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Introduction:
philosophy and psychoanalysis

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The essays in this volume are about philosophical issues arising from the work of Freud. They differ in approach and opinion, although most are written in the tradition of analytical philosophy. Readers who lack familiarity with psychoanalysis or philosophical discussion of it may find it useful to be given some perspective on the issues involved, and some indication as to how they are connected with one another. This introduction, therefore, consists of two parts. The first describes one of the most widely discussed topics from the encounter between analytical philosophy and psychoanalysis, and considers its bearing upon the exegesis and verification of Freudian theory. The second comments briefly on the essays, relating them to the issues described.¹

I

Philosophy aims, among other things, at clarity of understanding and the demarcation of knowledge. These aims are linked in the philosophical consideration of theories used in explanation, for a correct understanding of the nature of a theory may be required for judging how far explanations using that theory contribute to knowledge. Clarity of this sort about psychoanalytic theory has, it seems, been difficult to attain. In particular, the relation of Freud's explanations to those in physical or experimental science has long been a matter of dispute. Recently this dispute has taken a particular form.

In a number of remarks dating from his lectures in Cambridge in the nineteen thirties, Ludwig Wittgenstein suggested that a psychoanalytic explanation of what someone did was liable to confuse reasons with

¹ The view of psychoanalytic theory indicated in what follows was suggested to me particularly by the second chapter of Hanna Segal's *Introduction to the Work of Melanie Klein* (London, 1973). I am also indebted to work on Freud by Richard Wollheim and to him and Anita Avramides, Joanna Bosanquet, Jerry Cohen, Greg Desjardins, and Colin McGinn for helpful comments on the first draft of this introduction. I should also like to express my gratitude for the use of disguised material to an analyst who will remain anonymous.

causes, where investigation of the former were based upon what a person said, whilst the latter were associated with laws and could be investigated through experiment. These remarks and others passed into the philosophical literature as enforcing a distinction between the reasons on which an agent acted and the causes of his action, and particularly influenced subsequent work on psychoanalysis. Thus in *The Unconscious* Alisdair MacIntyre wrote, 'Freud calls the unconscious motive "the driving force behind the act". In other words he tries to treat unconscious motives both as purposes and as causes. This is simply a confusion.'²

More recently, analysts themselves have been concerned with similar distinctions. Thus in 1966, H. J. Home wrote

In discovering that the symptom had meaning and basing his treatment on this hypothesis, Freud took the psychoanalytic study of neurosis out of the world of science and into the world of the humanities, because meaning is not the product of causes but is the creation of a subject. This is a major difference: for the logic and method of the humanities is radically different from that of science, though no less respectable and rational and of course much longer established.³

Similarly, Charles Rycroft has argued that Freud's procedure was 'not the scientific one of elucidating causes but the semantic one of making sense', and that in failing to recognize this analysts lay themselves open to attack from those who see that 'psychoanalysis cannot satisfy the canons of those sciences based upon the experimental method, but who believe that if they can demonstrate its inadequacy as a causal theory, they have proved that it is nonsense'.⁴

In these and a number of related writings we find the psychoanalytic study of the reasons, intentions, or meaning of what someone does contrasted with the scientific investigation of causes. This contrast is used to support two related but distinct claims. First it is argued, as against Freud, that these different kinds of investigation are investigations of different things, i.e. that reasons are not causes. Secondly, it is argued, as against some critics of Freud, that psychoanalytic investigation has a different logic, or requires to be judged by different canons or standards, from those appropriate to physical science.

We can assess these claims by considering the contrast upon which they are based, between the investigation of causes and that of reasons or meanings. This can be brought out by comparing explanations citing causes with those citing reasons.

² London, 1968. MacIntyre revised this view in later work. See for example his article on Freud in the *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, vol. 3, pp. 249-52 (Macmillan, New York, 1967).

³ 'The Concept of Mind', *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 1968.

⁴ *Psychoanalysis Observed* (Penguin, London, 1968), especially pp. 9-20.

To be familiar with the everybody properties of objects — their hardness, fragility, solubility, etc. — is to know something about the way events involving them will cause others, and to apply to them the assumption that, in Hume's terms, like causes will have like effects. (It is plausible that a cognitive orientation towards objects, as well as a readiness to learn such things about them, is part of our evolutionary adaptation.) Thus suppose someone strikes a match and it lights, and we hold, correctly, that the striking caused the lighting. Then we should expect that if a similar match were to be struck in a like way, it too would light. Conversely, if another match were struck and failed to light, we should assume that this was due to some difference in the construction or composition of the match or the circumstances of its striking. To think this way, it seems, is already to connect the idea of a cause with that of a lawlike regularity in nature. For if we could specify how a match and striking would have to be in order to satisfy the maxim that like causes have like effects in relation to a given lighting, then we could use those specifications to state a law. It would be to the effect that whenever an event of kind *S* (like the striking) befalls an object of kind *M* (like the match) it causes an event of kind *L* (like the lighting).

Science enables us to formulate such laws. They cannot generally be stated in everyday terms, but require vocabulary drawn from theory. The way objects behave causally is explicable by reference to how they are constructed, so that an investigation of the way objects are made goes together with an attempt to form precise and specific laws about causal sequences involving them. A match, for example, will be constructed in a particular way of certain materials, known to ignite in ordinary circumstances at a given temperature, to which the friction of a striking can heat it. This kind of information is encoded in generalizations about substances and their behaviour which can be used to specify what matches and strikings must be like if the latter are to cause the former to light. These generalizations, in turn, are explicable by a more fundamental account of the way things are composed and the behaviour of their parts. Thus a given material will be composed of particular kinds of molecules in a characteristic arrangement, heating by friction will be a transfer of kinetic energy to those molecules, ignition a chemical change involving them, and so on, all such changes occurring in accord with laws of nature which are of pervasive application, and linked to their instances by mathematical deduction.

Theories embodying such laws can be used to predict events, and to explain their occurrence by showing them to be instances of general patterns in nature. Thus such theories can be tested relatively simply, by observations and experiments designed to determine whether the kinds

of events they predict actually occur. This use of laws for explanation, prediction and test is characteristic of the method associated with the physical sciences, and has seemed to some philosophers and psychologists to provide canons or standards for judging whether a theory is scientific, or has empirical significance. The application of such standards to Freud's work has commonly resulted in a demand that specific and reproducible behavioural consequences – analogous to predictable observations or results of experiment – be derived from Freudian theory.⁵

We also have a natural ability to understand one another as persons. This scheme of understanding seems fundamental to our conception of the mind, and rejecting it seems scarcely intelligible. Within it we represent one another as rational, purposive creatures, fitting our beliefs to the world as we perceive it and seeking to obtain what we desire in light of them. (Again it seems plausible to speculate that a readiness to use this scheme, together with language, is a result of evolution and consequently innate. Certainly we can imagine that it facilitates survival by enabling the individual to adjust his behaviour in all kinds of ways to that of others, and makes articulate co-operation possible.) We do this partly through the ascription of reasons.

So, for example, we spontaneously interpret what a person does by reference to his intentions or purposes in acting.⁶ These we understand in terms of the reasons on which he acted, involving beliefs and desires or other motives. Let us assume a case in which someone performs a communicative action by speaking: he says, simply enough, that the ice is thin, which he does by making some sounds, uttering the words 'The ice is thin'. We can take him to have uttered those words with a certain intention or purpose, namely, to say that the ice is thin. This will be because of certain desires and beliefs. He will have wanted to say that the ice is thin, and believed that uttering those words would be a way of doing so. There would also be further reasons for this action, and so further desires and beliefs related to it. Thus the agent might have wanted to warn someone against the possibility of falling through the ice, and thought that saying that the ice is thin would be a way of doing so; and so on.

Regarding a person's action in light of his reasons in this way makes it intelligible to us. We can see his aims in acting and why they were

⁵ On this demand see, for example, Karl Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations* (Routledge, London, 1963), p. 38n; also Ernest Nagel, in *Psychoanalysis, Scientific Method, and Philosophy* (University Press, New York, 1959), p. 40; and others in that volume.

⁶ Much of this discussion of reasons and causes is based on the papers in Donald Davidson's *Essays on Actions and Events* (Oxford, 1980). These have had wide influence, and should be consulted by anyone in search of further information on these topics.

important to him, and thus recognize that if we had such motives we should have reason to act in the same way. Also, we understand much of what is referred to as meaning by way of knowing reasons. The meaning of an action, for example, is sometimes explicated by some aspect of what the agent thought or felt about it. The meaning of a movement, sign, or symbol used in communication is often understood by reference to the kinds of communicative actions it is used or intended to perform. Thus the meaning of a word or sentence is partly to be understood through its use for the purpose of saying certain things, and hence the reasons for which it is uttered.

Citing a belief and desire as a reason for an action of a certain kind serves to explain the action by explaining the agent's desire to perform an action of that kind. The beliefs and desires cited in the example above thus purport to explain the agent's desire to utter certain words and his desire to say that the ice is thin, but give no explanation of his desire to warn. A belief and desire which can be used to explain another desire in this way are logically related to it in content. We can bring this out by saying that beliefs and desires involve thoughts. Where a belief and desire can explain a further desire, we can say, the thoughts associated with the explaining belief and desire are such as to entail the thought associated with the desire which is to be explained.

Thus suppose that the agent in the example desired to issue a warning and believed that saying that the ice is thin would be a way of doing so, and for this reason desired to say that the ice is thin. Someone who desires to issue a warning believes, or has the thought, that issuing a warning would be desirable in some way. The thought that issuing a warning would be thus desirable and the thought that saying that the ice is thin would be a way of issuing a warning together entail the thought that saying that the ice is thin would be desirable in that way. (We can see that if the former thoughts are true the latter must be.) This latter thought is that involved in the agent's desire to say that the ice is thin.⁷

The same connections hold in a family of cases of reasons for belief. Someone's reason for believing (or coming to believe) that it is summer may be that he believes that swallows have come and that swallows come only in summer; or his reason for ceasing to believe that no one can be trusted may be that he has learned of an honest man. These are instances of the more general idea that we can cite reasons where someone forms or holds a belief because of beliefs that entail it, or ceases to hold or fails to form one because of beliefs that contradict it (entail its negation). This is a parallel of the idea that we can cite reasons where, as above, someone

⁷ Parallel considerations apply for motives which involve thinking something necessary or obligatory, so far as these differ from desires.

forms or keeps a desire because of desires or beliefs whose thoughts entail its thought. Also, we can sometimes say that a person lacks or loses a desire or belief where he lacks or loses reasons – that is, desires or beliefs which are connected with it in the relevant way by entailment.⁸ All these cases of explanations by reasons, therefore, involve processes or relations of thought which are in accord with logic. So each can be seen as an instance of the idea that persons are rational.

Each of the thoughts involved in the desires and beliefs that we ascribe in giving reasons is connected in content with indefinitely many others. This means that each desire and belief must be accompanied by many others, with which it is connected in content. Suppose, for example, that someone believes that thin ice is dangerous. Then, it seems he must have further beliefs – about what ice is, what it is for ice to be thin, what for something to be dangerous, in what way thin ice is dangerous, and so on. Without these beliefs the initial one would be empty. Further beliefs are required to determine how the initial one represents things, and what role it might play in thought or action. In isolation a belief could have no representation or role, and hence no content. So it seems that any belief must go with other beliefs with which it coheres, in the sense that these others contribute to determining its content.

Ordinarily in assuming that someone believes that thin ice is dangerous we assume (as we say) that he knows what ice is, what it is for ice to be thin, and so on. This means that we attribute further beliefs to him, such as that ice is frozen water, that a person falling through ice will enter almost freezing water, that ice is thin (is rightly called 'thin') when it will not support the weight of a person, and so on. These enable us to understand, so to speak, what he believes in believing that thin ice is dangerous, and so what this means for his thought and action. It seems indeterminate precisely which beliefs must cohere with a given belief in this way, but clearly there must be very many, and they must overlap in content. A similar point applies to the content of desires.

So far we have sketched two kinds of explanation, related to causes and reasons, or to the physical and the mental, respectively. Explanations of each kind use deduction to bring information to bear on what is to be explained. The first enables us to describe events as instances of physical laws, and has one use in giving a deeper account of the causal and

⁸ Reason requires that beliefs be consistent, but not desires. Contradictory desires cannot of course both be satisfied, but the beliefs or thoughts involved in them may be consistent. When Brutus says 'As he was valiant, I honour him; but as he was ambitious I slew him' he expresses consistent thoughts involved in his presumably inconsistent desires towards Caesar.

dispositional properties of objects. The second enables us to describe beliefs or desires as derived from reasons, by exhibiting the thoughts in the former as following from the thoughts in the latter. We can see something more about how these kinds of explanation are related by further consideration of the components of reasons.

Desires and beliefs involve dispositions to thought and action; for having a reason involves having a disposition to what it is a reason for. Someone who desires to swim, for example, has a disposition to swim, in the sense that if certain conditions were fulfilled he would swim. (We shall consider the conditions later.) Likewise a person who desires to swim and believes that moving his body a certain way would be a way of doing so has a disposition to move his body in that way. And similarly, as we know, a person has a disposition to come to believe consequences of his beliefs, and to disbelieve what is inconsistent with them, even if he is unaware of doing so.

This means that desires and beliefs involve dispositions of a special and complex kind. The reasons for desire and belief we have so far considered are themselves combinations of desires and beliefs; so desires and beliefs act in combination to produce further desires and beliefs. The thoughts involved in the reasons we have so far considered entail, or have as their logical consequences, those involved in the desires and beliefs for which they are reasons. So the way desires and beliefs act in combination to produce others is a logical function of their contents. The possession of desires and beliefs thus implies the possession of dispositions to form further desires and beliefs, through the interaction of the desires and beliefs themselves. Our knowledge of reasons shows that we know something of these dispositions and interactions *a priori*, in accord with our own natural logical understanding.

Dispositions are often characterized in terms of their manifestations and vice-versa. Thus solubility is understood in connection with dissolving, fragility with certain kinds of breaking, and so on. In the case of the dispositions involved in desires, this is particularly clear: the description of a desire for action specifies the kind of action a disposition to which is involved in the possession of the desire. For this reason the citing of dispositions in explanation of their manifestations, or desires to perform certain kinds of actions in explanation of actions of those kinds, would often give little or no information. This redundancy is transcended in contrasting ways in the two kinds of explanation we are considering.

In the physical case we can eliminate reference to a disposition in explanation in favour of theoretical descriptions of the objects which have it. These descriptions and others of the events which trigger the disposition can be integrated with laws of nature to yield descriptions of

the events which are its manifestations. This not only provides explanation of the manifestations and a detailed account of how they are produced, but also elucidates the disposition itself. We can see that objects have a particular disposition in virtue of satisfying a particular theoretical description, since this makes prediction of the characteristic manifestations possible. Thus objects are inflammable in virtue of composition related to a certain chemical change, fragile in virtue of molecular structure, and so on.

In the psychological case, rather than state the desire whose disposition is manifest in the action, we cite reasons, desires and beliefs, from which this desire is derived. Since indefinitely many other desires and beliefs could have acted in combination to produce the desire visible in the action, this is informative. And clearly there is much information we can bring to bear in this way. Because we can cite further reasons for the desires and beliefs given in such an explanation, and because each desire and belief involves others in its content, we can understand a single action as issuing from a network of reasons which can be traced through in many ways.

Underlying any disposition are the mechanisms by which the events which are manifestations of it are produced. We know that the mechanisms underlying the dispositions involved in desires and beliefs are those of the human body, and in particular the brain. We regard the body as a natural object, whose physical operations and alterations – including those involved in perception, thought, and action – can be fully explained in physical terms alone. Thus when someone sees something, desires it, and reaches for it, we think there is a network of causally connected events, linking his eyes, brain, the muscular contractions involved in reaching, and so on, for all the events constituting this manifestation of the disposition involved in desire. If we knew enough about the body we could trace through this network, explaining later events by reference to earlier ones and the structure of the body, in the manner described above. This seems to apply to all the events in which dispositions connected with the mind are manifested, so that the only mechanisms involved can be said to be those of the body.

Since desires and beliefs involve dispositions whose underlying mechanisms are causal, they have a causal role, and can in this sense be regarded as causes. Reasons can therefore be regarded as causes of actions, desires and beliefs as causes of desires and beliefs, and so on. This means, moreover, that the logical role of desire and belief, which we can know *a priori* by understanding their contents and how they are related, displays for us their causal role. For example, we thus know that among the causal powers of the belief that all men are mortal is that of producing, together with the belief that Socrates is a man, the belief that Socrates is

mortal. Again, among the powers of a desire to signal is that of producing, together with a belief that waving one's hand would be a way of signaling, a desire to wave one's hand. So, finally, we can see that explanation by reasons brings information to bear which is ultimately causal; it does so by the specification of patterns of causes which operate in combination, rather than through the exhibition of causal sequences as instances of laws.

Since this fits with what we know about the body it should not seem counterintuitive. Also, if we assigned reasons no causal role, it seems we could not understand how someone's reaching for an apple could be prompted by desire or guided by the belief that it was in front of him. This does not, however, mean that desires and beliefs could be explicated by reference to physical states (of the brain, for example) in the same way that physical dispositions like fragility can. Each desire and belief can act in combination with indefinitely many others, the result always depending on the combined contents of the interacting attitudes. The dispositions involved in desires and beliefs, therefore, have no fixed physical or behavioural manifestations. So there can be no possibility of elucidating a desire or belief by producing an explanation of any fixed physical or behavioural range of events. Desires and beliefs seem irreducible by this kind of explanation. (Recognition of this may have been one source of the belief that reasons could not be causes.)⁹

Acknowledgment of the causal role of reasons thus does not imply that descriptions in terms of desires and beliefs can figure in the kind of explanation by predictive laws which we associate with physical science. Apparently they cannot. The systematic variation in the manifestations of the dispositions associated with desires and beliefs seems to ensure that these notations can play no role in laws for physical or behavioural prediction. Also, we can see that we cannot form a law connecting desire and action by specifying the conditions in which the disposition to action involved in a desire will be manifested – or, more shortly, the conditions in which an agent with a desire will act. We cannot strengthen or formalize our intuitive capacity to predict in this way, because such statements of conditions will always be circular, in the sense that the

⁹ In this connection it is worth noting that in one characteristic use of the notion of a physical state or property we do not take states or properties (but rather the objects which have them) to enter causal relations. There is thus an intuitive dissonance in the attempt to construe desires and beliefs on the model of such states or properties. Desires and beliefs can be thought of as realized by mechanisms of the brain which discharge their causal role. Such mechanisms might cause action in the appropriate circumstances, might interact with one another to produce further mechanisms structurally related to those from which they were derived, etc. The idea that the content of one thought involves that of others, however, suggests that distinguishable mechanisms will not correspond to individual desires and beliefs.

criterion of application of one notion will be stated in terms of other notions which the first was used to explicate. We shall take the simplest possible example, but this still requires going through some complex statements to see.

Suppose we try to specify some conditions for action on a particular desire by saying that someone who has a desire to swim will actually swim if (i) he is able to swim (where this includes being in the right circumstances), (ii) he is aware that he is able to swim and (iii) there is nothing else he would rather do than swim. Now to apply this we should have to be able to specify the conditions in which a person is able to swim. A person who is able to swim, presumably, is one who will actually swim if (i) he is aware that he is able to swim and (ii) he desires to swim and (iii) there is nothing he would rather do than swim. Again, if there is nothing a person would rather do than swim, it seems that if (i) he is able to swim and (ii) he is aware that he is able to swim and (iii) he desires to swim, then he will actually swim. This, it seems, takes us back to where we began.

It seems that such cycles can be enlarged or multiplied but not eliminated. We cannot measure strengths of desires, degrees of belief, preferences for ways of doing things, or the other factors which combine to determine a course of action. So in trying to state when a desire will produce an action we must assign to it a strength or role which ensures that it rather than other desires will be acted on ('nothing else he would rather do' above); then in explicating this strength or role we have to say that a desire which has it, rather than others, will produce action. Similarly, if we tried to state when a person would give up one belief because it contradicted another (as we know frequently happens) we should have to say not only that he was aware of the contradiction but also that he held one belief sufficiently more strongly than the other; and then the same kind of circle would recur.

The circularity is comparable to that involved in saying that an inflammable substance will ignite if made hot enough, while using ignition as the final criterion for sufficiency of heat. The statement is true, and also it is informative in describing cause and effect in a quantitative relation which is verifiable in experience. Beyond this, however, it provides no way of specifying when something will ignite. It is the same, I think, with the conditions of action we have been describing.¹⁰ We can

¹⁰ We do have indications of strength of desire by which we can tell that increase in it renders action more likely, and we often know when a person's desires are strong enough for him to act at once given an opportunity. Desire and action, like heat and ignition, admit of description in this very simple quantitative way without further measure. This, however, does not suffice to impose upon desire even a scale of levels whose place in an order could

see why this should be so. The explanations by reasons we have considered involve the assumption of processes or relations of thought which are in accord with logic. Each such assumption is an instance of our guiding general hypothesis in understanding one another, that persons are rational. Neither this hypothesis nor logic, however, can tell us how a person with certain beliefs and desires will think or act in a given situation.¹¹ For this, further information would be required than that brought to bear in explanations by reasons.

The preceding considerations tend to show that explanations involving reasons are not to be assimilated to explanations using predictive laws such as are found in physical science. They display causal information, it seems, in a different but certainly no less essential way. This means that our accounts of reasons cannot be tested through the use of laws putatively employed in them, such as those generalizing over beliefs, desires, or actions in the ways described. Nevertheless, it seems clear that we can be regarded as implicitly performing a suitable kind of testing in this field. And it seems that this does involve generalizations, if not at the level of those we have so far rejected.

We can regard ourselves as taking each interpretive explanation as liable to confirmation or disconfirmation through coherence or dissonance with other explanations of the same kind. Each such explanation involves the attribution of desires and beliefs. Each of these, moreover, is associated with many others, which cohere with it and help to fill out its content. Where the desires and beliefs in one explanation cohere and overlap with those of others, the explanations are mutually confirming. (Where they contradict or fail to cohere they are mutually disconfirming.) Since explanations by reasons are thus confirmed (or disconfirmed) by relation to others, giving the best account of an agent's actions requires fitting the pattern of his actions to the pattern of his motives as a whole, so as to achieve the greatest coherence.

Thus a judgment that an agent wants to warn someone about the danger of thin ice will fit with other interpretations of his actions which, for example, represent him as knowing what ice is, knowing thin ice is dangerous, thinking the danger might be avoided by warning, having a kind of concern which would prompt warning, and so on and on. It would not seem to fit (although it might be made to) with the falsity of any of these. Each of these judgments would likewise fit or fail to fit with

be correlated with something, let alone any stronger form of measure such as is used for temperature.

¹¹ The implication of both the laws of logic and the general assumption of rationality in explanations by reasons may of course engender the impression that laws are involved in a different way.

others which could be made on the basis of the interpretation of action, and so on and on. Finally, the judgment that an agent thinks he can say that the ice is thin by uttering 'The ice is thin' will be supported by other of his actions (particularly those performed by or in response to speech) which also confirm his understanding of English. So, although we interpret actions intuitively one by one, we can be regarded as understanding them in relation to each other more or less overall, constructing patterns of explanation which increase coherence and so give greater understanding of the content of reasons and their role in producing action.

This kind of verification through coherence of reasons can be compared to the statistical testing of hypotheses. If an hypothesis is to be tested in this way it must at least tentatively be interpreted as explaining and implying a range of correlations. If many of these obtain the hypothesis and interpretation are confirmed, whereas if they do not then either the hypothesis or interpretation is disconfirmed. Explanations by reasons can be taken to imply that desires and beliefs involving the thoughts of the reasons will figure in the explanations of other actions, and that those involving thoughts which contradict those in the reasons will not. It seems that we implicitly frame and confirm such hypotheses continually, in the course of understanding one another as rational agents in the sense described above.

The assumption that we can understand one another in this way entails that each of us will so behave that what he does can be interpreted cogently in terms of reasons. In this sense the assumption involves a general prediction about behaviour. It also entails that for practically every action reasons are to be found which cohere with those for many other actions, and this is a strong generalization about reasons and actions. The fact that such generalizations obtain enables us to verify or falsify explanations by reasons in the manner indicated. And our success in explaining actions in this way sustains the generalizations themselves.

The foregoing discussion of explanation and confirmation in everyday psychology may help to show why Home rightly thought it relevant to speak of a different logic and method for the humanities, and why Rycroft felt that psychoanalysis was misjudged if taken on the model of physical science (a point mistakenly put, if the preceding argument is correct, in terms of causality). This brief discussion of interpretation does not of course constitute an account of method. Still it seems appropriate that explanations displaying patterns of derivation among causes operating together should be sustained by a sort of holistic coherence.

Support of this kind might be regarded as increased if the cohering

explanations could be assigned some weight in abstraction from their place in the overall pattern of successful explanation. Such weight would be provided by the supposition, mentioned above, that this kind of co-ordinating mutual understanding is part of our adaptation. On this assumption we might expect the exercise of understanding in common-sense psychology to appear merely intuitive and scarcely capable of further elucidation, especially by comparison with the achievements of science. For this is how it would be if the interpretive capacity (like that for the perception of ordinary physical things) was put in a certain natural harmony with its objects by the processes of evolution.

We noted above some connections between reasons and meaning. In his psychoanalytic work Freud characteristically found the meaning of a dream, symptom, or other phenomenon by understanding it as a wish-fulfilment. What is meant by this can be seen in a simple example. Freud observed that frequently when he had eaten anchovies or some other salty food before sleeping he would dream that *he was drinking delicious cool water*. After some repetitions of the dream, he would wake up thirsty and get a drink of water. (This common dream has of course a counterpart concerning urination.)

In dreaming Freud produces an imaginative representation of himself as doing and experiencing something, that is, drinking. Also it seems that while sleeping, Freud desired or wished to drink. He was in a state such that if he had been aware of it and able to describe it he would have recognized it as one of desiring or wishing to drink (as he did on waking).¹² So clearly the content of Freud's desire is related to that of his dream. Since the desire is to drink, and the dream is that he is drinking, the dream represents the gratification of the desire, or represents the desire as fulfilled.

Dreams and other imaginative representations involve something like experience, belief and feeling. In dreaming he is drinking the dreamer has an experience as of drinking, and in some sense believes this. Still, this experience of gratification or satisfaction must be regarded as imaginary or, as Freud says, hallucinatory. For no water was in fact drunk, and the dreamer's genuine thirst remains unsatisfied.

It seems that the content—content relation between desire and dream in this case is strong evidence that it is no accident that the dream

¹² Desires seem more closely related to possibilities of action than wishes, in the sense (for example) that a person is better said to wish than to desire that his past life had been different. Desires clearly go together with related wishes, and both involve fulfilment or frustration which we may imagine away. So I shall use either notion as required to facilitate discussion.

accompanied the desire. Rather, it seems, we should suppose that the desire caused the dream. This consideration is evidently reinforced by what we have learnt above about the connection between content and causal role. The dream is thus an imaginative representation of the experience of the satisfaction of a desire, caused by that desire. These are, I think, the central features of a (Freudian) wish-fulfilment; the fulfilment in such cases being imaginary or hallucinatory.

Any structure with these features, it seems, will involve a twofold denial or falsification of reality — a falsification, in psychoanalytic terms, of inner and outer reality. In representing an unfulfilled desire or wish as gratified, a wish-fulfilment falsely represents the psychological state of the agent. Thus the dreamer, while thirsty, experiences himself as drinking. Further, in representing the agent as gratifying rather than suffering his unfulfilled desire or wish, a wish-fulfilment falsely represents the activity of the agent. The dreamer, asleep, takes himself to be active, drinking.

Although there are other cases of dreams in which the content of the representation and that of the desire represented as gratified are independently and easily determined, those with which Freud was mainly concerned are less easy. Most dreams can rightly be seen as wish-fulfilments only when their content is compared with desires inferred from the memories, ideas, etc., which the dreamer associates with the content of the dream. These can be considered, moreover, only if the dreamer enters a frame of mind in which they can emerge, and pursues them and submits them to investigation.

So for example one of Freud's patients dreamt that she wanted to give a supper party but was unable to do so, since she had only a little smoked salmon and was unable to get anything else. The dream could be seen as wish-fulfilling only in light of the recollection that an underweight friend of whom she was jealous (and whose favourite food was smoked salmon) had the day before enquired when she was to be asked to another meal. Not giving a supper party with smoked salmon could thus be seen to fit, among other things, her desire not to feed her rival.¹³

Finally, and especially in cases of conflict, a dream may represent the gratification of a desire symbolically. Thus after a session in the back of a car during which — with some difficulty — she restrained herself, a girl dreamt that she was in the car with her boy friend; he took out his knife and cut an item of her clothing. Again, a man dreamt that a young girl closely related to him offered him a flower, and he took it — this seemed a beautiful dream; later he dreamt (as he put it) he was deflowering her, and awoke in anxiety.

¹³ 1900b, IV, 147.

Symptoms occasionally have a fairly obvious representational content. Freud describes an intelligent and unembarrassed-looking girl who came for examination with two buttons of her blouse undone and one of her stockings hanging down, and showed her calf without being asked. Her main complaint was that she had a feeling in her body as if there was something 'stuck into it' which was 'moving backwards and forwards' and was 'shaking' her through and through. Sometimes it made her whole body feel 'stiff'.¹⁴ Generally, however, they can be treated as wish-fulfilling only where associations or other information make it plausible to assign to them both a content and an appropriate relation to a desire.

Consider, for example, the obsessional patient referred to as the table-cloth lady.¹⁵ Many times a day she would run from her room into a neighboring one, stand beside a table, ring for the maid, and send her away again. The compulsion to repeat this apparently meaningless action was perplexing to the patient, and presumably wearing for the maid. Part of the significance of the symptom emerged with two observations. The patient recalled that on her wedding night her husband — from whom she had separated and who was much in her thoughts — had been impotent. Many times he had run from his room into hers to try to have intercourse, and finally, saying that he would feel ashamed before the maid when she came to make the bed, poured some red ink on the sheets — but in the wrong place. To this the patient could add that when she rang she stood in such a way that the maid should see a prominent stain on the tablecloth. So it appeared that the symptom was a representation of events on her wedding night, with the difference that she ensured that the maid should see the stain. It does not seem easy to determine the content of this representation precisely. Freud remarks that the symptom shows wish-fulfilment (the husband is represented as potent), a sort of identification (with the absent husband, whose part the patient plays), and representation by means of a familiar symbolism (table and cloth for bed and sheet.) Also, the activity of the maid — in service, as it were, to the patient's representing imagination, shows a way in which the production of wish-fulfilling representations can involve co-operative or coercive activities among persons. So far as living persons are used in representations which involve symbolism, metaphor, or likeness to what they represent, wish-fulfilment is potentially an important social matter.

Finally, the role of wish-fulfilment as regards memory is exemplified in the following material from a young man who, despite a desire to settle down with a girl he loved, felt compelled to make other girls fall in love

¹⁴ 1900b, V, 618.

¹⁵ 1916, XVI, 263.

with him and to behave in what he considered an unduly seductive and promiscuous way. He began analysis by saying that being outside the consulting room door (while the analyst was with another patient) before his first session had reminded him of being outside the shut door to his parents' bedroom when he was little. Later he remembered something: he was very young, in his parents' bed (he could remember the pyjamas he was wearing, from early childhood) . . . his mother seemed to be rolling back and forth against him, as if excited and yearning, almost in tears . . . he too was excited. It could be ascertained fairly certainly that the memory related to a period when he used to cry at night and was sometimes allowed to come into his parents' bed. It was not his mother, however, but he who had rolled excitedly. The transformation in his memory was apparently wish-fulfilling.¹⁶

Now it is natural to suppose that the explanation of wish-fulfillment is the same kind as that of action. This seems to have been the assumption

¹⁶ On this topic Eysenck and Wilson write that 'Certainly Freud's choice of words is often curiously indecisive, as if he were afraid to say something that could be tested in any rigorous way. Cioffi urges us to "consider the idioms in which Freud's interpretations are typically phrased. Symptoms, errors, etc., are not simply caused by but they "announce", "proclaim", "express", "realize", "fulfil", "gratify", "represent", "imitate", or "allude to" this or that repressed impulse, thought, memory, etc." . . . these phrases may have been used to avoid refutation, as Cioffi suggests.' (*The Experimental Study of Freudian Theories*, London, 1973, p. 11. The reference is to F. Cioffi, 'Freud and the Idea of a Pseudo-Science', in R. Borger and F. Cioffi, *Explanation in the Behavioural Sciences* (Cambridge, 1970), p. 496.)

The suggested criticism seems based upon misunderstanding of Freudian theory. Freud uses 'express', 'represent', 'fulfil', 'realize', and 'gratify' as well as 'cause' in connection with wish-fulfillments not to avoid refutation but because he holds that wish-fulfillments express wishes which are not simply caused by them but also represent them as fulfilled, realized, or gratified. He uses 'imitate' because representation may involve an element of imitation, as in the table-cloth lady's imitation of her husband's running. Similarly, because of their role and content, wish-fulfilling representations can be said to announce, allude, etc. The girl's dream above alluded to events in the back of the car, as did the lady's symptom to her wedding night. The analyst's first statement on the couch — about being outside the shut door — both alluded to the past and announced (as first communications in analysis often do) a theme which was to dominate his analysis: his inability to tolerate the exclusivity of his parent's relations in their bedroom. And in connection with this his recall of a distorted memory of being in their bed gave a presumably early example of the defensive *motif* already proclaimed in his symptoms, namely that of representing the others as desiring and frustrated rather than himself. (The transposition of this theme on to the analytical situation, also announced in the first communication, continued with his coming to believe that the analyst envied and admired him, perhaps secretly loved and depended on him, preferred him to all other patients, etc.) On the importance of first communications in analysis see Freud's note at the beginning of the case of the Rat Man, discussed below. (1909d, X, 160n, 200). For description of some of Cioffi's misunderstandings see V. L. Jupp, 'Freud and Pseudo-Science' *Philosophy*, October 1977, pp. 441–53. An aspect of the account of Freud given by Eysenck et al. is discussed in Conway, 'Little Hans: Misrepresentation of the Evidence', *Bulletin of the British Psychological Society* (1978) 31, 385–7, and Cheshire, 'A big hand for Little Hans', the same *Bulletin* (1979) 32, p. 320–3.

of most philosophers (and analysts) who have explicitly addressed the explanation of symptoms, etc. And this assumption seems to have engendered debate, about the rationality or coherence of wish-fulfillment.

Thus Alexander and Mischel¹⁷ have discussed a hypothetical case of wish-fulfillment in which someone's (Oedipal) wish to kill his father is expressed in his lunging at lampposts with his umbrella, this latter being, it seems, a representation of an attack. They disagree as to whether he can be said to have reason, or good reason, for doing this.

Alexander argues that 'if my wish to kill my father were conscious it would be obvious to me that it was not adequately satisfied by lunging at lampposts'. Hence, he says, 'these "reasons" can be reasons for this behaviour only if they are unconscious for they would not look like reasons if they were conscious'. This, he thinks, shows that in an ordinary sense they cannot be regarded as good reasons, or perhaps as reasons at all. Mischel replies that 'if I (unconsciously) want to kill my father and (unconsciously) identify lunging at lampposts with killing him, then, given this irrational starting point, I do have good reason for lunging at lampposts'. This, he thinks, shows that explanation in this case is analogous to explanation of action by a reason.

The argument seems to turn upon Alexander and Mischel's common assumption that the symptomatic action in question should be explained by the agent's desire to kill his father together with some such belief as, that lunging at lampposts would be a way of doing so. Such a belief would, as Mischel says, identify lunging with killing, and so would fulfil the condition, which Alexander mentions, of ensuring that the desire to kill can be taken as satisfied by lunging. On this reading, Alexander's point would be that the belief that lunging at lampposts is a way of killing one's father would not be credible as a conscious belief, and so cannot serve as a constituent of a reason in the ordinary sense; and Mischel's reply would be that still we have here the elements of a reason, a desire and an (irrational) belief, in the dim light of which the action to be explained would appear desirable.

It would be possible, although it does not seem plausible, to interpret each of the examples we have considered in this way. Thus the table-cloth lady's ritual might be explained by some such desire as to have her wedding night over again except with things right, and a belief

¹⁷ P. Alexander, 'Rational Behaviour and Psychoanalytic Explanation', *Mind*, July 1962, 326–41 and a reply by T. Mischel, *Mind*, January 1965, 71–8. On this topic see also R. Audi, *The Monist*, 1972, 444–64. An attempt to reformulate psychoanalytic theory in terms relating to action is in Schafer, *A New Language for Psychoanalysis*, (New Haven, Yale, 1976).

that running to the table, etc., was a way of doing so. The dream of drinking could be explained by a desire to drink and some such belief as, that dreaming of drinking was a way of drinking. Perhaps even the analysand's memory could be explained by his desire to avoid recollection of unrequited desire and his belief that remembering wrongly in this way was a way of doing so. In these accounts, however, we encounter two difficulties. The first is that indicated by Alexander. Even if the desire to be linked to a wish-fulfilling representation is clear, and it seems reasonable to suppose that the representation is caused by that desire, still the belief required to explain the representation in accord with the pattern used to explain actions by reasons seems scarcely comprehensible or coherent.¹⁸ The second, related to this, is that in many cases we cannot plausibly link the content of a wish-fulfilment directly with a desire for action. Thus it does not seem quite right to say that the table-cloth lady's ritual shows her desire to repeat her wedding night; rather insofar as we link it to the past it seems we should say that it expresses her wish that things had been different. These considerations both suggest that we should not describe wish-fulfilment on the pattern of rational action, but rather as activity of the imagination.

We imagine by representing things to ourselves. Since wish-fulfilling activities consist in the imaginative representation of the gratification of desires or wishes, it seems we can regard them simply as forms of imagining that things are as (in some way) we wish they were. Such imagining may be caused by a desire to perform a certain kind of action, but it does not seem to be undertaken because of a belief that it is a way of performing that kind of action. It seems natural, for example, that someone hungry should imagine eating; but this carries no suggestion that he supposes that the imagining is a way of eating. No more is this implied if he hallucinates, and so believes that he is eating. Again, his imagining, like his desire to eat, may show his belief that eating is a way of satisfying hunger; but this is a belief about eating, not imagining.

We can imagine things at will, and imagining may involve experiences of gratification. These facts may suggest that the imagining in wish-fulfilment is a kind of intentional action. In many central cases this does not seem to be so. Some cases, however, may involve a certain kind of primitive confusion about actions and events, or an exercise of will of a kind prior to that in intentional action. An adequate discussion of this

¹⁸ Reflecting on this same difficulty W. Alston refers to the possibility 'that the unconscious is quite illogical'. ('Psychoanalytic Theories, Logical Status of', *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, New York, 1967, vol. 6, pp. 512-16.) This particular illogicality, if I am right, is simply the result of the imposition of an inappropriate pattern of explanation. See also F. Cioffi, 'Wishes, Symptoms, and Actions', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume*, 1974, 97ff, and the reply of P. Alexander.

would require detailed consideration of the psychoanalytic account of the development of the mind. Some arguments, however, may serve to indicate a line of thought.

Wish-fulfilment may seem most like action where it is effected by bodily or intentional activity, as in the *tableau vivant* of Freud's obsessional patient or the stabbing with an umbrella discussed above. Someone may indeed imagine himself to be performing one kind of action (attacking his father) by actually performing another (lunging with an umbrella); his imagining, that is, may consist partly in his doing something which symbolizes, resembles, or otherwise represents (to him) what he imagines doing. That imagining may govern someone's intentional actions in this way, however, does not show that the imagining itself is intentional. Characteristically, it seems, the actions will be intentional but the imagining not. This is because imaginative activity seems not to be governed by desire and belief in the way intentional action is. It is not typically undertaken, for example, because of a desire to obtain an experience of gratification and a belief that imagining something would be a way of doing so. The variety of our imaginings seems to outrun any beliefs we might have on this score, and what we imagine, with its pleasures or pains, usually arises in us unbidden. Nor is the enactment of a live representation typically undertaken because of a desire to represent something and a belief that performing certain actions may be a way of doing so. Rather it seems that the mark of the imagination — in this or other forms — is the capacity to create representations which are unanticipated and new. Activity like this could not be governed by beliefs about how to represent things.

We can think of imagining as like breathing, which follows a natural course in adjustment to need unless intention or will intervenes. On such a view the natural activity of imagination would encompass the spontaneous production of images of gratified desire, while willed imagining might hold, recapture, or elaborate these or others from perception or memory.¹⁹ From the outside we can think of the aim of such imagining in terms of the production or alteration of images or experiences. A correct description of the intentions with which such imagining is done, however, must depend upon how the person himself regards his activity. He can be said to intend to imagine or represent only if he can think of his activity in that way. So far as he is unable to distinguish imagining from acting or altering the world, his intentions in imagining must likewise be regarded as confused, unformed, or indeterminate.

We may speculate that in the first months of life, before an infant

¹⁹ See Freud's abstract and simplified account of this at 1910a, V, 565 and elsewhere.

comes to think of the objective world and his activities in it as distinct from what he imagines, this indeterminacy is radical and pervasive. In particular, it seems that the infant may picture the world in ways systematically distorted by his wishes, and also as partly subject to his will in the way his imaginings are. In Freudian terms, this would be the period of the domination of the pleasure principle²⁰ and infantile omnipotence of thought, before the establishment of the reality principle. The willed imagining by which the child alters his world during this period can be regarded as a kind of proto-action; and so far as symptoms and dreams involve reversion to this way of thinking, they can be viewed in the same way.

Looking to Freud's theories in the terms we have been trying to clarify, we can see that one of his central claims was that a wide range of human activities involved the wish-fulfilling representation of certain themes in desire. These included not only dreams, symptoms, slips, and transference, but also those of children at play and adults in serious pursuits (perhaps the table-cloth lady's serious symptomatic play with her maid suggests that these are not entirely distinct categories). This claim, as we can see from Freud's interpretive work, was meant to be supported by a systematic correlation and coherence among the results of the interpretation of wish-fulfillment and action.

Abstracting from the content of Freud's theory, we can think of such a correlation as built up as follows. We can interpret almost any action in terms of reasons which cohere with those for other actions. However, some activities which spring from the mind — dreams, symptoms, irrational actions — appear senseless or unmotivated in some respect. So far as these can cogently be interpreted as involving representation and wish-fulfillment, we can form hypotheses which partly explain them by relating them to desires or wishes. These hypotheses, in turn, can be tested through their coherence of dissonance with the results of interpreting both actions and other putative wish-fulfillments. In addition, they may lead to further interpretations of both actions and other wish-fulfillments. These may be tested as before; and so on. Such a process might lead by cogent interpretive steps to a theory which radically transcended commonsense psychology, and yet was strongly supported by interpretive coherence in the same way.

²⁰ See 1911b, XII, 215ff, 'Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning'. For more on the role of imagination in psychoanalytic theory see R. Wollheim, 'Identification and Imagination' in *On Art and the Mind* (London, 1973), and 'Wish-fulfillment' in *Rational Action*, ed. R. Harrison (Cambridge, 1979). Wollheim's account of omnipotence of thought is slightly different from that indicated here.

This extended psychology would supplement the assumption of the rationality of action with another concerning the ubiquity and connectedness of wishful imagining. As interpretive success in commonsense psychology sustains the strongly predictive guiding principle of interpretation that for almost any action reasons are to be found which cohere with those for many other actions, so success in the extended psychology might ultimately sustain the strongly predictive principle that for almost any wish-fulfillment desires are to be found which cohere with those for many actions and many other wish-fulfillments. This would mean that interpretations in the extended psychology could be strongly confirmed or disconfirmed, by very many instances of coherence or dissonance with others. So far as the ascription of new and definite patterns of desires was thus strongly and repeatedly confirmed, an extended psychology of determinate content would be strongly supported, and would itself contribute explanation and coherence to the commonsense psychology upon which it was based.

Also, still abstracting from the detail and content of Freud's theory, we can see how the interpretation of a wish-fulfilling structure in such a psychology may provide a condition for a sort of psychic development. An imaginary experience of gratification is precisely suited to preclude awareness of the desire which causes it, as an illusory experience of drinking may prevent awareness of thirst or a vivid phantasy of being desired may prevent awareness of unrequited desire. Now, for a desire or other mental item to be kept from awareness is partly for it to be kept from interacting — logically and causally — with other desires, beliefs, etc., in thought and action. Hence the desire may remain both ungratified and unmodified, like the dreamer's thirst masked by his illusion of drinking.

Interpretation of such a structure may bring awareness of it, and hence the possibility that it should be changed. This, however, involves acknowledging both the internal and external falsification of reality in it — recognizing an unfulfilled desire together with the fact that a range of apparently gratifying experience was illusory. This is partly modelled in the way a dreamer becomes aware of his thirst, and that his recent experiences of drinking have been chimerical, in waking to get a drink; but the hostility of wishful thinking to awareness of real desire is familiar from other areas of life.

The role of awareness here merits further consideration. Wish-fulfillment involves a certain incoherence or irrationality — the persistence of a desire together with an imaginary belief in, or experience of, its gratification. Likewise unconscious motivation characteristically involves contradictory beliefs or desires, of which the agent is unaware. Suppose, for example, that someone is hypnotized and told that after the

trance is over he will open an umbrella whenever the hypnotist gives some signal. He wakes up and seems to remember nothing about the trance, but ascertains where the umbrella is and keeps his attention on the hypnotist. Then at the signal he opens the umbrella, confusedly giving some excuse for doing so.

He is best understood as acting on the hypnotist's instructions. This implies that he believes that he was told to open an umbrella and in some sense desires to do as he was told. He may, however, sincerely deny that anyone has told him this, and he may be strongly opposed to any form of unthinking compliance with instructions. In this sense he has contradictory beliefs and desires. We may assume, as often happens, that if he learnt of the suggestion he would try hard to oppose it, and if he remembered being given it he would lose all desire to act accordingly. This means that a kind of memory and awareness would enable him to act more rationally; that is, to choose the course of action (refraining from opening an umbrella for no good reason) in best accord with his desires and beliefs, all things considered.²¹

This indicates how awareness is central to rationality. A person acts rationally when he acts best to satisfy all his own desires, obligations and so forth, as he sees things. To do so he must choose the most preferable – the most desirable, all things considered, or the best in light of his own motives, whatever they are – of the alternative actions he can perform. So far as his desires, beliefs, or other motives are not adequately reflected in his choices, he may fail to act rationally. What a person is fully aware of, it seems, enters most completely into his processes of thought, and plays its proper role in determining his choices. Sometimes, as in the examples mentioned, awareness may lead to resolution of incoherence or contradiction and hence to a simple and rational change in action. Things are more complicated, however, as regards the kind of motives with which psychoanalysis is concerned.

There is no rational satisfaction for the desires Freud thought represented in the incest and parricide of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, awareness

²¹ Logical consistency figures at two levels – often not grammatically distinguished – in our description of a person. If we take a person as an object which satisfies psychological predicates, then of course the predicates a person satisfies must be consistent. Also, we regard one another as rational, and so generally consistent in belief. This means that the contents of the beliefs we ascribe to one another will generally be consistent. These are, however, distinct matters. We can, as above, give a consistent description of an imperfectly consistent agent.

It may be tempting to think that such a description leads to contradiction. For, one may say, if he believes that it is not the case that the hypnotist told him to open an umbrella, then he doesn't believe that the hypnotist told him. So it seems that it is the case that he believes this, and also that it is not the case that he believes this; which is a contradiction. Such reasoning is, however, invalid; it requires us to assume the agent's consistency at just the point at which we know it to fail.

of which could not be borne. In theory, so far as the boy explicitly represents such desires as gratified he feels unbearable anxiety and despair at the damage he has done his parents and also fear of retaliation from his father. Yet so far as he acknowledges his parents' love for one another he suffers unbearable jealousy. Hence, in one line of thought, he represents his mother as loving him rather than his father, and his father as jealous rather than himself. This, however, results in tear of his father's jealous hostility and also of the consequences of his own wishful retaliation. So this representation is replaced by one in which the relations between father and son are idealized.

The jealous hatred and desire for possession masked by this idealization may, partly because they are so masked, be rendered unmodifiable by experience. This otherwise enables the boy more fully to appreciate and accept his role as a child who is loved by parents who nurture and care for him, help him to grow up, and so forth; and hence to accept that the way they love him is quite different from the way they love each other. So far as the primitive emotions remain unmodified they may continue to be expressed in representations which cause anxiety (or actual damage), may be guarded against by inhibition, and so on.

The reasons for anxiety will include love and concern for the parents. Hence interpretation of these representations will not tend to bring action on the desires shown in them, but rather modification of these desires and their products through awareness and contact with others in thought. Knowledge that hostility and imagined hostility are based on misconception and wish-fulfilment, for example, may bring a lessening of fear and hatred, and awareness that imagined possession and destruction are illusory may bring relief from guilt. Such changes may in turn diminish the role of such motives in the imagination, and hence the intensity of anxiety and idealization consequent on them.

All this may enable the patient to appreciate and accept more fully his place in the family, and to understand what was done for him as a needy child (rather than an imperious little parent). If so, his representations of possession and damage may be replaced by others which express his desires – previously shown mainly in idealization – to make good the relations between and with his parents which were distorted by his own infantile feelings, and to do other things from love, care, gratitude, and so on. Since these like other representations may involve activities which partly replicate or symbolize what they represent, this may mean an indirect but far-reaching change in action.²²

²² I should make clear that this sketch of theory is extremely incomplete, and is meant for illustration. Also the emphasis on reparation and gratitude in sublimation is taken from Melanie Klein. (See Hanna Segal, *Klein*, London, 1980.)

According to this last part of the theory, the sublimation of primitive sexual and aggressive desires which follows upon awareness of them and their modification in thought leads to the inception of new desires and interests, and so to more deeply satisfying rational action. This part of the pattern of rational action, however, takes its form and capacity to satisfy partly from its role as benign wish-fulfilment. (So gardening might be thought a continuously satisfying activity because of what it represented as well as because of its instrumental function.) Hence on this view of the working of the mind, it might be said, reason is not so much the slave of the passions as the servant of the imagination.

As the remarks above suggest, the psychoanalytic conception of defence is partly to be understood in terms of the kind of representation we have been considering. For example, in using projection as a defence against feelings of frustration or aggression, a person represents and feels another, rather than himself, to be frustrated or aggressive. This can be a simple wish-fulfilling reversal, such as was to be seen in the memories of the analysand above, who represented his mother rather than himself as yearning for erotic contact. Again, transference, which Freud described from his early work as the patient's tendency to make the analyst the object of the thoughts and feelings involved in his symptoms, consists in the patient's unconsciously representing the analyst as a figure from his past. This is a source of one of the interpretive correlations mentioned above, since if the patient's symptoms arise, as Freud claimed, from the Oedipus complex, then he will unconsciously experience and represent the analyst in the Oedipal terms hypothesized in theory.

This can partly be illustrated by reference to Freud's patient called the Rat Man. He was a lawyer, described by Freud as a young man of value and promise, who suffered from a number of incapacitating obsessions and compulsions. Recently he had been particularly tormented by the thought and fear that a certain punishment, in which rats gnawed their way into the anus of the victim, should be applied to his lady and his father, whom he loved. Thoughts of aggression directed towards his lady and his father were a constant source of anxiety and guilt to him, and he employed special formulae and other means to protect the victims.

The idea of the rat punishment being applied in this way had occurred to him when a Captain (his father had been a soldier) had told him about it on manoeuvres. Also, when this Captain told him of a small debt (his father had incurred a debt while in the army which he had apparently failed to repay) he developed a confused obsession with repaying it, supposing that if he failed to do so the punishment would be applied. The Captain advocated corporal punishment, and seemed to him obviously fond of cruelty. As he told Freud the story of the punishment, the

patient's face took on a strange, composite expression, which Freud interpreted as one of horror at pleasure of his own of which he was unaware. And while telling Freud of his attempts to pay the debt, the patient became confused, and repeatedly called him 'Captain'.²³

His father was dead, but much in his thoughts. This had been evidenced not only by his anxiety, but also by his thinking when he heard a joke that he must tell it to his father, by studying to please his father (but not being able to carry his studies through), and by actually imagining, when he heard a knock at the door, that it might be his father. His relationship with his father had been, as he described it, almost ideal. He said he was his father's best friend, and his father his; and in many respects this seemed to be true.²⁴ There was only one subject of disagreement between them. His father had been the suitor of a poor girl before marrying the patient's wealthy mother. The son's lady was not rich, and his father had thought the connection imprudent. He seemed to remain poised between his dead father's will and his desire for the lady; and before he had broken down his mother and family had encouraged him to marry a wealthy girl. He had suicidal impulses, and was tormented with self-reproach, as if he were a criminal, for not being present at his father's death. Also, when he had visited his father's grave, he had seen a large beast which he took to be a rat gliding over the grave; he assumed it had been gnawing on the corpse.

Despite his love for his father there seemed in his mind to be a lethal opposition between his father and his own sexual or marital gratification. He remembered before his father died thinking that the death might make him rich enough to marry his lady, and he thought later that his marrying might harm his father in the next world. He had not copulated before his father's death, and had masturbated only a little. From after his father's death, however, he remembered occasions of this which seemed significant because of their connection with the idea of a prohibition being defied.

In response to an interpretation about masturbation and thoughts of death or castration by his father, he remembered a period when he was suffering from a desire to masturbate, but was also tormented with the idea of his penis being cut off. And in connection with this he remem-

²³ 1909b, X, 155-320. I have made use of Freud's case notes from the time, appended as 'Original Record of the Case', pp. 253ff, and especially pp. 263-4 and 281-5. The patient's inability quite to distinguish his thoughts of punishment from the occurrence of punishment itself, and his connected belief in the power of his own thoughts may exemplify the kind of omnipotence of thought mentioned above. The 'Captain' paraphrasis is an early indication of the transference which emerges fairly clearly at 283-5 and is discussed below.

²⁴ It may be important that the relationship is represented as one in which there is no disproportion between father and son.

bered that on the occasion of his first copulation he had thought 'This is a glorious feeling! One might do anything for this - murder one's father, for instance.' (He also described a scene which he had been told of from his childhood, when he had been enraged with his father for punishing him, and had abused his father roundly. His father had apparently said that he would be either a great man or a criminal.)²⁵

His sense of opposition between his father and his own gratification apparently went back into childhood. He could remember thinking at the age of twelve that a little girl with whom he was in love might be more kind to him if he should suffer some misfortune - such as the death of his father. And even from the age of six, as far back as he could remember things completely, he could recall wanting to see girls naked, but feeling that if he had such thoughts his father might die.

His symptoms and thoughts fairly explicitly represented his father as punitively tortured or killed. According to the fragment of psychoanalytic theory sketched above, these symptoms or thoughts would involve the imaginary fulfilment of hostile wishes which had arisen in childhood when he had perceived his father as prohibiting his possession and enjoyment of his mother and which had remained relatively unmodified by his subsequent experience. To represent these wishes as fulfilled would lead to anxiety or guilt, whereas to represent himself as in possession of his mother and hence prohibiting his father in this way would lead to fear of castration or death. To avoid such jealousy and hostility the relationship would have to be imagined as equal and friendly, or as one of admiration, etc.

The hypothesis that such a complex of wishes and feelings was active would bear upon a number of features of the case. It would partly explain why, despite the genuine friendship between the patient and his father, the patient nonetheless also seemed to feel his father to be a barrier to his satisfaction which could be overcome only through harm or death. This was evidenced in his still hesitating in regard to the relationship of which his father had disapproved, and imagining that consummation of it might bring harm to his father in the afterlife; in his having thought that his father's death might enable him to marry the lady, or that one might murder one's father to enjoy the glorious feeling of sexual intercourse; in his having supposed that if his father died his childhood romance might prosper, or that his father might die as a result of his wishes to see girls naked. It would also partly explain his association of castration with masturbation, and his having begun to

²⁵ Here interpretation of a theme in the patient's associations had apparently enabled further associations to arise, in which the theme was represented more explicitly. See page 263 for the interpretation, 264-5 for the associations it released.

masturbate mainly after his father's death and then in connection with the idea of a prohibition being defied. It would explain his propensity to think of his father's death or torture, and his guilt and anxiety in doing so; his intensified guilt after his father's death; his suicidal impulses; and so on.

He was extremely reluctant to accept that he might harbour hostility towards his father. When Freud interpreted that there was a wish to kill his father in what he said he replied that he could not believe that he had ever entertained such a wish. Then, apparently disconnectedly, he remembered a story. It was about a woman who as she sat by her sister's sick bed felt a wish that her sister might die, so that she might marry her sister's husband. She thereupon committed suicide, thinking she was not fit to live. He said he could understand this, and it would be right if his thoughts were the death of him, for he deserved nothing less. The story repeated the themes which Freud was interpreting, in particular suicidal guilt because of a death wish consequent upon a desire to marry. Also, although the patient denied the wish he yet considered that he deserved to die because of his thoughts, as if they did reflect his desires or intentions. So despite the patient's denial, Freud could regard his response as partly confirming the correctness of his hypothesis.

Although he denied hostility towards his father, he later began showing hostility towards Freud. This intensified after analysis of a protective formula he used in masturbating.²⁶ In his deliberate actions he treated Freud with the greatest respect, but he attacked him in his thoughts, which as part of the treatment he put into words. He had phantasies of intercourse and fellatio with Freud's daughter; phantasies of Freud's mother naked, swords stuck into her breast and the lower part of her body and especially her genitals eaten up by Freud and his children (cf. the rats of the torture, and the rat seen in the graveyard);²⁷ of Freud's mother dead; and so on. These depressed him and also made him fearful.

²⁶ The emergence of hostility seems to begin with the completion of the *Gleisismen* work on p. 281.

²⁷ Later associations had Freud's son eating excrement, and Freud himself eating his mother's excrement. Those familiar with psychoanalytic theory will recognise the connection with the patient's attitude towards the lady (who was to be tortured by the rats as well) and to his mother, who was condemned because of her money. And it should be pointed out that although the Rat Man was neurotic, the patterns and phantasies in his associations - including those of attacking the mother's breast and eating into her body - are found in the material of normal adults and children as well.

Freud remarked that the Rat Man's recognition of his identification with rats - and so those of the cemetery and the torture - was part of the analytic work which relieved his symptoms. Elsewhere Freud links the themes found here - of killing and eating a prohibiting and castrating father - with the setting up of the super-ego and the acquisition of guilt. He does not, however, relate this in detail to individual development, but rather (and quite implausibly) ascribes it to events which happened in the prehistory of mankind.

While telling Freud of his phantasies he got up off the couch (as he had in first telling of the rat torture) and walked about the room. He said his reason for doing so was delicacy of feeling — he could not lie there comfortably while he was saying these things about Freud; and he kept hitting himself, as in self-punishment, while saying them.²⁸ But he agreed he was walking about the room not for this reason, but out of fear that Freud might beat him.

He imagined Freud and his wife with a dead child lying between them, and became particularly afraid that Freud would turn him out. He knew the origin of this — when he was a little boy he had been lying in bed between his father and his mother; he had wet the bed; and his father had beaten him and turned him out of bed.

His demeanour during all this was that of a man in desperation and one who was trying to save himself from blows of terrific violence. He buried his heads in his hands, rushed away, covered his face with his arms, etc. He told Freud his father had a passionate temper, and did not know what he was doing. Later he said he had thought Freud might be murderous, and would fall on him like a beast of prey to search out what was evil in him.²⁹

of which he supposed we have phylogenetic memories. Thus he cites a child who wanted to eat some 'ficussee of mother' in connection with the eating of the primal father (1912-13, XIII, 131).

Melanie Klein found such oral themes to be very prominent in the play and speech of children in analysis. Thus a patient 'phantasied about a woman in the circus who was sawn in pieces, and then nevertheless comes to life again, and now he asked me if this were possible. He then related . . . that actually every child wants to have a bit of his mother, who is to be cut in four pieces . . . first across the width of the breast, and then of the belly, then lengthwise so that the *pipi* [penis] the face and the head were cut exactly through the middle . . . he constantly bit at his hand and said that he bit his sister too for fun, but certainly not for love . . . every child took the piece of mother that it wanted, and [he] agreed that the cut up mother was then also eaten' (*Love, Guilt, and Reparation*, London 1975, 79). She was able to place this material in a theoretical framework which coheres with Freud's work but supplements it with an account, among other things, of the role of cannibalistic, coprophagous, and other oral phantasies in early development.

²⁸ Compare the boy in the last footnote biting himself as he describes his phantasy.

²⁹ Someone he knew to be constantly making things up had told him Freud's brother was a murderer. Also, he later remembered his sister having remarked that one of Freud's brothers would be the right husband for his lady, and took this as a further cause for jealous hostility to Freud's family. What he had been told does not seem to go far in explaining this scene, since he had been aware of it all along, and it only became important in the context of his transference and emerging parallel memory. Jealousy provoked by his sister's remark would fit in with his transference feelings, but would not itself explain them.

Representation of the analyst or father as a biting or devouring beast occurs elsewhere in the material of Freud's patients, as in other psychoanalyses which reach a certain depth. Little Hans' fear was of being bitten by a horse, which animal Freud took to represent his father. (1909b, X, 5ff). Freud's patient called the Wolf Man represented his father and related figures by fearful devouring wolves. He repeatedly dreamt of six or seven wolves staring at him, riveting their attention on him; as a child he awoke screaming in fear that the

Now fairly clearly the patient's experiencing extreme fear that Freud would beat him and turn him out, while remembering his father's having beaten him and turned him out (of bed),³⁰ instantiates the assumption that he was experiencing Freud as he had his father in the past. This experience was at first unconscious, then became conscious. That he was beaten and turned out as a result of what he did (with his penis) while lying between his parents is related to the Oedipal theme, and also to his symptoms.

He was lying between his parents, and so preventing his father having access to his mother. His father punished and displaced him, and so prohibited and barred his access. In his thoughts the father who had displaced him from the parental bed likewise stood between him and his lady or his gratification, and so might have to die or be murdered for him to marry or have sexual intercourse. (The symptoms would represent both the hatred of his father for this, and also his maintenance of the prohibition within himself, to avoid the terrible consequences of breaking it.) In his symptoms his father was also subjected to punishment, as in return.

Beneath the patient's attitude of respect and delicacy of feeling towards Freud were the unconscious hostility shown in his associations (for which he punished himself, and which depressed him) and the fear expressed at first in his walking about the room. This would cohere with the assumption that beneath his friendliness and respect for his father there was the hostility and consequent self-punishment and depression shown in his symptoms, and also a fear of his father. The ascription of fear would fit with the way his respect and delicacy of feeling gave way to fear of Freud as a murderer or wild beast, especially since he felt this while remembering and describing his father's (as he saw it) fearful violence. (This would be the coming to awareness, through reliving in the transference, of a repressed fear.)

He expressed his hostility towards Freud in part in the form of phantasies of Freud and his family behaving like the rats of his own symptomatic thoughts of the punitive torture of his lady and his father, and expected a reciprocal punitive hostility from Freud as a wild beast. Wolves might eat him. He linked this with the story of 'The Wolf and the Seven Little Goats', of whom six were eaten. In early sessions he would look towards Freud in a very friendly way, as if to propitiate him, then look away to a large grandfather clock opposite. He was able to explain this to Freud when he recalled that the youngest of the little goats had hidden in such a clock while his brothers were eaten by the wolf. Apparently he was representing himself as the youngest little goat, and Freud as the wolf who might eat him. (1918b, XVII, 9ff). The representation of the parent or analyst as such a beast would be a mirror image (projection) of the desires to devour or attack with the mouth and teeth mentioned in the footnote above.

³⁰ There may be an identification of the scene of the analysis here with the parental bedroom comparable to that in the case mentioned above.

This would cohere with the hypothesis that he had felt such hostilities towards his father in childhood — so that the thoughts of his symptoms were of infantile origin — and that he had expected a comparable hostility in return.

His fear surfaced in an image of a dead baby, lying between Freud and his wife. This would cohere with his thoughts of Freud as a murderer, and also with his memory of lying between his parents and being punished for what he did, as an image of what the terrifying and punitive father whom Freud now represented might do. Such a dreadful image, moreover, might still involve elements of wish-fulfilment. The child was between the parents, and Freud and his father were murderers, not himself. This image might thus represent the projection of the murderous impulses explicit in his symptoms on to Freud as on to his father. It seems to have been with the occurrence of this image that his greatest fear, and also his conscious remembering, began. An assumption of projection would cohere with his excessive fear of Freud, as well as the general tendency in his associations to present Freud (or his children) as possessing desires related in content to his symptoms. This might also be connected with his idea that he deserved death because of his thoughts about his father.³¹

Having illustrated some aspects of the Freudian concepts of transference, defence, and the Oedipus complex, we can approach the more abstract theoretical notions of ego, super-ego, and id.³²

So far as the patient's present inner conflicts — like those of the Rat Man — reflect previous conflicts in the world between his own erotic and aggressive impulses and the parental authority which prohibits gratification of them, it seems we must regard the original sources of conflict as in some way replicated now within the patient's mind. We can do so by thinking of the mind as containing parts or agencies.

One part would be the locus of the erotic and aggressive impulses involved in such conflicts. These would appear to be present from infancy, and since they correspond, on the one hand, to the sexual and nurturing feelings involved in reproduction, and on the other to intense desires for killing and death, they can be taken as expressions of

³¹ Although I think transference and projection are to be seen in this material, these interpretive remarks are not so much meant to convince on particular points as to indicate the presence of a field of imaginative representation related to Oedipal themes. This material could be linked with many other theoretical considerations, for example Freud's hypothesis that a boy's urination may be an expression of sexual excitement, ambition, and aggression, or the idea that mental projection may go together with bodily evacuation.

³² See 1933a, XXII, 57–86, 'The Dissection of the Psychical Personality'. The discussion which follows is both selective and supplemented by post-Freudian work.

biologically grounded drives or instincts towards life and death respectively. Since the unrestrained and incoherent operation of these drives would be incompatible with individual survival and co-operative life, they require and receive parental and social control. The locus of these drives and impulses would be the id.

Another part of the mind would discharge in the adult those functions of encouragement and prohibition of instinctual impulse which the parent reforms in relation to the child. This part of the mind would be acquired during maturation, and would be modelled on the role of the parents. Among its functions, therefore, would be those of conscience. This part, the super-ego, would be fully established by the time the individual attains independence and maturity, and its proper functioning would be shown in his capacity to love and work co-operatively in family and society.

To a third part of the mind, the ego, is assigned the function of mediating between the external world and the desires of the id, and later between the id and the super-ego as well. Since the drives of the id are not sufficiently coherent to admit of satisfaction in reality, the ego must be assumed to have the capacities of perception, etc., to learn about reality, and also to be capable of learning to act and to form and modify desires so as to obtain satisfaction in it. One way in which the ego may do this is by following the example provided by other persons.

The reality with which a very young child has contact is significantly constituted by his parents. Parental regulation — control of feeding, imposition of toilet training, encouragement to self-restraint, more grown-up ways, etc. — is in early life liable to be felt especially intolerable and frustrating, and so may be represented in the mind as incoherently demanding, prohibitive, and punitive. Hence this kind of representation may be the basis for the development of the super-ego. The child may begin to achieve regulation of his own impulses, that is, by imagining himself as standing in relation to such a figure; and this kind of representation, in this role, may become a permanent feature of the mind.

Failure by the ego to obtain satisfaction for the desires of the id leads to frustration, whereas failure to act in accord with the demands of the super-ego leads to anxiety. Those desires which are felt most violently to conflict with parental regulation (in particular, those comprising the Oedipus complex) are the greatest source of anxiety, and so have to be kept from the attention of the super-ego. Although these cannot be represented or acted on straightforwardly, they may find expression in wish-fulfilment, provided they are suitably disguised or disowned.

The ego employs various mechanisms of defence to mask the representation of forbidden desires, including symbolism and projection. This

latter allows desires which are subject to prohibition to be represented quite explicitly and openly, but as desires of another, and so without provoking anxiety from the super-ego. Indeed, projection can lead to a certain ratification of an otherwise forbidden desire: if the object of malevolent aggressive desires, for example, is represented as having these desires, he can then be thought of as a malevolent and aggressive enemy, and so regarded as a legitimate object of hatred and aggression. (In such a case, as it were, the super-ego joins with the id in aggressive hatred of the object.)

The super-ego is part of the ego, and the development and functioning of the one is bound up with that of the other. Their proper establishment in the young man is achieved through his identification with his father — that is, through his taking as his own a regulative image derived from that of his father as a paternal figure whose encouragements and prohibitions he can accept and on whose model he can love and act. This formative change in his ego and super-ego ensures that his desires and ways of satisfying them no longer require external regulation, and so renders him capable of the autonomous and rational pursuit of his own ends. His incorporating his father's prohibition against incest and correlatively following his father's example in choosing non-incestuous sexual love means that while he becomes like his father in type of sexual love he becomes different from his father in the object of it, so that the sources of Oedipal rivalry between father and son are removed. Thus the final development of the ego and super-ego through identification coincides with the dissolution of the Oedipus complex.

The relative functioning of these parts of the mind, however, may go wrong in a number of ways which impede development. For example, a child's intolerance of the frustrations imposed upon his early desires through his relations with his parents might lead to the formation of a severe super-ego. The anxiety generated by this might lead to a correspondingly severe masking and isolation of the aggressive desires of his id. These in turn could obtain representation as gratified, or legitimate gratification, only through projection. The projection of hostility aroused by frustration or prohibition, however, would serve to reinforce the infantile distortion of the parental images involved in his super-ego. Thus both the severity of the super-ego and the aggression of the id would remain in part unmodified by thought, and hence infantile.

For the boy this would mean that the unconscious images of his father related to the Oedipal period would be hostile and punitive in the extreme, and his own Oedipal desires and hatreds liable to correspondingly severe repression and projection. This in turn would continue to reinforce the distortion of the images of his father involved in his early

super-ego. In these circumstances he might be unable to form an integral image of his father as a paternal figure whose encouragements and prohibitions he could make his own, and so be unable to accomplish the complete identification with his father required for the dissolution of his Oedipus complex.

In his failure to love on the model of his father he would neither become like his father in choosing non-incestuous love nor become entirely different from him in his object of sexual love, so that together with his childhood super-ego his early Oedipal emotions would remain partly intact. In his failure to act on the model of his father he would remain subject to unintegrated and archaic desires and demands which he could neither assume as his own nor renounce on the basis of an alternative identification. As his super-ego would retain its immature severity, so the unmodified desires of his id would remain unsatisfied, while his weak or incompletely developed ego could have recourse only to projection, wish-fulfilment which would cause anxiety, and so on.

Such theoretical considerations might cast further light on features of the case already discussed. If the Rat Man's impulses were regulated through his representing himself as in relation to a disciplining paternal figure, it would be intelligible that he should feel such a figure to be opposed to his gratification and so forth. Hence we might better be able to understand the correlative role in the Rat Man of unconscious hostility to his father for prohibiting sexual gratification, images from his childhood of his father as particularly frightening and punitive, a severe conscience resulting in anxiety and suicidal guilt, and also a conscious image, which remained quite disparate from the others, of his father as a close friend. These ideas also might bear on explaining why the Rat Man fell ill when confronted with a choice between being unlike his father (and subject to his father's disapproval) in marrying a poor girl, or like his father (of whom he disapproved in this respect) in marrying a rich girl, as his rich mother encouraged him to do; or again why he developed an obsession over paying a debt, as his father had once failed to do. Here illness seems to be bound up with the kind of identification which is supposed to be formative for the ego and super-ego.

These considerations may also serve to explain something of the Rat Man's behaviour in Freud's consulting room, and perhaps something of the earlier disturbing influence of the Captain with whom he first identified Freud. In the terms under discussion we can say that the Rat Man's terror when his repressions began to lift was at confrontation with an image of his own super-ego, which had been turned by projection, as Freud said in another context, into a pure culture of the death instinct. A link with the super-ego is suggested by the way, as the image became

externalized, the Rat Man ceased to inflict upon himself punishment motivated from within as by his conscience, and started rather to fear punishment from without. This punishment was to come from something with murderous impulses, which would fall on him like a beast of prey, so as — and here there is another link with conscience — *to search out what was evil in him*.

The Captain who advocated corporal punishment and spoke of the punishment of criminals by other searching animals may also have been significant because he realized a paternal figure of the Rat Man's imagination. On this assumption the Captain's fondness for cruelty would have been significant precisely because it mirrored cruelty of his own of which the Rat Man was unaware. Some such mirroring is suggested by the fact that the Rat Man followed the example of the Captain in expressing cruelty through the thought of the rat punishment, and also took pleasure in thinking of the punishment being applied. In the case of the Rat Man, however, this was a pleasure of which he was unaware, and which horrified him.

In these theoretical terms the changes in desire, belief, imaginative representation etc. pursued in psychoanalysis are described as involving modifications in structural features of the mind. Where internal conflicts can be externalized, understood, and worked through in transference, or where episodes in which the super-ego took shape can be re-experienced and so considered again, the ego and super-ego admit of change. Ideally such development will facilitate belated completion of the identification required for the dissolution of the Oedipus complex. Any change of this kind, however, will mean an increase in satisfaction (or diminution in frustration) for the desires associated with the id.

I do not wish to suggest that this is the best way to describe these matters, but rather to indicate some of the point of doing so. Even if this is not an ultimately satisfactory way of representing things — and it is worth noting that there is no incoherence in supposing that parts of the mind should do some of the things done by the mind, or that functioning within the mind is in some ways comparable to that among persons — it apparently serves to describe important phenomena, and so deserves continued use until a better description is formulated.

When Freud arrived at his theories of dreams and symptoms he wrote his friend Wilhelm Fliess 'Reality—Wish-fulfilment: it is from this contrasting pair that our mental life springs.'³³ The aspects of the contrast discussed so far do not exhaust its role in Freud's work. It is found also, as noted

³³ *The Origins of Psycho-Analysis* (Imago, London, 1954), p. 277.

above, in his idea of primary and wish-fulfilling processes of thought, operating in accord with a pleasure principle, as opposed to secondary, rational processes, devoted to taking account of reality; or again in his remarks about the unconscious being contradictory, unchanging, but subject to wish-fulfilment. As the contrast seemed to Freud to fill our mental life, so it seems to pervade his thought.

The examples given above have been meant to illustrate, not to produce theoretical conviction. Even supposing that psychoanalytic theory were true, it would not be possible to demonstrate it in this way. This is not because psychoanalysis is unscientific or incapable of confirmation. We saw above that just as in commonsense psychology interpretation and verification and falsification are guided and sustained by underlying predictions about reasons and their relations, so in psychoanalysis they can be regarded as guided and sustained by underlying predictions about wish-fulfillments, desires, reasons and their relations. This renders judgments in psychoanalysis, and the theoretical framework itself, verifiable or falsifiable in the same way as those of commonsense psychology. Although this seems as much as could be expected in principle, in practice it does not suffice to produce agreement.

Psychoanalytic like physical theory ranges holistically over a vast number of instances and cases. Although a certain amount of theory may be seen to be applicable in a given case, its justification consists in the way it serves to order and explain the whole field. In the case of psychoanalytic theory, the field is particularly difficult to survey.

Accurate assessment of the explanatory scope and power of a theory can be made only by those who know how to use it. Although ability to interpret in commonsense terms comes naturally, a capacity to interpret in psychoanalytic terms (in any serious way) must be acquired through fairly extensive work and thought, and is therefore relatively rare. The material to which the theory has its central applications, moreover, is mainly outside the public domain. The psychoanalytic interpretation of the unconscious content shown in free associations takes place in conditions of privacy, and the more dramatic and unmistakable manifestations of content typically arise only after interpretation of the right themes has eased repression sufficiently for what is beneath to surface and be expressed.³⁴ (It is true that everyone can read case material, and

³⁴ Hence these may be missed by psychotherapists who do not give such interpretations, or again by other observers who attend only to material in which the unconscious is not particularly manifest. There is no reason to suppose that the Rat Man's transference or memories of 283-4 would ever have emerged clearly had Freud not given him such interpretations as that of 263 and others later.

also try to interpret his own dreams, slips, etc. Since, however, the grounds for interpretive judgments cannot be represented adequately or extensively in print, and self-analysis is difficult to carry far, the bearing of evidence gained in this way is generally relatively limited.) Hence even if we should accept that analysts who regularly observe behaviour which strikingly exemplifies psychoanalytic concepts have good grounds for theoretical conviction, still there would seem to be no generally available and compelling reasons for others to agree with them.

It may also be, as Freud thought, that there is resistance to the theory. Psychoanalysis is partly concerned with the representation in imagination and thought of activities involving biologically significant organs by which we pass things in and out of our bodies and exchange them with those of others. Since we nourish, live and reproduce through cycles of activity involving these organs, it is not implausible *a priori* that the

In trying to assess the cogency of interpretation by reference to case material B. A. Farrell considers an earlier interpretation given the Rat Man (that which led to his remembering the story of the woman who wished her sister would die) and says that although it may have 'produced some movement' this 'could be explained by an Adlerian theory according to which (as we have seen) L. had feelings of inferiority and resentment at the father, not feelings of an Oedipal character.' In this he follows Popper's claim that every conceivable case of human behaviour could as well be explained by Adler's theory as by Freud's, which he cites with some approval (*The Standing of Psychoanalysis*, Oxford, 1981, pp. 62, 72).

Farrell omits to consider the interpretation of 263, to which the Rat Man responded by reporting that the idea of his penis being cut off had troubled him intolerably at a time when he had desired to masturbate, that he remembered thinking that one might murder one's father for sexual intercourse, and that he was reminded of a scene in which he had been punished and had abused his father — which scene was connected in content with, and led to, that discussed above, in which his memory of being taken from between his parents in bed and punished had surfaced together with an image of a dead baby, his feeling Freud to be murderous, and so on. Since the feelings in this material seem to be fairly specifically Oedipal, it is difficult to see how it could be equally well explained by a theory according to which, as Farrell says, the Rat Man did not have feelings of an Oedipal character towards his father. Vague reference to feelings of inferiority and resentment has no specific explanatory purchase here at all.

The Popperian claim that non-Freudian theories can equally well or easily explain the responses above, or the oral and anal material with which they are interwoven, or many other aspects of this case, seems utterly implausible. Theories qualify as non-Freudian partly through their denial of such Freudian factors as oral sadism, castration anxiety, Oedipal sexual rivalry, transference of early childhood conflicts, and so on. They consequently lack resources for explaining material which is plausibly taken as manifesting these factors.

In this connection it should be remembered that Popper simply made up the examples he used to support and illustrate his claim. Even followers of Popper should agree that this is not an adequate substitute for the consideration of such real and testing examples of behaviour as are provided by the Rat Man. Such examples, however, seem to disconfirm Popper's claim. Farrell tries to support similar claims by examining a transcript of some exchanges in analytically oriented psychotherapy. The material to which he devotes his careful scrutiny, however, contains no distinctively Freudian interpretations, nor any directed to what is repressed or unconscious. So consideration of it is irrelevant to the present point, as is Farrell's invention of an Adlerian version of the same material.

mental representation of them should be of great psychological importance. Nevertheless we know that many people find the contemplation of such things either fascinating or repulsive or both. Also, if psychoanalysis were, as presented here, a theory of wish-fulfilment, it would be resisted whatever its content. It would be in the nature of any such theory to threaten to awaken people to the content of their unfulfilled wishes and the illusory nature of the gratifications which mask but do not finally satisfy them. Any such theory would spawn alternatives which again represented the wishes as gratified and allowed people to stop on, and so forth. It is possible that this has happened.

Empiricist psychologists have tried to test psychoanalytic theory without relying on the extensive use of interpretive explanations by which it has been built up and is sustained in use. Many results seem to have been vaguely favourable to Freud, but complete agreement has not been achieved.³⁵ One reason for this comes from the nature of indirect statistical testing itself, and so may be worth noting here.

Suppose a theory postulates that something unobservable or resistant to a favoured means of observation occurs, so that the theory cannot be tested directly.³⁶ Still it can be tested indirectly, if we can formulate some testing hypothesis to the effect that if the theory is true certain observable correlations may be expected to obtain, say in how people will answer questions when shown pictures or in taking standardized tests, or among customs in a number of societies.

Now clearly the presence or absence of an hypothesized correlation will bear upon the testing hypothesis as well as upon the theory itself. The presence of a correlation can confirm only both together, whereas absence can disconfirm either one or the other, but not both. Hence assessment of the outcome of tests will depend partly upon prior

³⁵ Thus Kline (*Fact and Fantasy in Freudian Theory*, Edinburgh, 1972) says in his survey of the literature that so much 'that is distinctively Freudian has been verified' that 'any blanket rejection of Freudian theory as a whole (e.g. Eysenck, 1952) simply flies in the face of the evidence' (pp. 346, 350), while Fischer and Greenberg, in a more recent survey, remark that they were generally impressed with how often the results of tests had borne out Freudian expectations. (*The Scientific Credibility of Freud's Theories and Therapy*, New York and Sussex, 1977, p. 393. Eysenck and Wilson, however, in the book cited above, continued to regard Freudian theory as disconfirmed or entirely unsupported. For discussion of the outcome of psychotherapy influenced by psychoanalysis see Sloane, et al., *Psychotherapy versus Behavior Therapy*, Harvard, 1975, and for a recent discussion of the outcome of various kinds of psychotherapy see Shapiro in the *British Journal of Medical Psychology* (1980) 53, 1-10.

³⁶ Thus an academic psychologist might consider that events like the Rat Man's rushing away, covering his face with his hands, and so forth, *in fear of Freud as representing his father*, were improperly observable, either because they could normally be observed by only one person, or because they had to be interpreted in terms of theoretical concepts to be seen as an instance of the theory. This latter objection would apparently hold for any interpretive judgment whatever.

attitudes to both theory and hypothesis. A psychologist who regards the theory as more plausible than an individual testing hypothesis will tend to view absence of correlation as casting doubt on the putative test, whereas one who thinks the hypothesis superior will count the result against the theory. Clearly there is room for the operation of prejudice here.

Further, a theory and its associated testing hypotheses will differ in character. The testing hypotheses will link parts of the theory either to behaviour which is directly observable or to some other correlations which are, in a way that the theory itself does not. (If the theory did so, it would not require this kind of indirect testing.) So the testing hypotheses will be more operational or behavioural than the theory itself, and consequently may misrepresent the content of meaning of the theory. For this reason no serious assessment of a theory will involve a general preference for testing hypotheses; any such preference risks implicit systematic distortion of the theory under test.

This means that the evaluation of results may be influenced not only by prior attitude towards theory, but also by general psychological outlook. Someone who favoured a theory and found irrelevant correlations might wrongly claim support from them. But also, someone who was prejudiced against a theory, or again was unduly influenced by behaviourism or operationalism, might systematically favour testing hypotheses at the expense of the theory,³⁷ thus at once distorting it and representing it as refuted or disconfirmed. It appears that objectivity in this area may be difficult to attain.

II

Of the essays which follow, two are directly addressed to these issues of verification. Cosin, Freeman and Freeman examine some of the demands made on Freudian theory by empiricism, and Clark Glymour discusses a testing strategy he finds in Freud's work in the case used for illustration above. Others are concerned with aspects of the relations between the phenomena known in commonsense psychology and psychoanalytic theory. Sachs discusses what might be called the rational logic of Freud's treatment of the emotions. Hampshire relates the unconscious to memory, and O'Shaughnessy the id to thought and will. Morton describes how everyday psychology has been influenced and extended by Freudian theory.

Freud's belief that human behaviour could be explained in both physical and psychological terms was considered above. Precisely what it means, however, to think of a physical object in mental terms – for example as having consciousness – or vice-versa has long seemed a philosophical problem. Nagel discusses some of Freud's thought relating to this, and links it to other mentalist theories in psychology, such as those of Chomsky. Wollheim finds in Freud a suggestion that a person in a primitive form of mental organization represents his mind in bodily terms; it follows that these representations may be used for psychological explanation which catches action in the perspective in which the agent sees it.

Freud's physicalism went with a willingness not only to be influenced by various sciences – in particular, biology – but also to use analogies from them in psychological theory. (This may have been a source of Wittgenstein's dissatisfaction.) Hart considers the usefulness of one aspect of this, in his discussion of psychic energy and repression. De Sousa describes some biological aspects of Freud's theories in relation to normative considerations and rationality.

We noted above a tendency to at least apparent paradox in psychoanalytic theory, and also described some mechanisms of defense and a division of the personality. Several essays are concerned with these linked questions of mechanism, division and paradox. Sartre argues that repression, described above in terms of wish-fulfillment, cannot be explicated as the activity of a censoring agent or mechanism, but rather must be understood in terms of the (paradoxical) intentions of the agent, and so assimilated to bad faith. Thalberg considers a range of comparable difficulties, and Fingarette and Pears discuss self-deception and other forms of motivated irrationality in relation to Freud. Suppes and Warren attempt a comprehensive formulation of the mechanisms of defence, whose operation is, as noted, assigned to one part of the personality, the ego. Finally, Davidson considers some connected features of Freudian theory which have been found paradoxical – including reference to psychic causes which are not in the ordinary sense reasons, and the partitioning of the mind into person-like structures which interact with one another – and argues that these are essential to a theory which aims, as Freud's does, to explain action which is irrational.

³⁷ In this context note Eysenck and Wilson's remarks about how unjustly favourable to Freud it might be to concentrate on positive rather than negative results, at p. xii.