be beside the point in the discussion of psychoanalysis as a language. As Hurry (1998) has

recognized psychoanalysis proper does require language and symbolic representation, and she has distinguished between that and psychotherapy relying on the non-verbal interaction between psychotherapist and child (similar to the non-verbal interaction between mother and baby), which if successful, could lead to psychoanalytic treatment proper. The preverbal stage could be compared with human interaction before the evolution of language and in the modern individual is a precursor to the development of language occurring when the infant's neurophysiological development has reached the appropriate stage.

In emphasising the importance of language and linguisticity I have found confirmation in hermeneutic thought which claims that language is the medium within which human experience exists and expresses itself. This notion of the importance in human life of language is supported by archaeological evidence for the evolutionary development of the species *homo sapiens sapiens* in terms of speech, language and symbolic representation (Donald 1991; Mithen 1996). Chomsky and Pinker, without undertaking evolutionary studies themselves, have claimed that the potential for language is part of the neurological equipment that infants are born with. So that a number of studies converge on emphasising the significance of language and linguisticity for the development of the human species. I have coupled the hermeneutic concept with Searle's notion that language can create a social reality have argued that it can also create a psychic reality of which Freud's metapsychology is the prime example.

Appendix 1

Why did Freud give up the Seduction Theory ?

A substantial literature has grown around this topic with different commentators taking radically different positions about it. They include Anzieu, Balmary, Esterson, Krüll, Kupfersmid, Israëls & Schatzman, Masson, Macmillan, Schimek, Sulloway and Swales, Vernant as well as others. Most are agreed that it was a development of great significance for his theory and the concepts that he created. They place different emphases on what it was that led to his abandonment of an idea that he had at first made the cornerstone of his theory of the ætiology of neurosis. Their different views fall roughly into the following categories:-

- a. absence of evidence of memories of seduction from any of Freud's patients (Esterson 1993; Macmillan 1992 & 1997; Schimek 1987); or, that evidence was a consequence of suggestion, conscious or unconscious (Freud 1925; Borch-Jacobsen 1996)
- b. failure of nerve in the face of adverse criticism of his sexual theory (Masson 1984)
- c. lack of independent empirical evidence (Israëls & Schatzman 1993; Sulloway 1979; Macmillan 1992 & 1997)
- d. a consequence of his reaction to the death of his father (Balmary 1982; Krüll 1986; Kupfersmid 1992).

In the famous letter to Fliess on 21st September 1897 announcing his disbelief in his 'neurotica' Freud gives four reasons for this loss of conviction. They are

- a. his inability to bring any of his analyses to a successful conclusion¹
- b. that in all cases the *father*, not excluding his own, had to be accused of being perverse and he could not believe that 'such widespread perversions' were very probable
- c. because there were no indications of reality in the unconscious it was not possible to distinguish between truth and fiction
- d. that even in the deepest psychosis unconscious memory does not break through and the secrets of childhood experiences are not disclosed; and this had implications for treatment in that the disclosure of those experiences could not be expected in therapy.

Strachey comments in a footnote (SE1:160-1) that Freud did not completely abandon the theory, despite the doubts expressed in this letter, for another eight years until the publication of the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality (1905b)*². Strachey further notes that in his paper on 'Female Sexuality' (1931) Freud claimed that the phantasies of his patients about the seduction by the father were a displacement from the actual *experience* of sexual stimulation by the mother whose 'activities over the child's bodily hygiene' (ibid:238) stimulated their genitals in a pleasurable way. So the phantasy was not *sui generis* but was a consequence of actual experience rather than being completely imaginary. Whatever the truth of the matter the relevance of that claimed displacement on to the father will become apparent when the question of Freud's reference to the innocence of the fathers is considered below.

In addition to the letter to Fliess Freud made a number of later references to the abandonment of the seduction theory, the first of which was in the *Three Essays on Sexuality* (1905b) where he commented that while he had not exaggerated the importance of seduction he had been unaware of the fact that, for many, such experiences did not lead to neurosis and that in consequence he had over-estimated its importance as an ætiological factor. In the following year in 'My Views of the Part Played by Sexuality in the Aetiology of the Neuroses' (1906) he was more explicit. There he ascribed it to the scantiness of his material and the over representation of cases where sexual seduction had occurred, and to his inability to distinguish between the truth and falsehood in his patients' material. He also introduced the idea that the actual trauma was not the ætiological factor in hysteria but its repression and its further repression in puberty as a result of reactivation of the memory consequent upon other adolescent sexual experiences. In 1914 in 'On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement' he referred to his uncritical acceptance of Charcot's view of the traumatic origin of hysteria as the reason for his belief in the stories of seduction told by his patients. In the *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (1917) he made a passing reference to memories of seduction as phantasies, although there might have been a real incident, usually by an older child, which formed the basis of the displacement of the memory on to a phantasy about the father. By 1925 in 'An Autobiographical Study' (1925b) the part of the seducer in the case of girls was almost always assigned to older children. He felt he had had to be uncritical about the reality of these experiences but was finally forced to recognize that they had been made up or forced on the patients by himself. The role of the father as the seducer was mentioned in the *New Introductory Lectures* (1933) as being a consequence of the period when "the main interest was directed to discovering infantile sexual

traumas" (my italics) which he was felt compelled to recognize as phantasies. In repeating the claim first made in *Female Sexuality* (1931) that they were displacements on to the father of phantasies created by the erotic stimulation of the genitals by the patients' mothers in their activities involving the bodily hygiene of the infant he was asserting that such phantasies were an outcome of female oedipal wishes.

Few of the commentators on this conceptual shift deal with all of Freud's reasons and most tend to argue that he did not have sufficient empirical evidence, either directly from his patients' recall of actual memories or from extra-clinical sources, to support his assertion that sexual seduction in infancy or premature sexual experience was the important aetiological factor in neurosis. Esterson (1993), Israëls & Schatzman (1993), and Macmillan (1992 & 1997) argue that Freud did not have any direct evidence from his patients' material and the supposed memories were all constructions which he created from their associations and from his own responses to them. Israëls & Schatzman maintain that Freud had claimed clinical success in advance of having any evidence for it and sometimes knowingly in contradiction to the facts, referring to the case of Fleischl and cocaine, and to his comments about Anna O's treatment. They also claim that all of Freud's reasons given in the letter of September 1887 to Fliess support the idea that he had no evidence for his theory. In his published works before his abandonment of the seduction theory as well as in some of them afterwards (1916/17:370)³, Freud claimed that they were actual memories and that he believed in their reality. However, in 1925 in 'An Autobiographical Study' describing his loss of confidence in those memories he says

. . . I was at last obliged to recognize that these scenes of seduction had never taken place, and that they were only phantasies which my patients had made up or which *I myself had perhaps forced on them*. . . (1925:34) [my emphasis]

and that these productions were a consequence of the application of a technique which he had formerly regarded as correct. This suggests that the difficulties that his patients had in assenting to their reality as memories, which he referred to in 'The Aetiology of Hysteria' (1896:204), were a consequence of his interpretations or of direct or indirect suggestions, and that Esterson, Israëls & Schatzman, and Macmillan were correct in claiming that his clinical material did not provide the required empirical evidence. In addition Kupfersmid (1992) cites Schusdek (1966) who drew attention to the expansion over a brief time period in the number of patients in whom he had found memories of premature infantile sexual experience. In February 1896 Freud reported that he had thirteen cases and by April he had eighteen cases and claimed that he had clinical evidence from all of them. Kupfersmid comments

It seems unlikely that Freud could confirm that seduction had occurred in all 5 cases in 76 days. Yet, in *The Aetiology of Hysteria*, Freud claimed to have evidence for all 18 cases. (1992:301)

So it is implied that even if the memories had been of real events that Freud had probably exaggerated the number of cases involved and that the limited number (not more than thirteen) would have been inadequate to support any generalizations from them. Freud's assertion that he had been unable to bring any single analysis to a successful conclusion adds support to this view, as Israëls & Schatzman argue, if

bringing about a successful conclusion required the discovery of repressed pathological memories and the consequent elimination of the symptoms.

Despite this argument about the memories being constructed rather than real there are in the letters to Fliess some direct references to incidents of traumatic sexual experiences with adults, although not always with fathers. There are in fact more than 20 letters over a period of 2 years from 1895 to 1897 in which direct and indirect references to premature sexual *experiences*, sometimes with adults and sometimes with other children, were made in order to convey to Fliess the sort of evidence Freud was finding. Some of it purports to be accounts of actual exchanges between himself and his patients but it is almost impossible to tell whether any of the reported memories were a result of suggestion or of the pressure technique. Borch-Jacobsen (1996) claims that the only explanation for these apparently spontaneous productions is that they were the result of Freud's suggestions. Borch-Jacobsen goes on to say

Rather than accuse Freud of retroactively inventing stories that did not exist, it seems more plausible to me to admit that his patients actively responded to his suggestions, 'reproducing' all the scenes he expected of them. (ibid:38)

To illustrate he cites one of the letters to Fliess on 24th January 1897 when Freud mentions that he had read that the devil's gold turned into excrement and the *next day* a patient reported that his nurse had had money deliria and that 'money was always excrement' for her (ibid:37). Borch-Jacobsen does not think that this was a coincidence and implies that the equation of excrement and money might have been suggested by Freud rather than having arisen spontaneously in the patient's associations.

However, Schimek (1987) argues that the seduction theory was not, even at its origin, a trauma theory. It was a theory about the importance of unconscious *phantasies*, which may have been based upon memories, revived by pubertal sexual *experiences* which were then repressed forming the symptoms of neuroses. He agrees that the memories which Freud reported as having discovered in his patients were in fact constructions created by his interpretations, but that this did not matter since it was the psychic reality of the phantasies which was pathogenic rather than the trauma itself and the unconscious memory of it. Schimek concludes that the interposition of the repressed phantasy between the memory and the symptom was already inherent in the seduction theory as formulated in 'The *Ætiology of Hysteria*'. The causality of this process for the formation of the symptom is somewhat complex and its relationship with an actual event is not entirely clear.

Sulloway (1979) and Macmillan (1992 & 1997) have examined the possibility that Freud may have sought independent evidence for his hypothesis and have concluded that he did not. Sulloway in an Appendix to *Freud: Biologist of the Mind* considers the work of Dr Felix Gattel who was also Freud's pupil from the Spring of 1897. He spent some weeks in early September of that year on holiday with Freud and his family, at a time when he had almost completed his study of patients with nervous diseases undertaken to test Freud's seduction theory. This immediately preceded the letter to Fliess announcing his disbelief in his neurotica. Gattel had examined one hundred consecutive cases of anxiety neurosis and neurasthenia at Krafft-Ebing's clinic in Vienna for the purpose of testing Freud's theory. The frequency of hysteria in a random sample of patients suffering from a nervous disorder was surprising and indicated that child sexual abuse might be much more widespread than Freud was

able to believe⁴. This was despite his awareness of the nature and extent of such abuse during his sojourn in Paris in 1885 (Masson 1984). Sulloway argues persuasively that it was likely that Gattel's findings influenced Freud's thinking before he wrote the letter to Fliess later in September, although he agrees that there can be no certainty about it. Macmillan believes that Gattel's findings may have come as a culmination of a process of Freud's disillusionment about his hypothesis which was gathering during 1897. The evidence of his letters to Fliess suggests that he may have been attempting to bolster his theory against increasing doubts since he seems to have been conveying in many of the letters accounts of the infantile sexual abuse of his patients supporting his seduction theory up to and beyond the letter expressing his lack of belief in it. His expressed doubts about 'matters concerning fathers' (Masson 1985:237) had followed an earlier one when he had accused his own father of "being one of those perverts" (ibid :231). Macmillan (1992) points out that the doubts about the hypothesis could have been settled by setting up a control group of non-neurotics which he had contemplated doing in 1893, and might have found possible in co-operation with Gattel in 1897, but he did not do so.

Although it seems plausible that Freud did not find in his clinical material prior to 1897 very much to confirm the reality of sexual assaults on his patients and still less evidence that those assaults were carried out by fathers⁵, Masson (1984) expresses no doubts about the reality of those assaults. He says

. . . the seduction theory, in my opinion, was the very
cornerstone of psychoanalysis.

and

Freud was the first psychiatrist who believed his patients were telling the truth. These women were sick, not because they came from 'tainted' families, but because something terrible and secret had been done to them as children. (ibid: xxx)

Masson repeated the claim in his autobiographical account entitled *The Final Analysis* (1991). Masson clearly thinks that the fundamental basis of psychoanalysis was first and foremost a trauma theory and which was recognized by Freud, but that he gave it up through a lack of 'moral courage' engendered by the opposition and hostility of the Viennese medical world. Ellenberger (1970) and Decker (1977) dispute the conclusion that Freud was opposed by his medical colleagues and that opposition was what led to the abandonment of the theory. Kupfersmid (1992) argues that the hostility of colleagues was unlikely to have deterred Freud since he was often in conflict with them and that the oedipal theory based on his patients' phantasies would have been no more acceptable to them. The issue raised by Masson, however, seems to be more related to whether the actual sexual trauma is the pathogenic factor rather than, as Freud later claimed the repressed phantasy that might or might not be based on an actual event. Masson claims in *The Final Analysis* that even modern psychoanalysts are uninterested in the real events and favour the pathogenic nature of phantasies and, he suggests, that they consider that premature sexual experiences may not necessarily be harmful. Freud nowhere suggests that infantile sexual seduction was not harmful in itself, but that it was a necessary, although not a sufficient, aetiological factor in hysteria and this view was based upon his belief that the incidence of premature sexual experience was much more widespread than the incidence of neuroses (Freud 1896 & 1905b).

From a strictly psychoanalytical view the reference to the need to accuse fathers in all cases not excluding Freud's own father is perhaps the most interesting, and it is noteworthy that Anzieu (1986) does not make any reference to it at all in his discussion in his book about Freud's self-analysis. It is interesting that in 'The Aetiology of Hysteria' (1896b) Freud claimed that the foundations of neurosis were laid in childhood by adults (ibid:208/9) but did not specifically accuse fathers. In his letters to Fliess, however, the reference to fathers was often more specific. In his published works he sometimes disguised the fact that fathers were involved (Freud 1895b:134 & 170 footnotes added in 1924). In the course of many years in successive publications dealing with the reasons for the abandonment of his original theory Freud's direct references to fathers as the pathogenic factor came very late, most frequently in the years between 1924 and 1932 and are usually in terms of a denial that fathers were the guilty parties. Although it is speculative it may be that Freud experienced discomfort at the prospect of the father's guilt so that he could only bring himself to mention the possibility publicly some time after he had managed to transfer the responsibility for the development of neurosis to the incestuous phantasies of the children themselves.

Balmory (1979) and Krüll (1986) both consider Freud's concern about the possible guilt of fathers to be the most significant factor in his replacement of the emphasis on seduction by infant's repressed incestuous phantasies without there being any confirmation of them in reality. It is of particular interest that, as Kupfersmid notes, Freud did not especially single out fathers in all cases as the seducers until his letter of 21st September 1897 (Masson 1895:264), and that the issue of the role of fathers did not begin to feature at all until 6th December 1896 (ibid:213). That letter was written only six weeks after the death of his own father, and in ten further letters until

27th April 1898 he continued to be concerned about the role of fathers. So it becomes very significant that what could be regarded as Freud's need to assert the innocence of fathers in September 1897 had been preceded by a letter in the same year accusing his own father of being "one of those perverts" (ibid: 230/1) and another noting his own 'over affectionate feelings' for one of his own daughters, Mathilde (ibid:249). It is unquestionable that his reaction to his father's death was of great importance. He recognized in 1909 that the death of his father had been a significant element in the writing of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, and it seemed to have been influential in the *Three Essays on Sexuality*. The importance of the father was also a prominent theme in *Totem and Taboo*. It might be said that the death of his father, ["the most important event, the most poignant loss in a man's life" (Freud 1900:xxvi)] was deeply preoccupying from the end of October 1896 and for several years afterwards. The emotional turbulence it caused may have been responsible for his blaming first his own father, and, by extension, all fathers, for the sexual traumas of infancy, and then for his declaration of his and other father's innocence in September 1897. He continued to make such declarations of the innocence of fathers even as late as 1932 when he declared that his women patients' claims that their fathers had seduced them were a displacement of their mothers' erotic stimulation of their genitals (Freud 1931:120). This interpretation was repeated in the *New Introductory Lectures*, 1933.

Balmary (1979) and Krüll (1986) in different ways account for the replacement of the theory of the seduction by the father with the theory of the infant's sexual phantasy of itself having seduced the parent of the opposite sex. They both claim that in creating

the Œdipus complex Freud may have had an unconscious aim of exonerating his own father. For Krüll Freud's dream known as 'You are requested to close *the* eyes' which he related, in a letter to Fliess dated 2nd November 1896 (Masson 1985:202), as being dreamed the night after his father's death, is evidence for his wish to protect his father's reputation. This idea is reinforced by the revised version of the dream (Freud 1900:318) which adds the alternative 'You are requested to close *an* eye' which Freud interpreted as meaning "to 'wink at' or to 'overlook'" (ibid:318). Krüll, making use of Freud's other writings as if they were tantamount to free associations, argues that Freud wished to overlook or wink at his father's transgressions which might otherwise sully his posthumous reputation. In so far as he had accused his own father posthumously in another letter to Fliess in February 1897 (Masson:230/1), although not publicly, suggests that he may have been struggling with some ambivalence about it during the year following his father's death. However, it is also evident that even before his letter repudiating the theory in September 1897 he may have been having some doubts about the conclusions in his paper 'The Ætiology of Hysteria' (1886b). It may be speculated that some of his belief about the hostility of the medical establishment in Vienna might have been a consequence of his projection of those doubts on to it⁶ which, despite his confident assertion about his own father on 8th February 1896 (Masson:230/1), had been unconsciously developing since his father's death. Krüll, like Balmory, makes a good deal of the various transgressions and shortcomings of Jacob Freud which might account for Freud's wish to restore his father's image and refers particularly to the period after Jacob Freud left his own parent's home earlier in the 19th century. Her argument is constructed as follows

1. In the early 1820's Jacob Freud left the Tysmenitz shtetl to conduct his affairs further west. At that time he embraced new Jewish doctrines in place of the

strict doctrines of the community in Tysmenitz, and he also subscribed to new notions of Jewish assimilation.

2. There may have been bitter struggles with his grandparents and parents about his possible breach of the commandment to honour the father and to do his bidding, and about his betrayal of his traditional Jewish heritage. She also speculates he may have committed some sexual transgressions through indulging in masturbation, which was strictly forbidden in the Jewish tradition at Tysmenitz
3. The break would have filled him with deep guilt feelings which were likely to have surfaced during times of crisis and failure which he may have 'engineered' as punishment for those transgressions.
4. The death of Jacob's father, in February 1856, just before Sigmund was born in May, could have represented such a crisis and Sigmund's first year of life may have been marked by Jacob's massive feelings of guilt about *his* father and his own sexual transgressions which were contrary to Jewish law. Sigmund was given the Jewish name Schlomo which was also the name of his paternal grandfather.
5. Freud's crisis in 1896/7 she believes can be traced back to those childhood years in Freiberg; to the unconscious mandate she believes Jacob had given him then to be both a more loyal son than Jacob himself had been as well as to abandon strict Jewish orthodoxy and to seek success in bourgeois society. Additionally Jacob had unconsciously placed a taboo on the discovery of his (Jacob's) sexual transgressions. (Krüll 1986:178)

These ideas have some plausibility in the light of the letter Freud wrote to Fliess on 3rd October 1897 to Fliess describing his discovery of his own incestuous wishes for

his mother and specifically disclaiming the responsibility of his father in his (Freud's) case. Krüll's theories do rely, however, on a great deal of speculation about what may have been felt by Jacob and his unconscious transmission of it to his son. She argues that Freud omitted from his account of Œdipus the guilt of Laius, whose name does not appear in any of Freud's works, and that he overlooked the accounts by Aeschylus and Euripedes where the iniquities of Laius are described. In terms of her general argument about Freud's unconscious wish to 'wink at' his father's transgressions this point has some cogency and points to a possible wish to repress and maintain the unconscious knowledge of his father's contraventions of Jewish law and of his sexual peccadilloes.

Balmory (1979) goes a good deal further than Krüll in establishing the iniquity which she calls 'the hidden fault of the father' for which she believes that Freud in some way had to atone⁷. Making very free use of material drawn from many of Freud's papers as if they were free associations to phantasies she constructs a case that Jacob Freud's supposed second wife Rebecca, about whom very little is known, may have committed suicide by jumping from a train and that her suicidal act was precipitated by Jacob's infidelity. Her argument depends upon the use of Freud's material as if it could be compared with the material produced in therapeutic sessions. She overlooks the fact that, although there is a belief that free associations are freely produced by the patient without any contribution from the analyst or therapist, they are a consequence of the interaction of the patient and analyst and are relevant to that interaction even apart from any question of suggestion (Meissner 1991). Her discussion is even more speculative than Krüll's and her reconstruction of what may have happened to Rebecca is a good example. She begins with the two invented

cases in *The Studies in Hysteria (1895b)* which refer in the first case to a railway accident, and in the second to a fallen apple which had rotted. From these she draws conclusions about Freud's railway travel phobia and the possibility that the rotted fallen apple might refer to rotted dead bodies and then links them with the lost Rebecca. She writes

A train, the father's wife (the mother), [a reference to the train journey Freud made with his mother], souls of the dead in hell [a reference to the gas lamps seen by Freud on the same journey and his interpretation of them]. A train, some one who falls - is not the eating of an apple the prototype of a fall in the Bible ? Moreover, the inclusion of the rotten part, a questionable part leads in the same direction. Will our Ariadne's thread lead us once again to a fault regarding the father's wife whose death he caused ?

Undoubtedly it will, and does for she continues

If Rebecca committed suicide and there is no trace of her death in Freiberg, is it because she died elsewhere ? Could she be the fallen apple, at whose fall Freud, the patient, was not present ? Had she fallen from the train ? Has she become the horrible cadaver when she was discovered ? Is she the origin of Freud's railway phobia ? Is his fear of not being able to get in the train a revelation, a reparation of the death of Rebecca, who would have descended from the train so violently ? In the play by Ibsen studied by Freud [in the paper *Some Character-types met with in Psychoanalytic Work*, 1916] the heroine, Rebecca West, also plunges to her death from a height into a millrace below. If Rebecca Freud committed suicide by jumping off a

train, how did word reach Freud ? Through whom ? When did the incident occur - before or after his birth ?

She agrees that the answers to these questions could only be provided by Freud's own associations but concludes

These hypotheses only constitute a plausible explication of Rebecca's mysterious end, only a possible explanation of Freud's phobia and his astonishing series of invented examples. (ibid:101/2)
[my comments in square brackets].

This seems to be a fine example of psychoanalytic inference but for which very little, if any, evidence for their content exists. Rebecca's death begins as a speculative hypothesis and becomes a reality in the course of the account. No thought is given to the possibility that the absence of any record of her death may simply mean that she did not die and may have either left or disappeared. Equally, it is assumed that the record of her existence as Jacob Freud's wife is correct although it may have been a bureaucratic error.

What is most interesting and perhaps more significant about Balmory's general argument is the claim she makes, as does Krüll, that Freud failed to understand the full meaning of the Œdipus story by restricting his reading to the version by Sophocles. Other versions by Aeschylus and Euripides contain more about the iniquities of Laius and particularly his elopement with and homosexual seduction of Chrysippus, the son of King Polep with whom Laius had sought refuge from his own father. Chrysippus committed suicide when he was subsequently abandoned by Laius who was thus guilty of a sexual fault and, by implication, of murder. The oracle's warning to Laius, in the versions of Aeschylus and Euripides, was not about

the danger of having a son who would murder him, but against his having children and avoiding the catastrophes that would follow if he disobeyed this injunction. Laius breached the prohibition and tried to conceal his guilt by attempting to murder Œdipus. Balmary suggests that Œdipus then became the innocent bearer of his father's fault of which he had no conscious knowledge. She goes on to draw parallels with the supposed sexual guilt of Jacob Freud and his responsibility for the supposed death of Rebecca and to Freud's need via his selective reading of the story of Œdipus to maintain his repression of that knowledge.

What is interesting about these two rather different accounts of what Freud might have been trying to deal with in his self-analysis and the creation of psychoanalytic ideas is that they both point to the central concept of psychoanalysis as being a way of avoiding something he had discovered in the seduction theory ie the guilt of the father. They agree that the effect of the conceptual change was to shift the responsibility for the development of neurosis from the adult to the child. Freud's own hypothesis that phantasies, of which the story of Œdipus applied to himself might be one, are a defence against memories adds weight to the idea that, although he may not have memories of his father's misdeeds, he may have been concerned to maintain the repression of that unconscious knowledge.

One need not go along either of the speculative paths set forth by Balmary and Krüll to believe that something about Freud's relationship with his father was of significance in the development of his thought. In respect of the creation of the Œdipal concept it may have been determining. Additionally, in the Sophoclean version

of Œdipus Freud may perhaps have misunderstood the implications of Œdipus's blinding himself which he had interpreted as his symbolic castration as punishment for the crime of incest (Freud 1900:398n). Blindness may also be symbolic of either an unconscious wish not to know or a wilful refusal to know. The saying that 'There are none so blind as those who will not see' makes the same point. In common parlance acknowledgement of understanding something may be conveyed by the phrase 'I see' thus conflating knowledge with sight. There are two references to blindness in Sophocles. The first is the blind Teiresias, an oxymoronic 'blind-seer', who knows (sees) the truth. The second is Œdipus's self-blinding which might also be understood as a wish to return to the state of not knowing, of wishing to repress, the awful knowledge which he had obtained even if it could also be interpreted as a symbolic castration⁸. Freud's interpretation of blindness as castration and not as his wish to repress unwelcome knowledge may have been symbolic of his own wish to repress the knowledge of his father's blemishes which he had exposed in his letters during 1897. In this connection the dream 'You are requested to close the eyes' did not need the amendment that Freud later made to it since it could have been interpreted not as referring to the dead father but to the son to make himself blind (close his eyes to. . .) to the father's faults.

In his public writing, as opposed to his private letters to Fliess, Freud had never claimed that fathers were guilty of the sexual abuse of their daughters until 1924 at the earliest and then only to note that he had been mistaken. The idea had been around before then, as his letters showed, although never being publicly owned. This contrast between his letters and his published material may attest to Freud's ambivalence and that he may well have been troubled by the idea of the father's guilt.

So he was unable to express it publicly for many years and then only by denial⁹. It is noteworthy that the announcement to Fliess of the discovery of the application of the story of Œdipus to himself and the confirmation that the sexual wishes of the child were paramount in the formation of neurosis came in five letters to Fliess on 3rd/4th October, 15th, 19th October, 5th & 14th November 1897. In addition there were four other letters to Fliess during this period on 27th & 31st October 15th & 18th November 1897 (Masson 1985). This flurry of letters, which include a mass of material about early memories, took place around the first anniversary of his father's death 23rd October 1896. In the first letter of the above series he wrote that

`I can only indicate that the old man plays no active part in my case, but that no doubt I drew an inference by analogy from myself onto him; (ibid:268)

The reference to `the old man' is usually considered to be a reference to his father. The latter half of the sentence may have been an anticipation of his later hypothesis that infantile sexual wishes are projected on to the parent, as well as being the beginning of the denial of his father's guilt. In a rather coy passage a few lines down he refers to his libido having been awakened

`toward *matrem*' on a train journey at the age of two an a half years
 `during which we *must* have spent the night together and there *must* have been an opportunity to see her *nudam* . . . (ibid:268) [Latin italics in the original).

It is not quite evident what the status of this `memory' about his mother is. To have referred to something as *must* having occurred seems more like an inference than a recollection. In any case it would have required his mother to have ignored the strict traditional Jewish taboo about being seen naked. Perhaps it was an example of a

memory being constructed in later life and projected backward to an earlier period as he hypothesized in his various explanations of the aetiology of neurotic symptoms. So neurosis in place of the seduction theory an important aspect of it was the declaration of the innocence of the father and the displacement of the guilt on to the innocent son¹⁰. This may indeed have been the motive for Freud's giving up that theory.

Notes to Appendix 1

- 1 In Strachey's translation (SE1:259) he construes this as *his own* analysis. Masson (1985:266) challenges this and claims that the original manuscript reads *eine* and not *meine*, which in view of the reference to patients who had previously been gripped by analysis running away, the absence of complete *successes* and the possibility of explaining those partial *successes* (plural in both translations) in other ways suggests that Masson's translation is more accurate. Moreover as his self-analysis had only just begun, possibly in July 1897 (letter to Fliess dated 7th July) or, according to Jones, in the summer 1897, it seems unlikely that even in those days of relatively short analyses he would have expected to complete it in 2 months. Gay (1988:96) is a little more vague in his timing but claims that he had begun sporadically 'some time in the mid-1890's and engaged in it systematically from the late spring or early summer of 1897 on . . . '.
- 2 Willcocks (1994) criticises Freud for this delay in publicly announcing his abandonment of the seduction theory for so many years as being both unscientific and as being contrary to medical protocol.
- 3 See also letters to Fliess dated 12th & 22nd December 1897 and Freud's contradictory statements in *The Three Essays on Sexuality* (P190) and in *My Views on the Part Played by Sexuality in the Aetiology of Neuroses* (1906:274) that he both did not exaggerate and did overestimate the importance of sexual seduction as an aetiological factor in neurosis.
- 4 The number was 17 cases of hysteria in a sample of 100 sufferers from nervous disorders and these were about one-third to one-half of those in the same sample suffering from neurasthenia in consequence of chronic adolescent masturbation. Sulloway queries whether child sexual assaults could have been as frequent as that. Had he, Sulloway, been writing a little later than 1979 or had had an opportunity to read Masson's account of Freud's experiences in the Paris Morgue he may have been a little less likely to doubt that possibility.
- 5 Kupfersmid (1992) believes that Freud more often accused servants, siblings or other adults rather than fathers and that he had no need to make special reference to fathers in his letter to Fliess on 21st September.
- 6 Both Decker (1977) and Ellenberger (1970) challenged the assertion that Freud's colleagues were hostile to him in the period after his presentation of the sexual theories in *The Aetiology of Hysteria*.
- 7 Balmary's ideas about this are exceptionally imaginative and speculative. The idea of the hidden fault of the father which is passed from one generation to the next has obvious biblical references to the sins of the father being visited on his children and their children ad infinitum. Such a chain of inherited fault can of course only be broken by a man who has no earthly father.
- 8 The reference to the blinding of Oedipus as a symbolic castration did not occur until 1914 and was not part of Freud's original explanation of the oedipal complex.

- 9 It may be of passing interest to note that in the *Origins of Psychoanalysis* (1954) the words 'not excluding my own' in relation to accusations of paternal perversion which were now being disowned were omitted by the authors, perhaps unconsciously acting out the same wish to preserve the memory and reputation of the father as may have motivated Freud.
- 10 Krüll points out that if the Oedipal complex was universal as Freud asserted then it could not be the cause of neurosis since most people are not neurotic.

Appendix 2

Psychoanalytical Theories and Therapy.

The relationship between theory and therapy has preoccupied theorists and therapists since Freud first began his work over 100 years ago. He was ambivalent about the subject and was concerned that the theory and therapy might conflict with each other (Freud 1912a:114). The primacy of therapy over science was at first asserted, since 'psycho-analysis is not an impartial scientific investigation, but a therapeutic measure' (Freud 1909a:104), and in the case of the Rat Man the scientific objectives were described as a by-product of the therapeutic aims. Later the claims of science became more important, and although therapy remained significant it could be damaging to research (Freud 1916/7). By 1923 it was claimed that psychoanalysis was primarily a procedure for investigating mental processes and only secondly a treatment method (Freud 1923). By 1926 Freud was predicting that psychoanalysis as a scientific study of the unconscious would be more important in the future than as a therapy. He declared in the *New Introductory Lectures* that he had never been a therapeutic enthusiast. On one occasion he suggested that the patients only existed for the benefit of research and the advancement of the theory, and he was ready to draw on the clinical material to provide support for the theory even when the treatment had been unsuccessful (eg Anna O, Frau Cacilie M, Dora,

the Wolf Man). In fact, he regarded failed cases as more productive of theoretical development than successful cases. But the movement over time from the view that psychoanalysis was primarily a therapy to the view that research had primacy may have been due to some uncertainty about its effectiveness as a treatment.

A variety of outcome studies have failed to find that psychoanalysis as a psychological treatment is more effective than any other modality of psychotherapy (Eysenck 1952; Lambert 1976; Fisher & Greenberg 1985; Kline 1984; Roth & Fonagy 1996). Luborsky and Spence (1978) claimed that psychoanalysts did not know how they achieved their results. Weiss & Sampson (1986) commented they could not discuss the process of therapy on the basis of a consensus of views about theory because there was no consensus between analysts about the fundamentals of theory. Moreover where the theory came closest to consensus it was formulated in such a way as to be untestable. Meissner (1991) thought it was difficult to assess outcomes in psychoanalytic therapy according to different theories because the evidence was subtle and hidden behind the closed doors of the consulting room. Therapists' reports might not correspond with what actually occurred between patients and themselves. Macmillan (1991) concluded that the effects of psychoanalytical therapy are not unique and do not confirm it as a theory.

In the United States many attempts have been made to assess outcome at the Meninger Clinic, most recently in their Psychotherapy Research Study, and at the Columbia Psychoanalytic Center. Both were conducted on classical medical research lines, and in respect of the Meninger Clinic project audio recorded versions of the

analytic session were analysed in detail by independent therapists to identify what were thought to be the therapeutic factors. The Columbia study found that there was a distinction between analyzability and therapeutic benefit. Wallerstein (1995), describing this research, reported that

. . . only 40 percent of those who completed analyses with good therapeutic benefit were characterised as having been 'analyzed' by the project criteria. (1995:489)

The report of the project reported that it had only been marginally possible to predict outcome from the initial evaluation. Wallerstein (*ibid*) quotes the author of the report (Weber et al 1985) as follows

The prudent conclusion from these findings is *not that* therapeutic or analyzability [is] *per se* unpredictable, but that once a case has been carefully selected for analysis by a candidate, its eventual fate remains relatively indeterminate. (*ibid*:489)

While claiming that the development of an analytic process produces a better therapeutic outcome than when it is not developed the report concluded that

. . . we do not yet know precisely . . . the nature and quality of therapeutic benefit associated with the development of an analytic process and without its development. (*ibid*:490)

Other studies have reached similar conclusions (Kantrowitz 1990). The Meninger Clinic project which considered various modalities of psychotherapeutic treatment concluded (*inter alia*) that

. . . these distinctive therapeutic modalities of psychoanalysis, expressive psychotherapy, supportive psychotherapy, etc., hardly exist in anywhere near ideal form in the real world of actual practice;

that real treatments in actual practice are inextricably intermingled blends of more or less expressive-supportive and more or less supportive-stabilizing elements; that almost all treatments (including presumably pure psychoanalyses) carry many more supportive components than are usually credited to them; that the overall outcomes achieved by those treatments that are more 'analytic' as against those that are more 'supportive' are less apart than our usual expectations for those differing modalities would portend; and that the kinds of change achieved in treatments from the two ends of this spectrum are less different in nature and permanence, than again is usually expected, and indeed can often not be easily distinguished.

(ibid:502)

What this may suggest is that the attempt to identify theoretical input with therapeutic outcome is doomed to failure, and that the search for the therapeutic factor in the minutiae of the clinical session however well recorded may be as futile as the search for the holy grail.

Almost all the efforts to examine outcomes have been undertaken on the medical model of diagnosis - treatment - cure. Given the origins in the medical world of 19th Century Vienna this is hardly surprising even though many analysts and therapists are not now medically qualified. However the distinction between analyzability and therapeutic outcome observed in the Columbia study above suggests that the first quality may depend upon specific theoretical input within which the therapist and patient construct a mutually satisfying narrative, while the second may depend on

much more unspecific factors. For both the medical model with its emphasis on cure may be inappropriate.

The term 'cure' was originally used in a religious context referring to the cure of souls and involved the process of talking to a priest in the confessional, who remained largely silent except to seek clarification and to pronounce absolution and penance. What may have been involved here was something very like the modern practice of psychotherapy and depended upon the process of talking. The enhancement of well-being which may be the outcome now that patients present less with specific symptoms than in the past (Shorter 1992) may be a consequence of the linguistic communication and interaction of the therapist and patient within a philosophical and theoretical structure which allows for the examination and exploration of conditions for which no suitable language existed previously. The religious practice of confession took place within such a structure involving the concepts of sin and forgiveness and the existence of a loving god who would admit the penitent to a state of grace and to Paradise. Without such a system created by the language the practice would have made no sense. I contend that psychoanalysis and the therapies deriving from it stand in this tradition and not in the medical tradition. Their efficacy depends on the languages which they have created which allow for the conscious and reflective reference to conditions which have always existed but have not had a way of expressing themselves except as psychosomatic conditions. If as I have argued in Appendix 1 an important aspect of the theory should be the wish to deny or repress unwelcome knowledge then the use of a specific language to undo that repression becomes significant. This in its turn is a consequence of the basic linguistic characteristic of human beings.

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