INTERPRETATION AND EXPLANATION IN PSYCHOANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT:

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By exploring the logical status of the psychoanalytic object of investigation, the compromise-formation, this dissertation suggests that although Freud's defence of Psychoanalysis as a natural science has been legitimately rejected as problematic, the reconstrual of Psychoanalysis as an interpretive or hermeneutic knowledge is likewise inappropriate to the psychoanalytic object. On the basis of the work of Donald Davidson and Arthur Danto, it is argued instead that the nature and status of Psychoanalysis as a knowledge is best understood and assessed in terms of a third alternative provided by the historical epistemology germane to the psychoanalytic object. In this way, the case against Psychoanalysis as a natural science is granted, while psychoanalytic epistemology is nevertheless defended as *explanatory rather than interpretive*.

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CONTENTS:

INTRODUCTION

> Probably the major debate on psychoanalytic theory of recent years is that over the classical metapsychology and its concepts, on their explanatory and ontological status. This debate relates, of course, to the position of Psychoanalysis in the sciences. The problem is: is Psychoanalysis an explanatory science of the same kind as the natural sciences? Or is it a special discipline of another kind, some sort of science peculiar to the treatment of human activities, irreducibly different from natural science? Arguments that it is a special human science, a science of meanings, have come in various forms from many and diverse thinkers. (Nigel Mackay, 1981 p.189).

> Psychoanalysis is a part of the mental science of psychology....Psychology, too, is a natural science. What else can it be? (Freud, 1940a[1938], p.282).

Freud's insistent location of the psychoanalytic enterprise within the natural scientific framework is generally acknowledged as problematic and perhaps even, finally, illegitimate. This is because Psychoanalysis has been found wanting as a science for a number of fairly standard reasons. It instantiates all those unstable characteristics of a knowledge making claims to the status of a science but which is by virtue of its object without recourse to reliable experimental evidence and verification.

Freud's question: "What else can [Psychoanalysis] be?" has therefore been taken up seriously in ways which Freud himself might have found surprising. Many defenders of Psychoanalysis suggest that Psychoanalysis would be better served by being moved out of the natural scientific position and into, broadly speaking, a human-scientific or hermeneutic position. By locating

Psychoanalysis in this way, that is, as an Interpretive knowledge, its adherents have attempted to up-hold the status of Psychoanalysis as a legitimate epistemological enterprise, against those who argue that Psychoanalysis, because an *inadequate* science, must be evicted into the alternative realm of "Art", or worse still, dismissed outright as "fiction" or "myth". (Eysenck, 1985, pp.201-2)

The question of whether psychoanalysis has legitimate claims to the status of a knowledge will therefore not be addressed in terms of standard scientific criteria or even in terms of the revised criteria of post-positivistic philosophy of science. Instead this dissertation will proceed by way of a re-reading of that tradition of work which resituates Psychoanalysis within an alternative epistemological framework, as a "science of meanings". (Mackay, 1981, p.189).

More specifically, it will suggest that although the interpretive position has made substantial advances for psychoanalytic epistemology, it has also resulted in an unproductive deadlock. The wholesale relocation of psychoanalysis as a "science of meanings" (ibid) has resulted in a radical circumscription of the psychoanalytic domain. And if Psychoanalysis thus *still* remains a problem for knowledge, then this is because its object somehow spans, or falls between, the two mutually-exclusive positions of the natural and interpretive sciences.

"The whale and the polar bear" says Freud, "cannot wage war on each other, for since each is confined to their own element they cannot meet". (1918[1914], p.281). Arguably then, Psychoanalysis is only a problem for knowledge in so far as it constitutes that territory on which they can, and do.

However, a re-reading of Freud suggests an alternative route which in granting the legitimacy of the case against Psychoanalysis as a natural science, nevertheless renders the hermeneutic or interpretive circumscription of Psychoanalysis premature, and at variance with Freud's overall project.

This third route, which is part of a broader movement in contemporary analytic philosophy, will be represented primarily by Arthur Danto and Donald Davidson, both of whom make direct contributions to psychoanalytic epistemology in particular.

Danto and Davidson's contributions to the definition of the psychoanalytic object, the symptom in particular and the compromise-formation in general, will be elaborated in order to illustrate that the psychoanalytic object of knowledge can be subsumed neither to an entirely natural-scientific, nor to an entirely human-scientific epistemology.

Danto's work on narrative epistemology will then be outlined as a potentially productive alternative procedure for delimiting and defining the form of verification appropriate to psychoanalytic investigation. In this way, it is hoped that the question of the status of Psychoanalysis as a valid epistemological enterprise can be formulated most productively.

However, it will become apparent that this order of exposition has also been motivated by a more overriding consideration.

Debates around the status of psychoanalytic epistemology (as interpretive or explanatory), have traditionally privileged either *the metapsychology*, which is seen to instantiate the causal and deterministic language of the

natural sciences, or *the case-histories*, which are seen to demonstrate the more clinical and interpretive aspects of psychoanalysis.

An alternative approach seems more instructive. This involves considering the metapsychology, in so far as it is an account of that class of objects called symptoms or compromise-formations, as an explanation of the symptomatic on a general level alone. The case-histories are then seen as a narrative account of the forms and origins of specific symptoms in particular.

In short, if the Freudian metapsychology is a broad account of the functioning of the psychic apparatus, then this is only in so far as the conditions of possibility for the symptomatic are statable on a general level. The metapsychological account does not, however, imply that Psychoanalysis must be construed along the lines of the natural sciences, *at least not in so far as natural sciences are necessarily law-like and predictive.* It is not in terms of the metapsychology, but in terms of the narrative procedures available to the clinic and exemplified in the case-histories, that Psychoanalysis operates as a practice and attempts to achieve its explanatory status as a knowledge.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter One

Since it may be assumed that signifying practices and sign-systems are the most appropriate objects of an interpretive knowledge, the first chapter will address the question of the extent and nature of the acknowledged and well documented role of language in Psychoanalysis.

This is done by way of a comparative analysis of the work of Paul Ricoeur (1970-1978) and Arthur Danto (1978), and the relative productivity of their analyses of the role of language in the classical psychoanalytic construal of its object, the compromise-formation.

Ricoeur alternates between describing the psychoanalytic compromise-formation as a dual-meaning linguistic expression and as a semiotics of the perceptual image. Both of these accounts, however, define the compromise-formation on a broadly linguistic model, i.e., as a significatory event. In this way, Ricoeur continues to legitimate his contention that: "Psychoanalysis is interpretation from beginning to end." (1974, p.66).

Danto's account, while equally concerned to illuminate the function of language and the image in the psychoanalytic object does not, by contrast, define the compromise-formation as a significatory event.

Danto maintains that if the compromise is explicable in terms of its relation to language at all, then this is only in so far as language itself consists of both signs *and* perceptual images, and in so far as these images can be operated as material "things" i.e., to the exclusion of their significatory status as meanings or signs. If language plays an important role in the compromise-formation then the compromise-formation is nevertheless not explicable in terms of those aspects of a language which make signification possible.

According to Danto the compromise-formation is therefore neither entirely inside nor entirely outside language, since it must in fact be understood as being in a purely negative relation to language's characteristic (significatory) function.

On the basis of this comparative analysis, it becomes apparent that the circumscription of Psychoanalysis to interpretation alone which results from Ricoeur's analysis of the psychoanalytic object on a linguistic model (as a semantic or meaning problematic), is illegitimate. Moreover, Danto's alternative rendition of the operations of language in the psychoanalytic object avoids many of the unfortunate epistemological implications which Ricoeur's account of Psychoanalysis on an interpretive model entails. These will be seen to include:

The generalization of the psychoanalytic interpretive field on the level of content and the concomitant elision of the necessarily specific causal relation between disguised material and the compromise-formation in which disguise results. Ricoeur's linguistic model will also prove ill-designed in negotiating the Freudian topographics, economics and dynamics.

Chapter Two

Arguments around the epistemological status of Psychoanalysis as explanation or interpretation also hinge around the problem of the intentional status of psychoanalytic symptoms.

Since Dilthey (1962), it has been common to suggest that because physical events are caused whereas human actions are intended or motivated, events can be explained, whereas human action can only be interpreted. An account of the psychoanalytic symptom as an intentional phenomenon thus also precipitates psychoanalytic epistemology into the field of interpretation considered appropriate to human action, as opposed to the field of explanation considered appropriate to physical events.

A comparative analysis of the work of Micheal Sherwood (1969) and Adolf Grunbaum (1984), reveals that the nature and status of the symptom as an *irrational* action, i.e., as an action which cannot be understood in terms of the agent's intentions, problematizes this bifurcation between actions and events, and therefore between interpretation and explanation in Psychoanalysis. The problem devolves on whether symptoms are, in the last instance, "chosen" on the basis of reasons, or "caused" by psycho-physical compulsion.

Donald Davidson (1982), attempts to resolve the logical problems associated with the issue of reasons and causes in psychoanalytic explanation in terms of an account of the nature of irrationality.

Davidson argues that although, in symptomatic action, the logical means-ends connection between reasons and actions is distorted or elided, so that only the causal relation between them remains, psychoanalytic explanation nevertheless allows us to account for the *intentional* aspects of these actions, by postulating a number of semi-independent structures within the mind which, although interacting *causally*, nevertheless produce consequences which must be explained on the principle of intentional actions, i.e., in terms of the reasons which produced them.

In providing an account of the symptom in terms of the Freudian topography, Davidson facilitates an understanding of the symptom as that phenomenon which slips between characterization as either an action or an event. In doing so he provides a thorough elaboration of why it is that psychoanalysis consequently straddles the fields of the natural and human sciences. More specifically, Davidson's account allows for a causal analysis of objects previously confined to interpretive activities. The novelty of Davidson's position is therefore that, like Danto's, it allows us to establish a third term between the natural and human sciences.

Davidson makes it clear that the description of the psychoanalytic symptom *in terms of* intentions does not precipitate Psychoanalysis into a purely interpretive field. In this way Davidson avoids the consequences of a purely interpretive account of the role of intentionality in psychoanalytic epistemology. As in the case of a purely linguistic (i.e., significatory) account of the role of language in Psychoanalysis, these will similarly be seen to include:

The undermining of the necessary role of causal explanation in the understanding of the psychoanalytic symptom, and the (witting or unwitting) eradication of the very notion of a split psyche fundamental to the psychoanalytic understanding of its object.

Together the first two chapters lay the groundwork for chapter three, which will argue for an explanatory narrative knowledge of the symptom in the clinic.

Chapter Three

As the first two chapters describe the symptom on a general or formal level, as an object of knowledge logically requiring explanation rather than interpretation, it remains to explore the question of whether veridical explanatory accounts of the symptom may in fact be achieved. On the basis of Freud's explication of his explanatory method in the clinic, it will be argued that psychoanalytic epistemology finally devolves upon the question of whether historical methodology pertains to the status of explanation, rather than interpretation. This is because the characteristic genre of the Freudian clinic, the case-history, attempts to account for the symptom by way of a particular individual history. The status of Psychoanalysis as a knowledge is therefore dependent upon its ability to produce a unique and particular causal series to explain the symptoms of any particular analysand.

In "Narrative Truth and Historical Truth: Meaning and Interpretation in Psychoanalysis" (1982), Donald Spence argues that the historical or archaeological method of classical Psychoanalysis is illegitimate; both

unviable and unnecessary to psychoanalytic technique precisely to the extent that it entails causal explanation and veridical historical reconstruction. Spence suggests that Psychoanalysis would be better served by being construed along the lines of a narrative operation which attempts to achieve curative effects along the lines of interpretive coherence and closure.

On the basis of Arthur Danto's work on the analytical philosophy of history "Narration and Knowledge" (1985), it will be argued that although Spence is correct in so far as he construes psychoanalytic technique along narrative lines, he fails to recognize that the construal of Psychoanalysis as a narrative operation does *not* preclude it from the field of causal explanation but may, rather, be that form of explanation more appropriate to the psychoanalytic object than either a natural-scientific or a humanist-interpretive one. Where Spence contrasts historical explanation and narrative, Danto shows them to be identical operations.

On the basis of an analysis of the role of general laws in historical, as opposed to natural scientific epistemology, Danto also provides the grounds on which to argue for a logical distinction between those forms of explanation appropriate to the case-history, and those appropriate to the metapsychology. In this way, the relation of the metapsychology to the case-history is clarified.

CHAPTER ONE

LANGUAGE AND IMAGE IN PSYCHOANALYSIS

Introduction

> Dream Interpretation traces the course taken by the dream-thoughts, follows the paths which lead from the latent thoughts to the dream-elements, reveals the way in which verbal ambiguities have been exploited, and points out the verbal bridges between different groups of material – owing to all this, we get the impression now of a joke, now of schizophrenia, and we are apt to forget that for a dream all operations with words are no more than a preparation for a regression to things. (Freud, 1917[1915], p.229).

The function of language is a theme which runs like a persistent thread throughout the entire body of Freud's work. This concern with the question of language can be traced from the early monograph "On Aphasia" (1891), and the "Project for a Scientific Psychology" (1950[1895]), through "The Interpretation of Dreams" (1900), "The Psychopathology of Everyday Life" (1901), "Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious" (1905), until Freud's final attempt to resolve the relation of language to the conscious and unconscious registers in his definitive metapsychological paper on "The Unconscious". (1915a).

Probably as part of the general intersection between questions of language and epistemology characteristic of much contemporary debate, this aspect

of Freud's work has recently been picked up to invigorate questions around the epistemological status of Psychoanalysis. Certainly, the continued presence of Psychoanalysis in philosophical debate today can primarily be attributed to the productivity of an essentially linguistic reading of Freudian Psychoanalysis now often called "French Freud". (Turkle, 1979).

Although the linguistic reading of Psychoanalysis is most commonly associated with the seminal works of J. Lacan, the *epistemological upshot* of this linguistic appropriation can perhaps most clearly and economically be presented by way of a comparative analysis of the work of Paul Ricoeur and Arthur Danto.

As both Ricoeur and Danto share a common conviction in the relevance of language to psychoanalytic epistemology, as well as a common body of Freudian texts, their work can clearly be compared.

Paul Ricoeur has written at length over an extended period of time on various topics of psychoanalytic interest, during which his views have modified considerably. However, this inquiry will focus only on those aspects of his work which have epistemological consequences derived from his assessment of the role of language or more broadly, semiotics, in Psychoanalysis.

Despite the shift in Ricoeur's thinking regarding exactly *what* constitutes the semiotic nature of the compromise-formation - a shift instantiated in his paper "Language and Image in Psychoanalysis" (1978) - it will be argued that a fundamentally hermeneutic or *interpretive* construal of Psychoanalysis remains consistent across Ricoeur's work. By proposing a semiotic reformulation of Psychoanalysis, Ricoeur's explicit project is to legitimate the

basic proposition that: "Psychoanalysis is interpretation from beginning to end." (1974, p.66).

In his paper "Freudian Explanation and the Language of the Unconscious" (1978), Arthur Danto argues, like Ricoeur, that the compromise-formation can be rendered intelligible in the psychoanalytic clinic because of its relation to language. However Danto's analysis negates Ricoeur's formulations with regard to the relation of the compromise-formation to representation and interpretation. In consequence, Danto's alternative analysis of the role of language in Psychoanalysis does not precipitate Psychoanalysis into the position of a purely interpretive knowledge.

In "Language and the Origins of Psychoanalysis" (1980), John Forrester, like Danto, recognizes that the operation of language in Psychoanalysis cannot be accounted for in terms of a purely interpretive epistemology. If Ricoeur's position is contrasted *primarily* to Danto's then this is only in so far as Danto provides a alternative explanatory framework within which to account for the role and nature of the operations of language in Psychoanalysis both economically, and precisely.

Likewise, Jean Laplanche and Serge Leclaire's contributions to the question of the role of language in Psychoanalysis, especially in "The Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Study" (1966), cannot but be mentioned. If their work has been excluded from this chapter, then this is only for the following reasons: Firstly, Laplanche and Leclaire's evaluation of Politzer's construal of the role of language and interpretation in Psychoanalysis is equivalent in upshot to the evaluation of Ricoeur's hermeneutic approach undertaken in this chapter. Thus Laplanche and Leclaire maintain that Politzer's construal of

chapter. Thus Laplanche and Leclaire maintain that Politzer's construal of the role of language and interpretation in Psychoanalysis, as identical to "the explication of a text" results in a radical circumscription of the true import of the Freudian notion of the unconscious. (Laplanche and Leclaire, 1966, Klaus Reprint 1984, pp.118-124). Secondly, Laplanche and Leclaire's alternative rendition of the role of language and interpretation in Psychoanalysis parallel's Danto's contribution in all essentials.

1.1 Language and Image in Ricoeur

Although the fundamental object for psychoanalytic intervention is, strictly speaking, limited to that which is symptomatic, the psychoanalytic field of study is in fact more extensive. It includes all those psychical productions called "compromise-formations" in which both an unconscious wish, as well as the conflictual demand for defense against that wish, are satisfied simultaneously. (Freud, 1916-1917, p.358). This field includes the symptom, the joke, the parapraxis and the dream.

It is however Freud's work on dreams (1900), which lends itself to the study of the role of language and interpretation most explicitly. Certainly, it is by using the dream as model that Paul Ricoeur consistently characterizes all psychical productions in the psychoanalytic field, i.e., compromise-formations, as an alternative "discourse" or "text" to be interpreted. This constitutes, as he claims, "the central thesis of the linguistic formulation of Psychoanalysis". (1978, p.298).

More specifically, Ricoeur has characterized the dream and by analogy, all other compromise-formations as "*communication disturbances*" and "*double-meaning linguistic expressions*". (1981, p.24; 1974, p.175).

These disturbed expressions take the form of "*symbolic utterances*" where the notion of the *symbol* is restricted to: "Double or multiple expressions whose semantic feature is correlative to the work of interpretation that explicates their second or multiple meanings." (1971, p.13; cf. 1981, p.261; 1974, pp.7-8).

For Ricoeur then, the psychoanalytic compromise-formation can be understood, not only on the model of the linguistic *sign*, but more specifically, on the model of the linguistic *symbol* - that class of sign in which one sensory signifier takes on at least two concepts or meanings, i.e., signifieds.

Ricoeur thus accounts for the "communication disturbance" instantiated in the compromise-formation in terms of the double repertoire of language - its capacity to take on two forms of significatory or intentional operation, the first denotative or literal, and the second connotative or figurative. This formulation is one which makes a direct connection between textual phenomenon and psychoanalytic objects. Firstly, in terms of their mutual reliance on resources available within language, in order to account for an alternative, i.e., symbolic, form of expression; and secondly, in terms of their parallel status as messages which need to be *interpreted* because their expressive or communicative function is never wholly apparent.

However, an immediate problem for Ricoeur's analysis of the compromise-formation is presented by his definition of the symbol as a "double-meaning

linguistic expression". (1974, p.175). Clearly even the Freudian field of the dream on which Ricoeur predicates his discussion cannot be accounted for in this way, because the dream involves a transformation of the dream-thought or meaning into an image or percept, rather than onto another meaning hinging directly on words or word-play. Thus even where Freud himself makes use of "symbolic" equivalences in the dream, what such equivalences, between a sabre and a penis for example, have in common could not be further away from a common word or signifier.

In a later article, one more obviously atuned to the Freudian project, entitled "Language and Image in Psychoanalysis" (1978), Ricoeur thus retracts the view that the drive, because it remains on the level of the signifier is wholly homogeneous with language. He writes:

> That these [unconscious] complexes should have an affinity for discourse, that they are sayable in principle, is not to be doubted. Therefore the analytic situation itself establishes a semiotic aspect. Moreover, that the phenomenon thus brought to light are governed by relations of motivation that here take the place of what the natural sciences define as a causal relation, ... none of this proves that what thus comes to language - or better, is brought to language - is or must *be* language. On the contrary, because the level of expression proper to the unconscious is not language, the work of interpretation is difficult and constitutes a veritable linguistic promotion. (1978, p.312).

In this article, Ricoeur thus swings from a purely linguistic reading of the workings of the dream to a purely non-linguistic one, in terms of an alternative "semiotics" of the image. The image can become the locus of "the semiotic dimension", because although at best only partially linguistic, it remains "fundamentally figurative, but nevertheless significative". (ibid, footnote, p.322).

Ricoeur assumes this position because, as he points out, a purely linguistic construal of the dream-work cannot account for the fact that the dream-thoughts are expressed in the dream as images, which lack the logical relations appropriate to the syntax of our natural languages. (ibid, p.313).

He therefore argues that it is unfortunate that we remain heirs to a tradition that sees the image as a residue of perception or as the trace of an impression, because, as a result, we are caught in the following disjunction: Either we recognize the function of the image in Psychoanalysis but misunderstand the semiotic dimension, or we recognize this semiotic dimension but assimilate it too quickly to the realm of language:

> I think it is mistaken to believe that everything semiotic is linguistic. At the same time, however, it is also an error to believe that the image does not arise from the semiotic order. It is this semiotic dimension of the image, therefore, that I will seek to explicate. (Ricoeur, ibid, p.311).

Now clearly, it is mistaken to believe that "everything semiotic is linguistic". (ibid). A semiotic in its proper form constitutes two full-blown systems of signification, one linguistic and the other non-linguistic, in which the non-linguistic system is studied in accordance with the linguistic model. If Ricoeur makes this point, that not everything semiotic is linguistic, then this is because formerly, his "semiotic" analysis of psychical productions as symbolic operations, i.e., as "double-meaning *linguistic* expressions", was predicated upon the assumption that the operations of the dream could be explicated in terms of a second order significatory system *within language itself*.

However, it remains the case that a semiotic analysis traditionally constitutes the attempt to study non-linguistic processes of signification by way of a

linguistic model. Thus, the postures of the body, the content and lay-out of menu's, fashions and photographs are studied as *representational* or *significatory* systems within society to be rendered intelligible by way of procedures essentially linguistic in form. (Barthes, 1964; Kristeva, 1986; Coward and Ellis, 1977).

Crucially then, Ricoeur is unwilling to make the move which would constitute a decisive break with the linguistic. Thus if he repudiates a purely linguistic reading of the workings of the unconscious then he replaces it with a happy alternative - that of a *visual language* or a *semiotics of the image*. In this way, Ricoeur can account for the role of the image in the dream while maintaining his commitment to an analysis of the dream and its analogues as fundamentally figurative and significative i.e., a symbolics in all essential respects.

Ricoeur himself emphasizes that his analysis of the dream as image will not differ in any essential respects to his analysis of the dream as linguistic text since both are, "a case in favour of the semiotic aspects of the analytic experience. Rather, it will be a case of reorienting the same arguments toward what I shall suggest we call a semiotics of the image and a theory of the imagination". (1978, p.294).

If Ricoeur's analysis of the dream as image thus relocates the entire conceptual baggage of a semiotics off the sign or word, and onto the image, then it remains doubtful whether this alternative fares any better than his initial formulation of the dream as text. The issue *still* devolves upon what the semiotic order to which he refers might be, and whether a semiotic characterization (be it linguistic or visual) is in fact appropriate to the workings

1.1.1 Psychoanalysis and Semiotics

Minimally, to count as an appropriate object for a semiotic analysis, a significatory system must allow three inter-related distinctions to be drawn:

Firstly, it must sustain a distinction between "langue" and "parole", i.e., between a surface, particular instance as a well-formed utterance, and the structural body of rules which makes well-formed utterances possible. This is because semiology is based on the assumption that in so far as particular instances of human actions or productions convey *meaning* or function as signs, there must be an underlying system of conventions governed by rules which makes this meaning intelligible. As Culler points out: "Where there are signs there is system." (1976, p.91).

Secondly, it must be possible to identify within the system both a paradigmatic and a syntactic axis, i.e., a horizontal organization of the rules of combination for particular signs and a vertical organization governing their substitutability or selection.

And finally, the signs or items making up this system must consist of an identifiable perceptual or material item, i.e. "the signifier", in a regular relation to a concept or meaning, i.e., "the signified". This relation between signifiers and signifieds, however, is only regularized by convention. There is no intrinsic or motivated link between them such as a physical similarity or semantic appropriacy.

In considering whether psychoanalytic compromise-formations such as the dream and the symptom can be understood in these terms it is necessary

to turn to "The Interpretation of Dreams". (Freud, 1900). For if Ricoeur does not often explicitly substantiate his contentions in the Freudian corpus, then it is this work which he nevertheless has in mind as "the key document" for his discussion (1978, p.298), and which in fact best illustrates his position.

Ricoeur's use of a semiotic model is clearly derived from the status of the dream as a presentation of the dream-thoughts. Thus, the manifest visual content of the dream can be seen as the perceptual material (or signifiers) in which the concepts or meanings (signifieds) of the latent content is expressed. (Ricoeur, 1978, p.302; p.318). Secondly, or more specifically, the dream-symbols outlined in chapter six of "The Interpretation of Dreams" seem to provide the necessary lexical items or signs of a language-like system and to instantiate both the literal and figurative aspects of the sign as *symbol.* (ibid, p.298). Finally, the Freudian account of the dream-work, especially the major operations of condensation and displacement, appear to provide a *grammar* which can and often has been closely associated with Saussures's syntagmatic and paradigmatic, or more specifically with Jakobson's metonymic and metaphoric, axes. (ibid, p.306).

However, these parallels, if tempting, reveal on closer examination more differences than similarities between Freud's account of the dream and the necessary features of a semiotic system, i.e., a lexicon (or vocabulary) and a grammar. Freudian symbols exhibit none of the necessary features of significatory items in a semiotic system, and it is the violation of a grammar rather than the operation of one which best characterizes the dream-work.

An examination of condensation and displacement as the supposed parallels of a grammar reveals that the dream images of the manifest content disguise

the propositional content of the latent, precisely because they do *not* instantiate the verticality and the horizontality of the paradigm and the syntagm which are the two axes necessary to produce the grammatical sentence or the well-formed semiotic utterance. And they cannot be understood by virtue of some possible alternative regular grammatical operation either, because far from instantiating or even paralleling the paradigm and syntagm positively, condensation and displacement operate in an explicitly negative relation to them.

Ironically however, it is those examples in "The Interpretation of Dreams" (1900) which Freud himself terms "symbols", and from which Ricoeur would seem to want to draw the strongest support for his position, which defy semiotic appropriation most rigorously. The Freudian symbol is suggestive of neither the arbitrary relation between signifiers and signifieds (the semiotic sign), nor the connotative/denotative operations of the traditional symbol.

Psychoanalytic symbols are that limited and specifiable group of images with a broadly but almost invariably sexual content: "The range of things which are given symbolic representation in dreams is not wide: the human body as a whole, parents, children, brothers, sisters, birth, death, nakedness - and something else besides." (Freud, 1916-1917[1915-1917], p.153).

Freud uses the following example to describe the forms which symbolic substitution takes more explicitly: "All elongated objects, such as sticks, tree-trunks and umbrellas ... may stand for the male organ... as well as all long, sharp weapons." (Freud, 1900, p.354).

Clearly sticks, tree-trunks, umbrellas and sabres (not to mention "neck-ties" and "nail-files") cannot *all* "connote" the phallus in Ricoeur's sense. If this were true, our linguistic and/or semiotic systems of second-order significations would be so poverty-stricken and sexually obsessed that it would be impossible to imagine what the creativity and proliferation of art and literature might consist in.

In fact, the Freudian relation between all these diverse objects and the phallus is entirely different from that encountered in the semiotic symbol, where the double meaning linguistic expression, say, a rose, denotes a flower and connotes beauty. It is different, likewise, from the manner in which the colour blue in a painting, denotes the wall and connotes sadness.

What the umbrella has in common with the male-organ is not their second - order "meanings", but rather their shape and perhaps, in the case of the folding umbrella, a certain (projectile) capacity for movement and growth. These are qualities which lie in the perceptual field of physical similarity or difference alone. Thus the logic of the dream-symbol is one in which the manifest or literal *and* the traditionally symbolic aspects of, for example, the umbrella, are elided in favour of one or more perceptual similarity between it and another object.

Whereas not every semiotic system consigns the value of sadness or despair to the colour blue or the value of supreme beauty to the rose, anybody, regardless of the semiotic system of their culture, can compare and contrast long and round objects which, as part of the field of perception, are neither historically nor culturally determined. Organizations or comparisons based

on perceptual similarity and difference are as it were, non-semiotic. They are determined by the nature of the human perceptual apparatus alone.

And although it is true that a semiotics *may* encode perceptual regularities retrospectively, the Freudian symbol does not legitimate semiotic analysis on these grounds either. If Freud argues that symbols are those items in the dream that are often not amenable to the accepted psychoanalytic method of dream-interpretation, i.e., free-association, and seem instead to allow for a certain regularity across interpretation, then he, unlike Ricoeur, nevertheless insists that this is not *because* such symbols are semiotically or culturally encoded, but rather, because they are not. (Freud, 1905, p.155).

It is this supremely non-semiotic and pre-cultural operation which characterizes, not only the (primary process) logic of the psychoanalytic symbol, but likewise the logic of the infantile-researches. It is only a complete disregard or incomprehension of either literal or connotative meanings that allows for the substitution of two items as manifestly *and* connotatively different as a baby and feaces, simply on the grounds that both issue from the mother's body.

The point is not that the child has no reason to pick out *this* perceptual relation between *these* particular objects, but simply that the motivated relation between a baby and faeces is a logic of *affect.* More importantly, it is not one which culturally encoded semiotic operations produce, nor is it a linguistic one. (Freud, 1918[1914], pp. 82-84).

In any event, Ricoeur himself recognizes that regardless of the fact that the dream is made up of images rather than words, it is nevertheless

inappropriate to simply replace a semiotic analysis of the dream as text for one of the dream as image.

In certain brief sections of this paper Ricoeur intimates, to his credit, that the role of language, i.e., of the *words* by which we express concepts or ideas, in the formation of the dream cannot simply be *elided* in favour of the image either. Thus he writes:

> Here we are at the juncture of image and language, since on the one hand the creation of images consists in large part of a "visual representation" of the dream processes, and on the other hand of a "pictorial language" which has to do with the concrete terms used. It is with regard to this, moreover, that Freud comments on the kinship between the dream and wit, as he did earlier with regard to the rebus and as he will do again a few lines later with regard to hieroglyphics. The concept of representability, therefore, designates a working level where the kinship between condensation, displacement and disguise is affirmed and which joins the figured aspects of language to the spatial and visual unfolding of a spectacle ... a figured language is one that gives a contour or a visibility to discourse. Consequently, the problem is not so much that we find words in dreams and that the dream-work should be close to the "verbal wit" which governs jokes, but that language functions at a pictorial level which brings it into the neighborhood of the visual image and visa versa. (1978, p.315).

Here Ricoeur comes close to a full analysis of the *interconnection* between the image/percept and the signifier/word operative in the dream-work, which will be explicated in the next section. However, Ricoeur does not follow this analysis through to its logical conclusion, because he still wishes to argue that the image, rather than being *related* to the sign, is analogous to it: constituting a semiotic system of its own. And it will become apparent that if Ricoeur recognizes and yet fails to take the necessary implications of the dream as "juncture of image and language" (ibid) into sustained consideration, then this is because it is only in this way that he can hope to legitimate

his explicit assertion that, "psychoanalysis is interpretation from beginning to end" (1974, p.66), or his model of Psychoanalysis as, "interpretation *rather than* explanation". (1978, p.300, italics inserted).

1.2 Language and Image in Danto

In an article entitled "Freudian Explanation and the Language of the Unconscious" (1978), Arthur Danto provides a coherent (and more useful) analysis of the role of both language and the image in the classical psychoanalytic account of the operations of disguise by showing that the form of the compromise-formation which disguise produces is in fact effected at the *intersection* between word and thing, or concept and percept, rather than between two languages or meanings. On the basis of Danto's account it will be seen that the role of language and of the image in the formation of the compromise are not mutually exclusive, and cannot be substituted for one another as they are in Ricoeur's paper "Image and Language in Psychoanalysis " (1978), because as Ricoeur himself suspects, it is the relation of the one to the other which is at stake. And it will be argued that by looking at the possible operations of words, as material "things" and as conceptual "signs", Danto provides an explanation of the formation of the dream and of the symptom which, while accounting for the role of language in their formation, does not consequently precipitate Psychoanalysis into the field of the interpretation of meanings alone.

Danto begins his analysis on the premise that Freudian interpretations involve, typically, "a punning transformation of terms, dreams and symptoms,

having as their roots plays on words". (1978, p.328). He argues that these features of representation figure prominently in Freudian interpretations of dreams and symptomatologies because the operations of disguise which account for the unintelligibility of compromise-formations have a language as their precondition although they are not, finally, of a linguistic order.

Danto's argument as to what the nature of these operations of disguise might be hinges on the understanding that the items in a representational system may be deployed in two ways, both as signs and as material things, and that these two operations are mutually exclusive. They may be deployed conceptually, as signs in the significatory (linguistic or semiotic) field, and perceptually, as objects of perception in the material world. Thus, it is only possible to produce signification when the rules for the combination of representational items are *not* governed by operations sustainable on the perceptual level. Likewise, operations sustainable on the perceptual level alone cannot produce signification. And Danto argues that in the symptom, language operates causally along a route which defies signification because in the symptom, representational items operate on the level of their perceptual values alone. (Danto, 1978, pp.330-331).

This analysis is predicated upon one of the basic premises of contemporary Saussurian linguistics, in which a clear distinction is drawn between units of a linguistic system, on the one hand, and their actual physical manifestations on the other. Culler outlines this distinction:

> Language is a system of signs. Noises count as language only when they serve to express or communicate ideas; otherwise they are just noise. And to communicate ideas they must be part of a system of conventions, part of a system of signs. (Culler, 1976, p.111).

Equally, however, Danto's argument devolves upon Freud's account in "The Interpretation of Dreams" (1900) of how, in spite of its highly disguised form, a dream may be interpreted. Here Freud maintains that the transfiguration of the wish in the manifest content of the dream is not simply that the wish is represented as fulfilled, but that the wish as proposition is transformed into the form of a picturing. Freud contends, however, that we cannot, in consequence, interpret the dream as a pictorial composition:

> A dream is a picture-puzzle ... and our predecessors in the field of dream-interpretation have made the mistake of treating the rebus as a pictorial composition: and as such it has seemed to them nonsensical and worthless....Suppose I have a picture-puzzle, a rebus, in front of me. It depicts a house with a boat on its roof, a single letter of the alphabet, the figure of a running man whose head has been conjured away, and so on. Now I might be mislead into raising objections and declaring that the picture as a whole and its component parts are nonsensical. A boat has no business to be on the roof of a house, and a headless man cannot run. Moreover, the man is bigger than the house; and if the whole picture is intended to represent a landscape, letters ... are out of place in it ... But obviously we can only form a proper judgement of the rebus when we put aside criticisms such as these ... [and] try to replace each separate element by a syllable or a word. (Freud, 1900, pp.277-78, cited in Danto, 1978, pp.341-343).

A rebus is the sort of puzzle in which words are presented as pictures, and in which the solution is a sentence. For example, if the dream-thought linguistically encoded in the present tense propositional form characteristic of the repressed wish were to be formulated as "I see you", then a dream which takes the form of a woman putting on *eye*-makeup at the *sea*-side while a *ewe* grazes on a nearby hill could be solved by sounding out the homonyms I/eye, see/sea, and you/ewe. Or, to use an example from Freud, the *image* of kissing someone in an automobile somewhat paradoxically represents the *word* "autoerotish" (English: "masturbation"). (1900, pp.408-

409; 1916-17, p.235). Hanns Sachs (1911) summarizes the operation of the rebus very clearly:

> We know from Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* that the dream-work makes use of different methods of giving a sensory form to words or phrases. If, for instance, the expression that is to be represented is an ambiguous one, the dream-work may exploit the fact by using the ambiguity as a switch-point: where one of the meanings of the word is present in the dream-thoughts the other one can be introduced into the manifest dream. (cited in Freud, 1900, p.410).

Mannoni likewise points out that: "The dream must not be interpreted as a painting would be [that is, as a representation of pictorial values in the world] but as the visual representation of the words themselves." (1968, p.54).

If Freud's analysis of the dream as rebus, *rather than* as pictorial composition is taken into account, it becomes clear that if Ricoeur cannot account for the dream in terms of a double meaning *linguistic* expression because the dream is made of images, then he cannot account for the dream by way of an alternative semiotics of the image either. The pictures of the dream are not explicable - as pictures - because they are in fact explicable in terms of the words or signifiers which they represent. The interpretation of the dream in terms of its verbal description is not only possible, but necessary, because the form of the dream-image is determined by the form of the linguistic proposition. It is for this reason that Danto argues that: "We solve the rebus by pronouncing the words that go with the individual pictures, replacing these with homonyms, and getting a spoken sentence that makes sense - the solution of the rebus." (Danto, 1978, p.341).

It also becomes clear why it is that Danto maintains that the way in which words operate in the dream is, by the same token, not a linguistic or semiotic operation. Language operates in the dream by way of its material features *rather than* as a sign or symbol, the material features of which are necessarily suppressed. It is only if the signifieds of "ewe" and "you" are ignored in favour of their phonetically similar signifiers that disguise can occur. Thus, it is only one of the elements of the sign, namely its signifiers as sounds or marks, which allows for the possibility of disguise. And signifiers as sounds or marks we produce in speaking or writing are *not* in themselves units of a linguistic system.

This is because language as a sign system is necessarily predicated upon the unmotivated relation between signifier and signified. The significatory and communicative role of language and other representational systems is only made possible if there is a systematic or habitual, rather than a motivated or intrinsic, relation between signifiers and signifieds. In the compromise-formation, by contrast, words or propositions are confused on the basis of their perceptual identities, thereby allowing for the possibility of disguise. Through a slippage in the normal operation of language, the propositional or significatory content of words can be confused or lost, thereby fulfilling the necessary conditions of repression and disguise.

And Danto maintains that not only the dream-content stands to the dream-thought as a rebus stands to its solution, but that much the same is true of symptoms. As in the dream, disguise in the symptom is made possible *by* language but is not a phenomena *within* it. This is because in the symptom, as in the dream, the material (perceptual or phonetic) features of a language (i.e., signifiers), are operated in accordance with the procedures which

govern their organization in perception, thereby suspending their relation to meaning or the signified.

Danto illustrates this with an example from the case of the Rat-Man who, during the course of a summer vacation, decided that he was too fat (German: "Dick"). He began to leave the table before pudding, to tear along the road without a hat in the blazing heat of the August sun, and to dash up a mountain until he could no longer continue. (Freud, 1909, pp.188-9).

Freud points out that the Rat-Man could not explain this senseless behaviour, until it suddenly occurred to him that his beloved and her English cousin, of whom he was very jealous, were also at the holiday resort. This cousin, whose name was "Richard", was known as "Dick". The Rat-Man then, by running, had been trying to get rid of "Dick". (Freud, ibid).

It is plain that it would be absurd to attribute to the Rat-Man, obsessional as he was, the conscious or even unconscious belief that by slimming *himself*, he would somehow eradicate his rival: "Were the matter as simple as that, we would have only a wayward premise to rectify, and instruction in the technology of rival-riddance would take care of the Rat-Man's therapeutic needs." (Danto, 1978, p.344).

Thus Danto concludes that if getting rid of Dick was the real reason for the Rat-Man's running, then the transformation of the Rat-Man's unconscious belief into his given one can only be on the basis that the signifiers "Dick" and "Dick" are related homonymically, as rebus to resolution.

Although here it is two words, rather than a word and an image, as in the dream, which are confused, it remains their phonetic and perceptual (i.e., material) identity upon which a slippage is nonetheless predicated. The point at which the two words overlap has nothing to do with their signifieds or reference but only with the form of their signifieds. The result is an arbitrary return to their identity on the level of perception. (In fact, there are dream-images in which the operation of saying to showing, or saying to picturing, also takes this route, through two words, rather than between a word and an image.) (Freud, 1900, p.413).

Danto also illustrates his argument with a case of schizophrenia cited by Freud in which a girl, after quarreling with her lover, complained that "her eyes were twisted". As Danto points out, Freud relates this example in illustration of "the meaning and the genesis of schizophrenic word-formation", since the German word for deceiver is "Augenverdreher" (eye-twister). (Freud, 1915a, p.198, cited in Danto, 1978, p.349).

The section in Freud's paper on "The Unconscious" (1915a) from which Danto draws this example, if dense, is clearly instructive. Certainly, it appears at first sight as if Danto is merely emphasizing the distinction Freud is himself concerned to draw between the primary process operations of the system unconscious, which operate on the logic of "thing-presentations" alone, and the secondary process operations appropriate to the systems preconscious/conscious, which are characterized by the logic of "word-presentations", or a *correspondence between* word and thing. (Freud, 1915a, pp.201-202). However, it becomes apparent that by arguing that words may themselves operate both as *words* (signs) *or as things*

(material items), Danto is not so much re-iterating Freud's analysis, as explicating its hidden agenda.

This is because a problem for Freud's analysis arises at exactly the point upon which his argument is predicated, i.e., in the transformation undergone in schizophrenic speech. Freud maintains that the *words* of the schizophrenic are effects of the primary psychical processes which operate on the level of thing-presentations (i.e., on the level of perceptual identities) alone. Yet he also recognizes that, "what has dictated the substitution [in schizophrenic speech] is *not the resemblance between the things denoted but the sameness of the words used to express them*". (Freud, 1915a, p.201; cf. Freud, 1900, p.602). Likewise in "The Interpretation of Dreams", Freud writes: "It is true in general that words are frequently treated in dreams as though they were things, and for that reason they are apt to be combined in just the same way as are the presentation of things." (1900, pp.295-296).

What is more or less explicit in both of these texts, and substantiated consistently across the Freudian corpus as a whole is then, what Danto is concerned to demonstrate: The compromise-formation implicates language in so far as it operates the primary process logic appropriate to the thing-presentation *across* the word, rather than eliding words altogether. Since the compromise-formation is defined by Freud as the product of inter-agency conflict, rather than as a pure product of the unconscious system alone, this account is, moreover, faithful to the spirit of Freud's essential project.

The notion of a failure in the function of language is also clearly an essential feature of Freudian explanation in "The Psychopathology of Every-day Life". (Freud, 1901). Here, common errors or parapraxes of all sorts are rendered

explicable, rather than accidental, in terms of the motives of wish-fulfillment and defence. Freud's analyses in this work are all paradigmatic instantiations of Danto's analysis of the operation of language in the compromise-formation, in which the phonetic and perceptual similarities between words take precedence over, and undermine, their differential significatory contents. Freud writes:

> Not only the motives, but also the mechanisms governing the forgetting of names, deserve our interest. In a large number of cases a name is forgotten not because the name itself arouses such motives, but because - owing to similarity in sound and in assonance - it touches upon *another* name against which these motives do operate. (1901, p.32).

It is not the significatory content of words, but rather their material qualities which are foregrounded, and which therefore provide the links between the missing name and the repressed topic. Freud uses his "Signorelli" slip in order to demonstrate this subsumption of significatory content to perceptual identity in the associative links leading to the parapraxis.

Instead of remembering the name "Signorelli", the names of two other painters, "Botticelli" and "Boltraffio" occurred to him, although Freud immediately recognized these to be incorrect:

> The name *Signorelli* has undergone a division into two pieces. One of the pairs of syllables *(elli)* recurs without alteration in one of the substitute names: while the other, by means of the translation *Signor* into *Herr*, has acquired a numerous and miscellaneous set of relations to the names contained in the repressed topic, but for this reason is not available for [conscious] reproduction. The substitute for it [for *Signor]* has been arrived at in a way that suggests that a displacement along the connected names of "*Herz*egovina and *Bos*nia" had taken place, without consideration for the sense or for the acoustic demarcation of the syllables. Thus the names have been treated in this process like the pictograms in a sentence which has had to be converted into a picture-puzzle

> (or rebus). Of the whole course of events that have in ways like these produced the substitute names instead of the name *Signorelli* no information has been given to consciousness. At first sight it seems impossible to discover any relation between the topic in which the name *Signorelli* occurred and the repressed topic which preceded it in time, apart from this recurrence of the same syllables (or rather sequence of letters). (1901, pp.4-5).

On the basis of these and countless other examples, it can be argued, contrary to Ricoeur, that although there is a regularity underlying the role of language in the formation of the compromise, this regularity is not a second-order operation within language itself (as in the process of symbolization or double-meaning), *or* a semiotics of the image. Rather, this regularity lies in the possible slippage which results when the *negation* across the relation percept- to-word necessary in the production of signification is undermined or elided. Danto, unlike Ricoeur, can thus account for both the role of linguistic and of perceptual representations in the formation of symptomatic psychical productions at once, in terms of his conception of the compromise-formation as an *exchange* across the perceptual and significatory aspects of natural language - an exchange in which the perceptual is made to do the work of the conceptual and *vice versa*.

It is perhaps necessary to point out, however, that although Danto's analysis of the role of language in the formation of the compromise is clearly and consistently substantiated in Freud's texts, it remains the fact that it is not always and everywhere the case that the compromise takes its route via a slippage in the operation of language.

Thus, it is also true that the substitution of one image for another can occur along the route of pure *showing*, i.e., in terms of a picturing relation which relates directly from thing to thing, rather than because of any relation

between the two referents on the level of the material similarity of the words which designate them.

In fact, however, the logic of Danto's analysis can be extended to include compromise-formations which do *not* operate across a slippage between word as concept and word as material thing. It can be extended to include compromises which do not implicate any features of language at all.

What is crucial in Danto's argument is that wherever an accidental or arbitrary connection returns *within an already articulated or semiotic system*, this slippage is necessarily predicated upon the exclusion of the significatory or representational values of that item, in favour of its status as object or thing. Any significatory or semiotic operation, whether it be linguistic or not, is put in check in a compromise-formation by foregrounding a signifier as material object *rather than* as an element within a system which stands in for something else.

This is born out in Freud's analysis of the fetish in which the efficacy of the substitute object is originally that, like a sign, it *stands in for* the (mother's) phallus. The fetishist, for whom underwear, a sort of material, or a shoe, for example, stands in for the missing phallus can, however, only be *distinguished* from the non-fetishist, for whom underwear, lace, velvet or high-heeled shoes stand, rather, as a sign for the female gender (and not for the missing phallus), on the grounds that *in the case of the fetishist,* the substitute or fetishistic object must return to the status of thing, rather than retaining the status of a sign, if the disguise of its true role is to be effected. (1927, pp.149-152; 1905, pp.153-155).

Thus, where a lover's perfume, *or* the colour of her eyes, or the type of dresses she wears, can stand in for a non-fetishist's desire, a fetishist can only be satisfied with a (more or less) specific and non-substitutable object, for example, blue velvet. It is only the specificity of the object involved as a thing which for the purposes of disguise has lost the status of a sign, that can thus serve as the grounds for distinguishing the symptomatic from the non-symptomatic in this type of sexual aberration.

And if there remain examples in the Freudian corpus which cannot be subsumed to Danto's analysis of the compromise-formation across a slippage between the word or image as "meaning" and as material "thing", then it is nevertheless also the case that these instances do not follow Ricoeur's model of a double-meaning linguistic or iconic signification either.

This is because these instances do not implicate the exclusion or disguise of the significatory values of the material in question, but operate exclusively on the level of the "thing-presentations" appropriate to the unconscious alone and cannot, in consequence, be integrated into the debate around semiotics in any way. Examples of such instances include not only the psychoanalytic symbol, the content of which is usually invariant, but also, for example, the dream-presentation of the Wolf-Man's nursery-maid Grusha as a butterfly with *yellow stripes.* This is clearly not because the wolf-man "signifies" Grusha to himself in terms of yellow stripes, but because they occur, *as shape and colour*, on the pear which shares her name. (Freud, 1918[1914], p.91).

In any event, it is not the *extent*, but rather the *manner* in which Freudian explanation/interpretation involves language with which we are here

concerned. In short, this dissertation is by no means concerned to argue that *all* Freudian symptoms implicate language, but rather to explore the way in which language does or does not operate in many symptomatic formations such that the epistemological consequences of the role of language in psychoanalysis may be explored.

And if it has been seen that Danto provides a more adequate (both more consistent *and* less misleading) account of the role of language in the formation of the compromise-formation then it remains to explore the epistemological consequences of his, as opposed to Ricoeur's, formulation.

1.3 Explanation and Interpretation in Psychoanalysis: Danto vs. Ricoeur

Ricoeur's formulation of the psychoanalytic compromise-formation as a semiotic operation is predicated upon a linguistic model in which the relation between the signifier and its signified is necessarily arbitrary. He writes: "Freud, it also seems, knew nothing of the idea of language conceived of as a group of signifiers defined by their differences within the interior of a system." (1978, p.305).

Moreover, the capacity of the sign to acquire a *dual* significatory function (i.e., to instantiate the *symbolic* operation Ricoeur insists on) is likewise regulated by cultural convention alone. Thus Ricoeur maintains that psychoanalytic symbols are amenable to hermeneutic interpretation because hermeneutics is, "the theory of the *rules* that preside over an

exegesis - that is, over the interpretation of a particular text, or of a group of signs that may be viewed as a text". (1974, pp.7-8, italics inserted).

Now clearly, it is not by virtue of a "rule" which requires hermeneutic explication that tigers come to be associated with ferocity, but it is by virtue of a convention or rule alone that blue symbolizes sadness, or that roses, despite their thorns and rather than tigers or lilies or violets, come to connote feminine beauty in our culture in a regular way. Thus if some of the connotative or secondary meanings of words may be seen to be originally grounded in perceptual associations, then this cannot detract from the fact that a symbolic system which is rule-governed is finally determined in terms of an essentially arbitrary cultural (linguistic or iconographic) convention alone.

Since there is no necessary or inherent relation between the dual meanings instantiated in those signs which are also symbols, Ricoeur's argument for the compromise-formation on the model of the symbol unquestionably results in the following implication: Ricoeur cannot argue for certainty across psychoanalytic interpretation unless the latent or hidden meanings of the compromise are taken to be fixed or culturally encoded.

By contrast, Danto provides the grounds on which to argue for certainty across psychoanalytic interpretation without the consequence of regularity across like instances.

On the basis of his consideration of the proper implications of Freud's discussion on the rebus, Danto maintains that the translation of manifest into latent content in the compromise short-circuits the significatory content of a

sign-system (including the dual significatory content of those signs functioning as symbols) by operating the signifier as material object of perception *rather than* as the arbitrary medium for the transmission of specific (if sometimes multiple) signifieds.

On this model it is *not Freud* as Ricoeur contends, but rather *Freud's patients* who, "knew nothing of the idea of language conceived of as a group of signifiers defined by their differences within the interior of the system". (Ricoeur, 1978, p.305). Rather than being arbitrary, the form which the compromise takes is wholly determined by the perceptual operations of identity and difference in general, and (most commonly) limited by the material features of a language, in particular.

Danto therefore maintains that although the aberrant forms of the dream and the symptom may have the features of language as their precondition, they do not operate *as* a language but rather, in *conflict* with its representational and communicative functions. The compromise-formation is thus never, finally, of a properly linguistic order.

By defining the operation of disguise in the compromise in this parasitic but nevertheless, negative relation to language, Danto thus avoids the implications of viewing the compromise-formation on a linguistic model, i.e., a model which necessarily implies the consequence of (albeit more or less) regular interpretation across like instances.

If Danto's considerations on the role of language (and the image) in Psychoanalysis can thus be seen to diverge in many substantial respects from Ricoeur's then what is at stake in these discriminations, (above and

beyond their fidelity to the original Freudian formulations), is twofold: Firstly, Danto's analysis of the role of language in Psychoanalysis on the model of the rebus, rather than on the model of a significatory system, allows for the recognition that an interpretation can acheive certainty to the extent to which it is causally particular and individually specific. Secondly, or by implication, if the compromise-formation is understood on the model of the rebus then it can only *be* "interpreted" *in so far* as it is causally "explained". These two points will be elaborated consecutively.

1.3.1 Interpretation *and* Certainty

Within significatory systems, or between such systems, negotiable interpretation is possible because substitution or paraphrase is possible. There is no logical way to guarantee a specific interpretation except through the regularization of the interpretive field. Because the rebus, however, does not occur within or between languages, it cannot logically be paraphrased, and *must* (logically therefore) be interpreted non-arbitrarily.

It is for this reason that Freud compares the rebus-like operation of the dream and the symptom to a "picture-puzzle":

> After many attempts, we become absolutely certain in the end which piece belongs in the empty gap, for only that piece fills out the picture and at the same time allows its irregular edges to be fitted into the edges of the other pieces in such a manner as to leave no free space and to entail no overlapping. (Freud, 1896a, p.205).

A puzzle, unlike a text, is something for which an answer is either not found, or correct. Rather than an "interpretation", it requires a "solution". If the pieces of a puzzle are re-arranged in varying combinations over and over again,

then this is not because there *are* many possible "interpretations" of its final organization, but because many possible patterns must be explored before a solution is ultimately achieved.

In the procedure of biblical exegesis, or in the interpretation of a literary text, interpretations are more or less subtle, illuminating or credible, but no interpretation can totally rule out any other, and the words "right" or "wrong" do not apply. In the case of psychoanalytic interpretation, by contrast, the procedure for finding and testing an interpretation may well be tortuous and hazardous, and many useful interpretations which seem to hold may consequently have to be discarded or altered, but it nevertheless remains true that a definitive interpretation *may*, potentially at least, be achieved.

This is because if the form of the compromise-formation, like the form of a rebus, is determined by the specific, highly individual propositional content which it elides, and what is uncovered in an analysis accounts not only for the *fact* of the compromise but for its very *form*, then the necessary relation between *that* elided content and *that* resultant symptom, dream or joke is guaranteed.

It is in *this* sense that we must appreciate Freud's contention that the arbitrariness of the patient's associations is foreclosed by the fact that the key to verbal disguise are, "generally known and laid down by established linguistic usage". (1900, pp.341- 2).

It is only the fact that "Dick" is the name of the Rat-man's rival and that in German, "Dick" means "weight", combined with the fact that the only explanation available to the Rat-man in explaining his compulsive running is that he

must want to lose dick/weight, which together combine to produce certainty of interpretation. At the same time however, this certainty is achieved without entailing the implication that all joggers have a rival called "Dick", or that other people have not jogged for other reasons, whether these be symptomatic or not.

What is fundamental to this analysis of the compromise-formation on the model of the rebus is thus that the interpretation of any given compromise is only *necessary* to the extent to which it is causally *particular* and individually *specific.* It is for this reason that, once produced, the interpretation of a rebus strikes one like a joke already heard. Nobody discusses the interpretation of a joke because in order to work a joke must, finally, have only *one* possible meaning.

In hermeneutic or semiotic interpretation by contrast, certainty of interpretation can only be achieved on the basis of the regularity of a standardly encoded connotative meaning. If this model is applied to Psychoanalysis, then certainty of interpretation can only be achieved by precipitating psychoanalytic interpretation into the field of generality about particular compromise-formations such that any one particular symptom, for example, hysterical coughing, would have to be interpreted in a fixed and consistent way across all instances. In short, a semiotic model of Psychoanalysis could only argue for certainty of interpretation by insisting that symptom-formation is consistent across all people subject to the same sign-systems.

1.3.2 Interpretation *and* Explanation

If, on the model of the rebus, the compromise-formation does not have a discreet systematic connotative language of its own, with its own rules of signification, then Ricoeur's argument for "interpretation *rather than* explanation" (1978, p.300) is undermined. This is because if the manifest and latent content of the dream are not two substitutable or paraphrasable systems, then no element of the dream-work can be interpreted, unless at the same moment, it is causally explained. In other words, the relation between manifest and latent content can only be interpreted once its contingent and individual motivation is established, whereas the relation between "dog" and "hund" requires no such motivation, but merely an English-German Dictionary. Likewise, the relation "rose" to "beauty" merely requires a dictionary of symbols or connotations.

Thus Culler contrasts Freud's psychoanalytic analyses, which are causal explanations despite the fact that they have no predictive force, with linguistics. Unlike Psychoanalysis, linguistics:

> ...does not pretend to causal analysis: it does not try to explain why an individual uttered a particular sequence at a given moment but shows why the sequence has the form and meaning it does by relating it to the system of the language .... What is especially significant here is the move away from historical explanation. *To explain social [linguistic] phenomenon is not to discover temporal antecedents and to link them in a causal chain but to specify the place and function of the phenomenon in a system. (1976, p.73, italics inserted).*

Ricoeur is thus right that a relation between languages, or across connotative meanings, does not explain; it cannot tell us why a particular individual's symptom takes a particular form. However, if the relation between manifest

and latent content in the compromise-formation is not a relation between or within significatory systems, then this relation must be explained, because it is a radically specific and highly motivated one.

1.4 Elucidation: The Wolf-Man and the Interpretation of Dreams

Freud's elucidation of his method of interpretation in the "Wolf-Man" case (1914) can be used as an extended illustration of both of these inter-related points. Here Freud himself clearly facilitates the recognition firstly, that it is only if the *form* of the compromise is determined by the *content* of the wish that valid interpretation is ensured, and secondly, that this relation between (manifest) form and (latent) content must therefore be causally explained, if it is to be meaningfully interpreted, in so far as it is a relation which is both specific and motivated.

Early on in his analysis the Wolf-Man recounted to Freud a "memory" of early childhood. He was chasing "a beautiful big butterfly with yellow wings which ended in pointed projections", when he was suddenly seized with terror. This memory remained unaccounted for until much later in the course of analysis, when the Wolf-Man told Freud that in his language a butterfly was called "babushka" (Russian:"granny"), and added that butterflies reminded him of women and girls, and beetles and caterpillars of boys. (Freud, 1918[1914], p.89). Freud writes that at the time, he had suggested that the yellow stripes on the butterfly had perhaps reminded the Wolf-man of similar stripes on a piece of clothing worn by some woman, and he adds:

> I only mention this as an illustration to show how inadequate the physician's constructive efforts are for clearing up questions that arise....*I may mention the facile suspicion that the points or stick-like projections of the butterflies wings might have had the meaning of genital symbols. (1918 [1914], pp.89-90, italics inserted).*

Instead, the gradual unfolding of the Wolf-Man's infantile thought processes in the process of free-association revealed the sort of word-play described in Danto's analysis. Behind the screen-memory of the butterfly lay the memory of the Wolf-Man's nursery-maid, whose name was "Grusha", and the yellow stripes were not on her dress as Freud had suggested, but on the pear whose name was the same as hers.

The profound fear caused by the reactivation of the memory of Grusha by this butterfly remained, however, unclarified. Freud suggests many possible and even likely explanations of it on the basis of material accumulated during the course of the analysis, but he nevertheless only considers these *confirmed* by the following dream.

The Wolf-Man related his dream of "a man tearing off the wings of an *Espe*", and explained, in the face of Freud's incomprehension, that "an *'espe'* is an insect with yellow stripes on its body, that stings". (Freud, 1918[1914], p.94).

By confusing a "Wespe" (a wasp) with an "Espe", the Wolf-Man had clearly both mutilated the wespe, and produced his own initials: S.P. By giving this mutilated wasp *yellow stripes* however, he also contrived to inflict considerable bodily harm on Grusha, the nursery-maid. And if both Grusha and the Wolf-Man have thus incurred the damage of having their wings torn off, then it is clear why Freud can conclude that this dream provides another

indication of the Wolf-Man's fear of mutilation, and a new indication of his desire for revenge or reparation in this regard.

Finally, the original memory of the butterfly, in conjunction with this dream of the wasp, together provide the necessary evidence that both the Wolf-Man's fear, and his desire for revenge are in fact attributable to another childhood event in which the Wolf-Man's nursery-maid, Grusha, was present, "teasing or scolding him". (ibid, p.91).

Clearly, it was primarily the material similarity between the words "Babushka" - "Grusha" - "Grusha", (butterfly - pear - nursemaid), and "Wespe" - "Espe", that allowed Freud to establish the meaning of, and connections between, these two memories and the dream which followed their partial yet inconclusive analysis, and to thereby ascertain both the fears and desires necessary in explaining much of the Wolf-man's later symptomatology.

However, if the slippage across butterflies, grannies, pears and nursery-maids; as well as across wasps and patients with the initials "S.P.", could be picked out and illuminated, then this was for two reasons. Freud knew, not only the operations necessary to the achievement of disguise and their preconditions in language, but also or equally, the specific details of the Wolf-Man's childhood history and infantile fantasies as they were related to him over the course of an analysis.

In chapter two of "The Interpretation of Dreams" (1900), Freud makes these essential aspects of his interpretive approach even more explicit when he contrasts his method of dream-interpretation to two traditional ones:

> The first of these procedures considers the content of the dream as a whole and seeks to replace it by another content which is intelligible and in certain respects analogous to the original one. This is "*symbolic*" dream interpreting... The second of the two popular methods of interpreting dreams...might be described as the "*decoding*" method, since it treats dreams as a kind of cryptography in which each sign can be translated into another sign having a known meaning, in accordance with a fixed key. Suppose, for instance, that I have dreamt of a letter and also a funeral. If I consult a "dream-book", I find that a "letter" must be translated by "trouble" and "funeral" by "betrothal"...It cannot be doubted for a moment that neither of the popular procedures for interpreting dreams can be employed for a scientific treatment of the subject. The symbolic method is restricted in its application and incapable of being laid down on general lines. In the case of the decoding method everything depends on the trustworthiness of the "key" - the dreambook, and of this we have no guarantee. (1900, p.97).

In his comprehensive and scholarly study on "Language and the Origins of Psychoanalysis" (1980), John Forrester delineates many subtle discriminations which illuminate, among other things, the importance of Freud's differentiation between these interpretive methods and his own.

If Freud associates his method more closely with the "decoding" than the "symbolic" interpretive methods then this is only, as Forrester points out, in so far as both conceive of the dream as a series of *un*unified *elements* to be interpreted. However, in contrast to both the "symbolic" and the "decoding" methods, the psychoanalytic method of elucidating the dream consists in placing each element of it into the context of the patient's verbal free-associations. (Forrester, 1980, pp.71-73). If Freud later revises "The Interpretation of Dreams" to allow for the fact that a certain limited group of specifiable objects and actions may be subject to stock interpretation or standard translation in the event of a failure of the free-associative method, then there is also no doubt that this aspect of psychoanalytic interpretation is marginal, and cannot be generalized to the detriment of the role of the

radically particular causal aetiologies consistently demonstrated and emphasized across the Freudian corpus.

Freud himself writes that we must always be prepared to find that a single piece of content may, "conceal a different meaning when it occurs in various people or in various contexts". (1900, p.105).

Forrester thus maintains that Ricoeur confuses Freud's notion of the non-arbitrariness of the role of language in the operations of disguise with a (Jungian-type) notion of "collective" symbolism, "when he [Ricoeur] characterizes the shift from the Studies to the Traumdeutung as one in which the mechanisms of displacement and condensation have absolute priority in the Studies, to the set of 'cultural stereotypes' of The Interpretation of Dreams." (Ricoeur, 1970, p.97, cited in Forrester, 1980, p.73).

And if Ricoeur's latest meditations on the dream in "Language and the Image in Psychoanalysis" (1978) are considered, then it becomes apparent that this confusion, if less blatant, remains intact. For Ricoeur maintains that the way that dreams are "typical" is: "Not just, as we say, because they are common to several dreamers, but because their content is the structural invariant that allows a dream and a myth to stand for each other." (1978, p.320).

What is at stake here, far from being trifling, is fundamental to the most radical aspects of classical Psychoanalysis. This is, as Forrester correctly maintains:

> Freud's conviction of the individuality of structure of each dream, of each neurosis. Such structures were built up out of the same mechanisms, but one did not expect these mechanisms to produce the same manifest content or symptom corresponding to a given concealed thought, since the

> individual's unique experiences were the raw material out of which the structures were built. In his papers on the neuroses in the 1980's, Freud made much of the revolution he was effecting in the nosology of the neuroses: his new classification was based on mechanism, not on symptomatology. (Freud, 1895, pp.90-1). Similarly, his theory of dreams rested on the delineation of the mechanisms of the dream-work, not on the superficial themes or common features shared by various dreams. To retreat back to classification by symptom and sign would in effect amount to losing everything that psychology had gained for pathology. (Forrester, 1980, p.76).

In fact, the quotation which Ricoeur uses from Freud in order to justify his argument for interpretation *rather than* explanation itself undermines this distinction, and brings the necessity of explanation for interpretation to the fore:

> The aim which I have set before myself is to show that dreams are capable of being interpreted..."interpreting" a dream implies assigning a "meaning" to it - that is, replacing it by something which fits into the chain of our mental events as a link having a validity and importance equal to the rest. (Freud, 1900, p.96, cited in Ricoeur, 1978, p.300, italics inserted).

Now clearly, if "interpreting" a dream or assigning a meaning to it means, as Freud argues, "replacing it by something which fits into the chain of our mental events as a link having a validity and importance equal to the rest" (ibid), then the distinction between interpretation and explanation, or translation and causal explication, cannot be justified.

Conclusion

Ricoeur's contention that, "psychoanalysis is interpretation from beginning to end" (1977, p.66), is predicated on a linguistic model in many respects inappropriate to the material it is intended to subsume, and which results in unfortunate repercussions for the possibility of achieving epistemic certainty in the clinic.

This is because regardless of whether Ricoeur is arguing merely for negotiable interpretation, or for a generalization of the interpretive field in terms of a regular connotative field, his argument logically undercuts the necessity for the particular causal explanations instantiated in the case histories. To read the whole of Psychoanalysis on a linguistic model is either to deny the role of causal explanation in Psychoanalysis entirely, or to take the role of sign-systems in the unconscious as a major expanded explanatory network. Either way, Ricoeur excludes not only the content of the case-histories but in fact, the rest of the metapsychology.

This circumscription is inevitable in view of Ricoeur's narrow characterization of the compromise-formation as a significatory event. This characterization (wittingly or unwittingly) elides what is both most consistent and significant about the psychoanalytic definition of its object - its status as the product of a defensive conflict between agencies, and its status as a regressive substitute affording the subject replacement satisfaction. (Freud, 1896, p.170; 1917, pp.358-359).

If this is a consequence not strictly related to the epistemological concerns of this project, then it is nevertheless too significant not to receive at least

cursory mention. For, by defining psychoanalysis as an interpretive knowledge, Ricoeur is lead to account not only for the operations of disguise, but for the symptom in its entirety, on a linguistic model, i.e., "in terms of communication disturbances". (1981, p.24). In short, Ricoeur's epistemological position leads him to maintain that not only the possibility for disguise, but in fact the very possibility for the symptom, can be explained on a linguistic or communicative model.

In so doing, Ricoeur cannot do otherwise but undermine the entire psychoanalytic metapsychology (the topographics, economics and dynamics), in favour of a semantic and meaning problematic, and conclude that:

> Hence, psychoanalytic theory is inadequate to the discovery made in psychoanalytic practice when it proposes a purely energetic definition of desire in terms of tension and discharge ... And the theoretical model ignores language as well as the other person, since to speak is to address oneself to another person. (1978, p.296).

If psychoanalytic theory (i.e., the metapsychology), "ignores language as well as the other person" (ibid), then Ricoeur has not done a proper job of reading it. But it is perhaps only in this way that he ever came to hold the opinion that: "Psychoanalysis is interpretation from beginning to end." (1974, p.66).

By contrast, Danto gives us a formal explanatory account of the role of language in the structure or form of the symptom, in terms of the possible relations between words as significatory items and as material things, without resituating Psychoanalysis in consequence, as a purely interpretive knowledge. Likewise, Danto's account of the operations of language in the

formation of the symptom is one in which language provides the conditions of possibility for disguise, or for the *form* of the symptom alone. It is not an account in terms of which language or any other significatory and communicative system (its uses and abuses) is considered sufficient to account for the symptomatic per se. The role of language and interpretation in Psychoanalysis is thus not only *other than* Ricoeur would claim, it is also a great deal more circumscribed. It can account for the *form* but not for the *origin* of many psychical productions.

It remains then to elaborate the structure of psychoanalytic explanation in other directions. In the next chapter, Donald Davidson's account of the conditions of possibility for the symptom in terms of the Freudian topography will therefore be explored. In particular, the way in which the topographics also problematizes the scientific and human-scientific bifurcation between interpretation and explanation will be demonstrated.

CHAPTER TWO

REASONS AND CAUSES IN PSYCHOANALYSIS

Introduction

The logical divergence between the human and natural sciences is, as is commonly recognized, predicated upon the understanding that since physical events are caused, whereas human actions are intended or motivated, events can be explained, whereas human action can only be interpreted.

Arguments around the epistemological status of psychoanalysis as either explanation or interpretation therefore hinge, not only on the nature of the symptom as a linguistic phenomenon, but on the problem of the intentional status (or structure) of psychoanalytic symptoms.

The view that symptoms are *actions* rather than *physical events* on the level of the body alone inaugurates the psychoanalytic project. However, if Freud never concluded on this basis that symptoms must be interpreted by reasons *rather than explained by causes*, and that in consequence Psychoanalysis necessarily belongs to a discrete human scientific mode of explanation fundamentally divorced from all other natural sciences, then it is nevertheless this secondary implication which is currently more popular amongst defenders of Psychoanalysis.

Thus G. S. Klein, P. Ricoeur, H. Guntrip and S. Toulmin have privileged Freud's clinical theory over that of the metapsychology, which is seen to abandon the personalized clinical level and assume the impersonal and *deterministic* natural science language of energies, forces, systems and mechanisms.

H. Guntrip, for example, criticizes the metapsychology for instantiating "a study of the mechanisms of behaviour and not of the meaningful personal experience that is the essence of the *purposive* self". (1973, p.49, italics inserted). G. S. Klein commends psychoanalytic *clinical* theory for its attempt "to state reasons rather than causes". (1976, p.56, cited in Grunbaum, 1985, pp.83-91). P. Ricoeur writes that, "an explanation through motives is irreducible to an explanation through causes... a motive and a cause are completely different". (1970, pp.359-360). And S. Toulmin contends that since "troubles arise from thinking of Psycho-analysis too much on the analogy of the natural sciences .... [Psychoanalysis] should re-emphasize the importance of 'reasons for action' as opposed to 'causes for action'". (Toulmin, 1954, pp.134-139). (see also Guntrip, 1961, p.155; Schaffer, 1977, pp.12-13, 1976, pp.204-205; Gauld and Shotter, 1977, pp.9-10).

This characterization of the psychoanalytic symptom as an intentional phenomenon which privileges the "clinical" language of experience over the metapsychology, and situates psychoanalytic epistemology within the field of interpretation appropriate to human action, *rather than* the field of explanation appropriate to events, is clearly motivated, at least in part, by the desire to defend Psychoanalysis from the consequences of what has often seemed to be its unfavorable comparison to the natural sciences. It is for this reason

that Micheal Sherwood has designated this humanist-interpretive position, "the thesis of the separate domain". (1969, p.179).

However the problematical status of the symptom as an *irrational* action, i.e., as an action (rather than a bodily event) but one which cannot be understood in terms of the agent's intentions, undermines the clear-cut traditional bifurcation between actions and events, and the attendant distinction between interpretation and explanation.

It is therefore necessary to explore the possibility that the dichotomy between reasons and causes, and the attendant dichotomy between interpretation and explanation, is inappropriate to the psychoanalytic field - mistaken in principle.

This possibility will be taken up in terms of a comparative analysis of three of the major critics of the human-scientific position in so far as it relates to the role of intentionality in human action, (hereafter referred to as the humanist-interpretive position).

Adolf Grunbaum, Micheal Sherwood and Donald Davidson all criticize the characterization of human action as intentional *rather than* causal, and attempt to locate psychoanalytic epistemology within the framework of this debate centering around the nature of human action. All three can be seen to instantiate Kant's view that:

> It is an indispensable problem of speculative philosophy to show that its illusion respecting the contradiction [between intentionality and causality] rests on this, that we think of man in a different sense and relation when we call him free, and when we regard him as subject to the laws of nature ... It must therefore show that

> not only can both of these very well co-exist, but that both must be thought *as necessarily united* in the same subject." (Kant, 1909, cited in Davidson, 1986, p.225).

Of these three authors, however, Davidson's analysis is the most important in that it alone is successful in establishing the relation between reasons and causes in the psychoanalytic symptom *in particular*. Although Davidson's work on the analytical philosophy of action is well-known, ("Actions and Events", 1980), Davidson's contribution to Psychoanalysis and its relation to this epistemological debate is limited to a single seminal paper, "Paradoxes of Irrationality". (1982).

Davidson's account in "Paradoxes of Irrationality" will be elaborated firstly, in order to explain how it is that the symptom can be subjected to causal explanation on the psychoanalytic account, without detracting from its status as action, (rather than event), and secondly, in order to elaborate why it is that the symptomatic in classical Freudian Psychoanalysis consequently appears to pivot *across* the fields of science and human science. Davidson allows us to implement a causal analysis across fields previously confined to either interpretive activities *or* causal explanation in the natural science model. The novelty of Davidson's position is therefore to establish a third term between natural and human science.

2.1 The Problem of Reasons and Causes in Psychoanalysis

Both Grunbaum and Sherwood provide convincing critical analyses of the conceptual confusions which underlie the view that since actions are "motivated" rather than "caused", psychoanalytic epistemology must be construed as interpretive rather than explanatory. Both conclude that this humanist-interpretive position is misguided to the extent that reasons, despite their intentional status, are nevertheless causal.

Thus Grunbaum writes that: "Causal relevance is a matter of whether X - be it physical, mental, or psycho-physical - MAKES A DIFFERENCE to the occurrence of Y, or AFFECTS the incidence of Y." (Grunbaum, 1984, p.72). Likewise, Sherwood maintains that: "Reasons...are those causally relevant factors which become causally relevant by virtue of the fact that they are taken account of consciously and acted upon by the individual in question." (Sherwood, 1969, p.162).

However, when Grunbaum and Sherwood attempt to undermine the distinction between reasons and causes in Psychoanalysis more specifically, their analyses diverge in a way which makes it apparent that the fundamental issue at stake in the debate around the role of reasons and causes in psychoanalytic epistemology cannot be resolved so easily, i.e., by equating the two.

This divergence between Grunbaum and Sherwood's analyses with regard to the inappropriacy of the humanist-interpretive position to Psychoanalysis devolves on their differential interpretation of the role of *unconscious reasons* in psychoanalytic explanation. It will consequently emerge that the Freudian

field of *unconscious reasons for action* retains its problematical status, as reason *or* cause respectively, despite the fact that both Grunbaum and Sherwood argue that logically, reasons qualify as causes.

In "The Logic of Explanation in Psychoanalysis" (1969), Sherwood maintains that unconscious reasons for action are not different, as causal factors, from conscious ones. Both unconscious and conscious reasons *cause* the behavior in which they result.

Sherwood substantiates this argument with an example from the case-history of the Rat-Man, whose unconscious hostility towards his dead father caused him to engage in a nocturnal undressing ritual. In the event that his father's ghost might care to visit him, his (unconscious) desire to express his defiance would thereby be satisfied. (Freud, 1909, pp.203-204). Sherwood writes:

> Unconscious hostility is not different, as a causal factor, from conscious hostility. If hostility is a cause of, for instance, the patient's undressing ritual, then it is a cause whether or not the patient is aware of it .... It is possible, of course, for the patient to become aware of this hostility, in which case, by definition, it ceases to be "unconscious". This does not, however, mean that it necessarily ceases to be a causal factor or that it changes from a cause to a reason. On the other hand, this awareness itself might well become a causally relevant factor in certain new behavior... The X's we tend to designate as unconscious reasons are just the sort of X's which, in other cases, are reasons of the usual variety. Thus, by labelling Lorenz's hostility, which caused so much of his behavior, as "unconscious reason", we emphasize that this is the sort of factor which in other cases could be a conscious reason for behaviour. (1969, pp.178-179).

What Sherwood fails to recognize is that if the equation between reasons and causes is to be complete, then it is insufficient for unconscious reasons, like conscious ones, to qualify as *causal* factors. Unconscious causes, like

conscious ones, must also qualify as *intentional* factors. In failing to address this side of the equation, Sherwood seems to be taking it for granted. By demonstrating that unconscious reasons, like conscious ones, cause behavior, he seems to assume that unconscious reasons, like conscious ones, must likewise be intentional. In any event, he concludes that they are, "reasons of the usual variety". (ibid). The logic of Sherwood's argument thus prematurely closes this debate.

And it is here that Grunbaum and Sherwood differ, because Grunbaum argues that unconscious reasons do *not* qualify for the notion of intentionality appropriate to the explanation of conscious reasons. Sherwood's assumption regarding the intentional status of unconscious causes for action, or rather, his failure to address this issue at any length, thus exposes an important logical distinction between his own and Grunbaum's contrasting approaches.

Grunbaum maintains that a reason, in order to qualify as such, must fulfill the following criteria: It must result in or cause an action *because the agent believes that such an action will satisfy or fulfill the reason* which caused it.

By defining a reason in this way, Grunbaum can demonstrate that unconscious reasons do not qualify as adequate or sufficient reasons for action in one essential way: there is no means-ends connection between unconscious reasons and the actions in which they result.

Schreber, for example, does not unconsciously *believe* that his delusional persecutory thoughts will accomplish his homosexual "intentions". (Freud, 1911[1910], pp. 200-202 cited in Grunbaum, 1984, p.76). Or, to remodel

Sherwood's example, the Rat-Man does not unconsciously *believe* that his "undressing" ritual shall eradicate or satisfy his hostile impulses. (Freud, 1909, pp.203-204).

Although both conscious and unconscious reasons qualify as *causes* for action, conscious causes alone qualify as *reasons* for actions in any coherent or meaningful sense. Grunbaum therefore concludes:

> It emerges that, in Psychoanalysis, the notion of *intentionality* appropriate to the explanation of premeditated actions - intended because of the agent's belief in their conduciveness to his goals - typically applies at best in only a *Pickwickian or metaphorical sense*, if at all. Unconsciously, the agent is cognitively intent upon a certain desideratum, but he is hardly intent upon the behavior that is causally engendered by this yearning *as an action toward that desideratum.*" (Grunbaum, 1984, pp.79-80).

And he contends that it is for this reason that:

> Freud does *not* regard psychopathological symptoms, slips (parapraxes), and manifest dream contents as *intentional actions*. Yet, quite compatibly, he did hypothesize the *causes* of these to be repressed "intentions", and hence took symptoms, etc. to attest to the presence of unconscious strivings. (ibid, p. 77).

Clearly there is something important at stake in Grunbaum's analysis of unconsciously motivated action as that sort of action in which reason explanations (or interpretations) are misplaced.

Sherwood's description of the difference between conscious and unconscious reasons as a purely *descriptive* one (i.e., different only in so far as they are accessible to awareness or not) overlooks this causal peculiarity of unconscious reasons - that they lack a logical or rational means-ends

connection to the actions which they cause. Likewise, his analysis ignores or glosses the fact that a symptomatic action would neither be of the same form nor, in fact, symptomatic, were the agent's reasons consciously available to him.

This essential characteristic of unconscious reasons is recognized by Peter Alexander when he maintains that a condition for a belief as an unconscious reason for action is that it would not be a reason for that action if it *were* conscious. (Alexander, 1963, cited in Danto, 1978, p.337).

If Sherwood recognizes this problem then he can only account for it by maintaining that: "On the other hand [conscious] awareness itself might well become a causally relevant factor in certain new behavior." (1969, p.178).

What Sherwood's premature equation of unconscious and conscious reasons fails to allow for is the fact that there is something about actions caused by unconscious reasons which brings these actions closer to the effect of a cause than to the effect of a reason.

However, if Sherwood characterizes unconscious reasons for action as, "reasons of the usual variety", i.e., on an intentional model, somewhat prematurely (1969, p.179), then Grunbaum, by contrast, dismisses the possible intentionality of unconscious reasons a little too quickly, as applying at best, "in only a Pickwickian or metaphorical sense". (1984, pp.79-80).

The relation of the psychoanalytic object to the intentional field must be not only clarified, but fully accounted for, or the psychoanalytic field will remain that of pure compulsion or reflex, i.e., irreclaimable for rationality or intentional

action, and unassimilable to description in mental terms at all. By failing to address the crucial question arising from his analysis - the question of how it is that a cause for action which is also a reason, comes to fail the criteria of an intentional model - Grunbaum lays Psychoanalysis open to the criticism that its object *does not exhibit the necessary or distinguishing feature of the mental (i.e., intentionality) at all.*

Thus, although Grunbaum and Sherwood both insist that psychoanalytic explanation is necessarily both intentional *and* causal, it is questionable whether either adequately resolve the logical problems around the issue of reasons and causes at the heart of psychoanalytic explanation.

Donald Davidson's analysis of classical Psychoanalysis, by contrast, does provide an analysis of how an action caused by a reason might nevertheless fail to qualify as a "reasonable" action, i.e., as an action on a properly intentional model. Since the logic of Davidson's argument in "Paradoxes of Irrationality" (1982) is essentially formal, and explicitly relates to only the most fundamental psychoanalytic postulations, Davidson's argument will not require detailed substantiation in terms of the classical psychoanalytic corpus.

2.2 Davidson - Resolving the Paradox

In "Paradoxes of Irrationality" (1982), Donald Davidson approaches the problem of reasons and causes in Psychoanalysis from a more productive angle. Rather than directly addressing the question of whether Freudian explanation instantiates reasons or causes (or both), he looks at the problem

which irrationality, or symptomatic action, poses for the reasons versus causes debate, or more generally, for the epistemological status of thoughts, actions or emotions, at least *in so far* as they are construed in intentional terms.

According to Davidson, explanation in terms of reasons is essential to the idea of intentional action since it enables us to see actions (or thoughts and emotions) as rational from the point of view of the agent. The notion of irrational thought or action seems to be a paradoxical one, because it undermines the intentional status of such thoughts and actions, and thus, their status as thoughts or actions at all. (1982, p.289).

To this extent, Davidson appears to agree with Grunbaum. Like Grunbaum, he points out that any explanation of intentional/rational action minimally requires two elements: a pro-attitude (i.e., a goal or desire) to be achieved and a belief (i.e., conviction), that this goal or desire will be fulfilled by way of a specific action. The action on the one hand, and the belief-desire pair which give the reason on the other, must also be *related* in two discreet ways if they are to yield an explanation. Firstly, there must be a logical relation between them. The belief-desire must explain the action in the way in which the belief in, for example, exercise as a means towards the desired goal of health explains the particular action of jogging. And secondly, "the reasons an agent has for acting must, if they are to explain the action, be the reasons on which he acted; the reasons must have played a *causal* role in the occurrence of the action". (1982, p.293).

However, despite the fact that Davidson recognizes, as Grunbaum does, that irrational or symptomatic action as explained by Freud cannot fulfill these

requirements of normal intentional actions, he nevertheless also points out, as Sherwood does, that in most respects, unconscious desires and beliefs are not qualitatively distinct from conscious ones, to the extent that they *do* in fact retain their status as *reasons* for the symptomatic actions which they engender. It remains to show how Davidson reconciles these two seemingly contradictory positions.

It must be pointed out in advance, however, that Davidson's elaboration of the problem of reasons and causes in Psychoanalysis in terms of the equivalent distinction between "actions" and "events", is intended only to distinguish between those effects caused by reasons, and those which are not. "Actions" must therefore be understood to include all phenomena, whether physical *or mental*, which are explicable as the effects of intentions or, to put it another way, are *caused by reasons.*

Davidson claims that it is only Psychoanalytic theory as developed by Freud which can in fact provide the conceptual framework within which to resolve the question of the logical status of action, especially in relation to the problem of irrationality. Consequently, his work is a defence of Psychoanalysis, or rather, "of a few very general doctrines central to all stages of Freud's mature writings". (ibid, p.290). It is important to remember that Davidson's formal account is concerned only with those *metapsychological* notions which are at the conceptual, rather than the clinical or empirical level. This distinction is crucial to Davidson's contribution, not only to the understanding of the concept of irrationality as it poses problems for philosophical analysis, but also to the understanding of the epistemological status of some of Freud's most fundamental doctrines.

Although Davidson's analysis neither makes use of classical Freudian terminology nor of Freudian examples, this exclusion must also be understood to be deliberate, since it shows that the logic of psychoanalytic explanations is neither determined by the network of concepts specific to Psychoanalysis, nor by Freud's particular choice of confirmatory examples.

Thus Davidson's analysis does not, for example, address the Freudian conception of *unconscious* mental states directly because he maintains that objections to the notion of unconscious mental states and events can be repudiated by showing that the theory is acceptable without them. As he points out, nothing in the description of irrationality requires that any thought or motive be unconscious. Irrationality is operative in cases in which the agent knows what he is doing and why, and knows that it is not for the best, and why. He writes:

> If to an otherwise unobjectionable theory we add the assumption of unconscious elements, the theory can only be made more acceptable, that is, capable of explaining more... The agent denies he has the attitudes and feelings we would attribute to him. We can reconcile observation and theory by stipulating the existence of unconscious events and states that, aside from awareness, are like conscious beliefs, desires and emotions. (ibid, p.305).

Davidson begins his analysis by identifying the underlying problem of explaining irrationality. He points out that much that is *called* irrational does not make for paradox or conceptual difficulty: "It is sensible to try to square the circle if you don't know it can't be done." (ibid, p.290). The sort of irrationality which makes for conceptual difficulty is not the failure of someone else to believe or feel or do what we think reasonable. Rather, it is the failure within a single person of coherence or consistency in the pattern of their beliefs, attitudes, emotions and actions. This distinction has important

implications for Davidson's definition of the irrational as a relational concept which only acquires its status - as the irrational - as a function of its *structural* incoherence, rather than as a function of any specific contents such as a belief in witches, or the desire to kill your father because he refused you ice-cream.

Davidson turns instead to those examples of irrational action in which the agent acts counter to what he himself believes, or goes against his own best judgement, since he claims that even these manifest examples of irrationality are insufficiently explained in pre-Freudian analyses.

He outlines what he designates as the *Plato Principle*, which stands at one extreme in the continuum of possible views, and exemplifies the paradox which irrationality presents for the explanation and definition of intentional action. According to this doctrine, no one willingly acts counter to what they know to be best, and consequently, only ignorance can explain irrational actions. This view in effect denies the existence of irrational actions, because the irrational is ruled out by the logic of the concepts involved: There is a conflict between the standard way of explaining intentional action and the idea that such an action can be irrational.

At the opposite extreme is the *Medea Principle*. This doctrine implies that irrational actions are not intentional, because they are the result of alien forces which overwhelm the agent's will. What the agent did had a reason, but the reason was not *his*. Instead, it was a passion or an impulse which overcame his better judgement, such that his action was not so much an action, as an *event*, or the effect of a cause. (This is what happened to Medea, who begged her own hand not to murder her children).

According to Davidson, there are situations in which both of these analyses can be seen to be appropriate. They do not, however, account for all those instances where the agent acts *intentionally* while *aware* that everything considered his course of action is not for the best. When the Medea Principle is at work, "intention is not present", and in the case of the Plato Principle, "the agent is not aware of an alternative". (ibid, p.195).

Davidson therefore attempts to resolve the problems and paradoxes of irrationality by isolating what these might be seen to consist in.

If irrational reasons for actions do not fulfill the criteria of standard reason explanations of action, in which beliefs and desires bear appropriate relations, firstly to each other, and secondly to the actions they cause, then this must mean that: "In the case of irrationality, the causal relation remains, while the logical one is missing or distorted." (ibid, p.298).

Davidson demonstrates this with the example of wishful thinking, in which the understanding or belief that a state of affairs is desirable, becomes a reason to believe that it exists. (ibid, p.298). In short, the desirability of X *causes* the belief that X exists, despite the fact that the logical relation between the desire and the belief is clearly distorted, perhaps even missing. On these grounds, Davidson concludes that in the case of irrationality there is, "*a mental cause that is not the reason for what it causes*". (ibid, p.298, italics inserted).

But he also insists that irrationality can be seen to be a concept which applies only to those kinds of events where rationality *may potentially* operate. Irrational phenomena are mental in that they contain *reasons* which cause

effects caused by reasons in the instance of irrationality are not *logically* connected to each other, as they are in instances of rationality.

If it is true to say that irrational effects *are caused by intentions*, then it is also apparent that we nevertheless remain outside the only standard pattern of explanation which applies to the mental - for that pattern of explanation demands not only that a mental cause be a reason, but that it also be a reason for what it causes. Or, as Davidson puts it: "For an explanation of a mental effect we need a mental cause that is also a reason for this effect, but, if we have it, the effect cannot be a case of irrationality. Or so it seems." (ibid, p.300).

Davidson thus turns to Freud, for he maintains that it is only on the basis of classical psychoanalytic theory, or more specifically, on the basis of the following three fundamental propositions, that this paradox can properly be accounted for:

1. The mental consists of a number of semi-independent structures which all contain thoughts, desires and memories.

2. Thoughts, desires and memories can combine from all of these structures, as intentional actions, to cause further events, both in the mind and outside it.

3. When some of the thoughts, desires etc., in one substructure in the mind affect other such substructures, this inter-relation must be viewed on the model of physical dispositions and forces.

Davidson points out that these three Freudian propositions have met with criticisms of essentially two sorts. The first is that the idea of semi-autonomous parts of the mind is unintelligible, since it requires that mental events be attributed to something less than a whole person, or agent. The second, though related, criticism concerns the underlying explanatory methodology behind these propositions. Thus it is claimed that Freudian propositions contradict each other, because they include both *reason and causal* accounts of the workings of the mind. Freud *extends the reach of reason explanations* by discovering intentions and desires not recognized before, thereby increasing the number and variety of phenomena to be viewed *as rational*, yet he also wants his explanations to yield *causal accounts* equivalent to those of the natural sciences. And since it is maintained that *causal* accounts are only operative in science because *reason* explanations are not, it is held that these irreconcilable tendencies in his work account for, but do not justify, Freud's application of metaphors drawn from other sciences such as neurology and mechanics to the mental sphere. (ibid, p.291).

In order to repudiate these charges against psychoanalytic theory, Davidson simply points out it is only these denounced aspects of psychoanalytic theory which in fact *make it possible* to explain irrationality, i.e., "a mental cause that is not the reason for what it causes". This is because the only way one mental event can cause another mental event without being a reason for it is when cause and effect are adequately segregated out, as when they occur in different minds. Davidson uses the following example:

> Wishing to have you enter my garden, I grow a beautiful flower there. You crave a look at my flower and enter my garden. My desire caused your craving and action, but my desire was not the

> reason for your craving, nor a reason on which you acted. (perhaps you did not even know about my wish). (ibid, p.300).

He suggests that if we are going to explain irrationality at all, then it is clear that this idea of segregated cause and effect must be applied to a single mind and person. In short, we must assume that the mind is partitioned into semi-independent, yet overlapping and interacting structures, in each of which there is a network of reasons, beliefs and desires which conflict with and contradict those in the other structures or systems. It is important to note, however, that the competing desires and beliefs in these structures do not, in themselves, suggest irrationality. Rather, the possibility of a partitioned mind leaves the field open to irrationality, and the explanation thereof, because it facilitates an account in terms of which one element can operate on another in the modality of non-rational causality. (ibid, p.301).

On the basis of this elaboration Davidson contends that it is in fact *only* Freud's "mixture of standard reason explanations with causal interactions more like those of the natural sciences", and his postulation of semi-autonomous yet interacting parts of the mind, which provides a coherent way of describing and explaining irrationality. (ibid, p.304). For it is only in this way that it is possible to explain how thoughts or impulses can cause effects to which they bear no logical relation, (i.e., in a way more appropriate to the domain of non-intentional or purely *caused* effects), while at the same time retaining their status as *reasons* for those effects.

Davidson's contribution to the understanding of the epistemological status of some of Freud's most basic doctrines can perhaps be summarized in two interlaced points:

The first of these concerns the way the Freudian topography problematizes the scientific and human-scientific bifurcation between reasons and causes and the attendant distinction between interpretation and explanation. And if this argument is followed from the bottom up, then it becomes apparent that a failure to recognize the extent to which psychoanalytic epistemology necessarily incorporates both interpretation in terms of reasons, and explanation in terms of causes, logically results in the disavowal of the topography itself.

The second contribution Davidson makes to an appreciation of psychoanalytic epistemology concerns the way in which the compromise-formation, as that interagency product instantiating both reasons and causes, and requiring both interpretation and explanation, may in fact be known, i.e., both picked out and understood. These two points will be elaborated consecutively in the following two sections of this chapter.

2.3 Explanation and Intentionality in Psychoanalysis

Davidson argues that in symptomatic action, the logical means-ends connection between reason and action is distorted or elided, so that only the causal relation between them remains. Psychoanalytic explanation nevertheless allows us to account for the *intentional* aspects of these actions, by postulating a number of semi-independent structures within the mind which, although interacting causally, nevertheless produce consequences which must be explained in terms of the reasons which caused them, i.e., on the principle of intentional actions. In this way, Davidson's analysis

reconciles Grunbaum's and Sherwood's alternative approaches to the role of reasons and causes in Psychoanalysis.

Grunbaum and Sherwood both concur that rational actions can be explained causally because to *explain* an action is, quite simply, to understand the agent's reasons for doing it.

However, Grunbaum recognizes that the principle object of the Freudian field, namely the symptom, is not causally explicable by way of this intentional model alone, i.e., by reference to the reasons which caused it.

Davidson thus shows that the symptom is aberrant, *not because it is non-intentional*, but rather, because the form of the reason and the form of the action which is its result are logically unrelated therein such that, in symptomatic action, the agent's reasons *do not amount to an explanation of that action*.

What Sherwood's intentional construal of the symptom implicates, therefore, is the important recognition that Psychoanalysis allows for the *extension* of the range of phenomenon subject to explanation in terms of intention.

Despite their differences, Grunbaum and Sherwood are correct on the one point over which they do agree: The psychoanalytic object can and should be described both in terms of reasons and causes, and Freudian epistemology must therefore be defended on this point.

Intentional actions, to count as such, entail *both* logical (reason) explanations, *and* causal relations. This is so because it is only when a reason

explanation functions as a causal one, that a sufficient explanation for any action is obtained. In short, a reason is a rational cause. Like Grunbaum and Sherwood, Davidson thus refutes the logic of the humanist-interpretive position, which denies that a *reason* for action, which is teleological, can also be a *cause* of action, which is not:

> Noting that nonteleological causal explanations do not display the element of justification provided by reasons, some philosophers have concluded that the concept of cause that applies elsewhere cannot apply in the relation between reasons and causes, and that the pattern of justification provides, in the case of reasons, the required explanation. But suppose we grant that reasons alone justify actions in the course of explaining them; it does not follow that the explanation is not also - and necessarily - causal. ... Central to the relation between a reason and an action it explains is the idea that the agent performed the action *because* he had the reason. (Davidson, 1986, p.9).

Certainly if we turn to Psychoanalysis, we see that reason explanations alone, or *what counts to the agent or patient as motive or intention*, are wholly insufficient as explanations in any case of symptomatic action.

Freud distinguishes between *reasons* and *rationalizations* on the grounds that *rationalisations*, however reasonable, are *not* in fact causally relevant factors for any particular action. Rather, they are, "a set of secondary motives" put forward in order to account for those actions. (Freud, 1909, p.192). On these grounds alone it is apparent that a reason only counts as such precisely when it is causally relevant.

The humanist-interpretive position, i.e., the view that human behavior is composed of actions and must therefore be interpreted by reference to reasons, *rather than* explained by reference to causes, fails to recognize this necessity for causal (as well as logical) relations between a reason and the

action in which it results. Psychoanalytic epistemology must therefore be defended, not only against the *criticisms* addressed to it on the basis that it represents a misapplication of causal analysis, but also against the *defence* of it on the grounds that it contains no causal explanation at all.

However, if Davidson vindicates classical Freudian epistemology on the grounds that its mixture of reasons and causes, interpretation and explanation, is both legitimate and necessary, then his contribution is in fact a great deal more substantial.

What Davidson shows is that if psychoanalytic epistemology has always been at the center of the philosophical debate around the role of reasons and causes in human action, then this is because the psychoanalytic object of knowledge, i.e., the symptom, raises a fundamental question in relation to the wishes and intentions which cause it. This is because the symptom is that kind of mental event which both empirically and logically, takes on the character of a mere cause which lacks a logical or rational relation to its effects.

And by exploring the nature of irrational or symptomatic action Davidson can insist that Freud's postulation of discrete structural agencies in the psyche does not so much problematize the relation between intentions and their effects, as resolve a problem already existing. For it is only the Freudian topography which can account for *symptomatic action* on an intentional model, thereby reclaiming irrational or symptomatic actions for the field of action from the field of events. This is because the topography provides an explanatory account of the possibility of error, i.e., of how an intention may come to lose its logical relation to the action it causes.

In short, Freud is not only correct in assuming that human actions, to count as such, must entail both reasons and causes, but his postulation of discrete structural agencies in the psyche in fact explains how this may *fail* to be the case.

Davidson does not defend Freud's use of an energetic and dynamic model of the mind simply on the grounds that human actions are motivated by reasons and, therefore, necessarily *caused* by them. He does so in view of the fact that certain mental events may take on the character of *mere* causes for the actions they produce, which is what happens in the symptom.

At the same time, however, Davidson undermines the attempt to define the irrational or the symptomatic neurophysiologically alone, (thereby eliminating the need for an intentional vocabulary). He points out that if the cause of a symptom is described in non-mental or non-intentional terms, we necessarily lose touch with what is needed to explain irrationality, which only appears when rationality is appropriate. This is so because irrationality, as "a *failure* in the house of reason", is to be distinguished from the purely *non*-rational. (Davidson, 1982, p.289, italics inserted).

Mental or psychological events can be characterized as mental or psychic only under a certain description, so that, although these events can be redescribed as neurophysiological, and ultimately, as physical events, in which descriptions in terms of cause and effect are appropriate and sufficient, descriptions in terms of cause and effect alone do not address the sort of logical relations which make for reason or its failure. (Davidson, ibid, p.299). The formulation of the problem of the irrational and the symptomatic on a neurophysiological level alone thus side-steps the very problem to be

under false pretences, deceptively achieving its goal without exposing its true designs, while the second compromises the first. The ego as mediator in particular, "too often yields to the temptation to become sycophantic, opportunistic and lying, like a politician who sees the truth but wants to keep his place in popular favour". (1923, p.56).

it is for this reason that the end result of interagency relations cannot be viewed on an intentional model alone. By the time a strategic compromise between the agencies is reached, none have fully achieved their initial goals, and the outcome is in accordance with none of their original objectives.

To use the example of the Rat-Man's compulsive running once again, it is notable how neatly the conflictual impulses of the Rat-Man's unconscious (Id) aggression towards his rival, and his consequent unconscious (super-ego) impulse towards self-punishment, together combine to produce a consequence which partially satisfies both and in consequence, fully satisfies neither. (Freud, 1909, p.188-189).

It is *this* problem, or more broadly, the very notion of a divided and conflictual psyche instantiated in the topography, rather than the problem of intentional as opposed to non-intentional phenomena, which is at stake in the debate around reasons and causes in Psychoanalysis.

If Freud initiated Psychoanalysis and formulated his topographical account of the functioning of the psychic apparatus then he did so because it is only in this way that the symptomatic can in fact be accounted for along intentional or psychological lines, *rather than* on the purely causal (psychiatric) model of psycho-physical compulsion.

It is therefore ironic that the failure on the part of many of Freud's supporters to recognize the logical distinction between a symptom and an *intentional action proper* results, finally, in the repudiation of the very *notion* of a divided psyche. At the same time, however, it makes sense that if the symptom is viewed on an intentional model alone, then the necessity for *explaining* the symptom and the fact of irrationality in terms of interagency conflict (or in any way at all) is dispensed with, along with the symptomatic register itself.

Overlooking the extent to which the symptom bridges both the intentional and causal registers has resulted in an attempt to distinguish between the "impersonal" causal language of the metapsychology, and the more "personalized" intentional language of clinical practice, in order to privilege the latter. This necessarily undermines Freud's structural theory of the mind in which component parts of the psychic apparatus are seen to interact *causally*, i.e., the very notion of a split psyche fundamental to the psychoanalytic explanation of the symptomatic.

Thus Guntrip, for example, has explicitly revised Psychoanalysis into "a personal theory of the active, purposive whole self". (Guntrip, 1961, p.188). As Stephen Frosh points out, Guntrip's "reiteration of the term 'personal', his use of the notion of the 'self', and his concentration on the 'experience of the individual'", firmly aligns him with humanistic psychologies which emphasize and extend the notion of the ego as a potential unity. (Frosh, 1987, pp.95-101).

If this move has been made in the interests of saving psychoanalytic epistemology from dying the death of an inadequate natural science, then it is also a move at the hands of which Psychoanalysis suffers a more ignoble

fate; rendered inadequate even to the logical definition of its object. In short, this broadly humanist-interpretive reconstual of Psychoanalysis, in so far as it is based on the failure to recognize that the symptomatic is that kind of intention which takes on the character of a mere cause, precipitates itself back into the paradoxes of the Plato and/or Medea principles.

2.3.1 Concluding Remarks on Explanation and Intentionality in Psychoanalysis

Davidson's analysis establishes that it is the Freudian topography alone which facilitates an account the symptomatic, (or of how it is possible for a reason to take a pathway to action other than the one it would rationally cause). The upshot of this analysis is that in contrast to normal intentional actions, *the explanation of symptomatic actions cannot be limited to the intentions which truly caused them.*

Symptomatic behavior is only fully accounted for once the missing intermediary relation between the intention/wish and its result is re-established. Thus, the Rat Man's compulsive running is not fully explained or accounted for by its true cause, i.e., the wish to get rid of his rival Dick, but also requires explanation in terms of the equation "Dick" (rival) to "dick" (fat).

It becomes apparent that if Davidson gives us an account of the possibility for symptomatic action in terms of the three agencies (which can both pick out the class of the compromise-formation from the field of rational action on the one hand, and causal events on the other, and account for the role of both reasons and causes in psychoanalytic explanation), then Danto in effect supplements this account by providing us with an analysis of the conditions of possibility for disguise on a general level, or for *the way in which* in the

symptomatic action, the reasons for action can be elided in the actions which result.

Danto supports and supplements Davidson's account of irrational action, as those actions in which the symmetry between wish/belief and action is misplaced, by showing that if irrational actions can nonetheless be interpreted, or the above connections re-established, then this is because the form that the action takes, and its relation to the original wish/belief is not an arbitrary one. In short, the relation between a reason and what it causes in symptomatic configurations can be re-established in terms of the relation between language as *signification* and language as *picturing*.

Certainly, if Davidson's account of the symptom is combined with Danto's account of the mechanism's of disguise, it becomes clear that - to the extent that the means-ends connection between reasons and actions is elided through an operation of language - *interpretation* of the symptom is necessary if *explanation* of its intentional preconditions is to result.

It is for this reason that Davidson is at pains to point out that a symptom is *caused* in so far as the descriptive identity conditions of a *reason* (a belief and a pro-attitude or wish), are not intact therein. Intentional phenomena which do not meet these particular identity-conditions may be characterized as symptomatic ones. However, to say that a symptom does not fulfill the identity-conditions of reasoned action is not equivalent to saying that a symptom is caused in the same way in which an event is caused. Rather, it is to say that, *in so far* as a symptom is not self-explanatory because it cannot be explained solely in terms of the agent's reasons for doing it, the symptom, unlike rational action, *requires* interpretation.

It is thus unavailing for proponents of the humanist-interpretive position to argue that because psychoanalytic symptoms express intentions, they are open to interpretation *rather than* explanation. Rather, it is because meanings or reasons *cause* symptomatic actions in which these meanings or reasons are *not* expressed, that symptomatic action requires "interpretation" at all.

The symptom, as that anomalous object midway between intentional action and caused event, requires explanation not only on the level of content - but also on the level of form.

2.4 Explanation and Knowledge in Psychoanalysis

Davidson's first contribution to psychoanalytic epistemology has been to show that the symptom is that kind of intentional phenomena which requires explanation. His second inter-related contribution concerns the way in which the symptomatic, defined in this way, may be known. For clearly, it is one thing to appreciate that the symptomatic (once recognized as such) requires explanation and another thing to pick out any given instance of the symptomatic in the first place. In short, Davidson's second contribution to psychoanalytic epistemology concerns the way in which a symptom may be picked out from amongst all the true actions and real events in the world, and recognized as a slippage between them.

In establishing the particular identity-conditions for distinguishing the symptomatic - as a structural discrepancy between actions and the wishes they satisfy occurring on an interagency site - Davidson implicitly excludes

the possibility of recognizing the symptomatic on the basis of any distinguishing content or distinctive manifest feature.

This definition of the symptom places the necessary emphasis on Freud's account of the symptom, not as the mere existence of an unconscious wish, but as the failure of repression, i.e., as an unconscious wish manifesting itself against, or through, its repression by other agencies. It is not the unconscious wish in itself but the relation it takes to the ego, and its subsequent status as a compromise-formation, which is defined by Freud as symptomatic: "One part of the personality champions certain wishes, while another part opposes them and fends them off. Without such a conflict, there is no neurosis." (Freud, 1916-1917[1915-1917] p.341).

Thus, although clearly some wishes, i.e., wishes in the infantile field, are inherently unrealizable, it is only in so far as such wishes take a route to satisfaction or realization and are thus implicated in dynamic conflict that they can be defined as potentially symptomatic. In short, it is neither symptomatic nor irrational to have a wish which is impractical, but it is symptomatic to try to fulfill it. Moreover, it is often perfectly practical wishes which, according to Freud, take on an irrational form and symptomatic consequences. It is for this reason that Davidson insists that a proper description of irrationality must be able to account not only for wishes which are necessarily impractical, such as the wish to impregnate ones father, but also for wishes which are not, such as the wish to impregnate one's daughter, or sister-in-law.

What is at stake in this account of the symptomatic as that which arises *between* agencies, is the extent to which it undermines any characterization of the Freudian unconscious or the unconscious wish as irrational per se.

(An explanation of error, of irrationality and of the symptom, is not an explanation of the unconscious.) Equally, no action is, in and of itself, necessarily symptomatic. One and the same action can, under different circumstances, be either symptomatic or non-symptomatic. It is therefore impossible to pick out the symptomatic either on the basis of its external features, or by virtue of the inherent features of the reason which caused it. Rather, it is the *structural relations* between an action and the reasons which caused it which define that action as a symptomatic or a non-symptomatic one.

Freud formulates the purport of the topographic model with precision when he writes that in symptomatic configurations: "The appearance of an incorrect function is explained by the peculiar mutual interference between two or several correct functions." (1901, p.278).

Conclusion

If the symptomatic cannot be known on the level of the content of the reasons which cause it or on the level of the features of the action which results, then it is clear that the symptomatic cannot be picked out (or explained as such) in advance, i.e., on the basis of a regular set of distinctive qualities. It is for this reason that the metapsychology accounts for the possibility of the symptomatic (in terms of the topographic, economic and dynamic registers) on a general or formal level but does not, in and of itself, provide the means by which to pick out any particular action as symptomatic or not in all instances. Likewise, the metapsychology does not provide the grounds on

which to explain why any one particular wish has taken an indirect or symptomatic route to satisfaction, in any one particular individual. Instead, what the metapsychology suggests is that the symptom is both *that which must be explained, and that which cannot be explained on a general level alone.*

It therefore remains to demonstrate how *particular* explanatory accounts of specific symptoms are possible. And in the next chapter, it will be maintained that it is the psychoanalytic clinic, or rather the case-history, which alone facilitates an account of an individual's reasons for symptomatic action, thereby recovering the relation wish/intention to action.

In other words, if Davidson provides us with an account of the symptom as that essentially open class which is neither rational action nor caused event, and Danto provides us with an account of how this slippage is achieved (in terms of another open class of slippages which is neither representation nor perception, word or image), then it remains to demonstrate how particular instances of these classes may be recognized as such, for it is only in this way that epistemic validity, both in the clinic in particular and in Psychoanalysis in general, may potentially be achieved.

CHAPTER THREE

NARRATION AND HISTORY IN PSYCHOANALYSIS

Introduction

> It still strikes me myself as strange that the case histories I write should read like short stories and that, as one might say, they lack the serious stamp of science. I must console myself with the reflection that the nature of the subject-matter is evidently responsible for this, rather than any preference of my own. (Freud 1955[1895], p.660).

As the last two chapters have suggested that the symptom is that which must be explained, yet cannot be explained on a general level alone, this chapter must show how explanatory accounts of particular symptoms may be achieved. Because the characteristic genre of the Freudian clinic, the case-history, attempts to account for the symptom by way of an individual history, the status of Psychoanalysis as a knowledge would seem to depend upon its ability to produce a unique and particular causal series to explain the symptoms of any given analysand. Psychoanalytic epistemology therefore finally devolves upon the potential validity of a historical method for achieving veridical explanation in the case.

However, the status of history as an explanatory knowledge is itself not unproblematical. In fact, if the antinomy between explanation and interpretation is as we have seen focussed around the issues of language and action, then the third area in which this antinomy is foregrounded is in the theory of

history. This is hardly surprising because the epistemological status of history as an objective knowledge poses a problem on two levels.

By concerning itself with human actions, the explanatory force of history is jeopardized by the widely accepted doctrine that intentional actions cannot be causally explained but only interpreted. Furthermore, because these actions are in addition *in the past*, historical epistemology is said to be doubly confounded by its tenuous evidential base. History can neither verify its factual hypotheses by designating events as they occur, nor can it reproduce the antecedent conditions for those events, thereby justifying the postulation of causal connections between anterior events and their effects. By locating its subject-matter in the past, history can neither observe, nor experimentally reproduce it.

These epistemological liabilities traditionally open out onto the broader debate around the role of general laws in history, as opposed to science. This debate centers on C. G. Hempel's contention that if events are to be causally *explained* (i.e., related as cause and effect), then they must also, by implication, fall under strict deterministic laws. It is thus the presence or absence of assertions of regularity, or general laws, which, according to Hempel, is considered to ground "explanation", as opposed to "understanding" or "interpretation" in history *as in* the natural sciences. (Hempel, 1942, cited in Danto, 1985, p.203).

The status of *historical* epistemology is thus usually seen as contentious, to the extent that history does not seem to involve the use of general laws. It concerns itself instead with *singular, non-repeatable* actions and events

which occurred in the past, and fails to instantiate the predictive value which general laws are expected to entail.

This fundamental difference between historical and scientific method - concerning the role of general laws and the associated role of prediction in each - has contributed, either to the privileging of scientific over historical epistemology, or, to the view that since the epistemological validity of historical explanation along natural scientific lines is suspect, historical explanation must be re-classified as historical *interpretation* and valorized as such in terms of an alternative human-scientific epistemology.

In the classical psychoanalytic case-history, issues of this kind endemic to the epistemic status of a history can be seen to be crystalized. In so far as the case-history constitutes an attempt to retrieve the strictly *causal* determinants for pathology in an individual's psychic history, the psychoanalytic method can, and often has been, condemned as incapable of satisfying its own, legitimate and necessary, criteria of epistemic validity. Alternatively, the logical status of the psychoanalytic case-history as a necessarily causal analysis can be undermined. Thus, it can be maintained that if the case-history does not fulfill the criteria of an explanatory causal analysis, then it is these criteria, rather than Psychoanalysis itself, which must be replaced.

Donald Spence's argument in "Narrative Truth and Historical Truth: Meaning and Interpretation in Psychoanalysis" (1982), clearly demonstrates this latter position. Spence contends that Freud's historical or "archaeological" method, in so far as it implicates a form of causal explanation more appropriate to the natural sciences, constitutes a fundamental

misunderstanding of the methodology appropriate to psychoanalytic investigation.

By recasting Psychoanalysis as a "narrative" technique, Spence therefore attempts to relocate Psychoanalysis outside the bounds of the natural sciences and more specifically, outside the form of causal explanation which they instantiate.

On the basis of Arthur Danto's work "Narration and Knowledge" (1985), it will be argued that although Spence is correct that the psychoanalytic case-history is best construed as a narrative technique and contrasted to the natural sciences, *a narrative construal does not entail the exclusion of Psychoanalysis from the field of causal explanation.* Although narrative procedures can and should be distinguished from those of the natural sciences, this distinction must be seen to turn on issues quite distinct from the relative entailment of causal explanation in natural scientific, as opposed to narrative, operations.

3.1 Creative Narrative as Interpretive Closure

The question of whether Psychoanalysis can satisfy its own criteria of validation, or the question of whether, and how, Psychoanalysis can achieve *veridical* historical explanation, is dependent upon the primary question of whether the psychcanalytic case does, in the first instance, instantiate a legitimate and coherent form of causal explanation.

In "Narrative Truth and Historical Truth: Meaning and Interpretation in Psychoanalysis" (1982), D.P. Spence contends that it does not. He argues, not only that verification in the psychoanalytic clinic is liable to multiple epistemological objections, but that Freud's very endeavor to achieve historical reconstruction can be rejected wholesale, in favour of a pragmatic commitment to clinical effect. Spence therefore argues that the problem for explanation inherent in psychoanalytic epistemology can be rendered innocuous, in terms of the overarching abandonment of narrative as an epistemological question, in favour of narrative construed in terms of its pragmatic effect.

Rather than merely exposing unfortunate uncertainties in the evidential field of the clinic, Spence's work constitutes an overarching denial of the very possibility of eliciting an explanatory account of the patient's psychic history on the basis of his words and interactions during therapy. He contends that *all* psychoanalytic interpretations and constructions are like artistic productions which have no more provable correspondence to reality than a painting or a piece of music. (ibid, p.275). Thus, although Spence marshalls a medley of unrelated objections to verification in the clinic, such as the impossibility of translating thoughts, feelings and images, especially dream - images, into words, and the unreliable nature of the patient's memory, as well as of the analyst's interpretations, to his cause, his contention is not simply that psychoanalytic constructions are unfalsifiable or lacking in criteria of validation, *but rather, that Freud's archaeological model misconstrues the psychoanalytic case as an explanatory history in the first place.* In other words, Spence argues that the archaeological method of Psychoanalysis which requires the reconstruction of the individual's veridical history is not

only *impossible*, but *unnecessary*. Consequently, Spence proposes a total reformulation of Psychoanalysis, both as theory and as practice.

In the forward to Spence's book, Wallerstein outlines this reformulation:

> The logic of all this leads us (if we are willing to follow Spence in all his complexly ramifying argument) to a whole series of transformations of our usual analytic thought conventions: of reconstruction into (new) construction, of acts of discovery into acts of creation, of historical truth into narrative fit, of pattern finding into pattern making, of veridical interpretation into creative interpretation, of all interpretation into a species of (more or less) inexact interpretation, of analysis essentially as a science of recovery of the past into a science of choice and of creation in the present and future, and of psychoanalyst as archaeologist and historian, into psychoanalyst as poet, artist, and aestheticist. (ibid, pp.11-12).

Spence's "complexly ramifying argument" (ibid) can be unravelled into two main strands. The first of these constitutes Spence's *epistemological objections* to the psychoanalytic case *in so far as it is construed as a veridical history*, and the second constitutes his *alternative construal* of the psychoanalytic case *as creative interpretation.*

3.1.1 Spence's Epistemological Objections to the Psychoanalytic Case as Veridical History

Spence argues that the archaeological conception of Psychoanalysis which requires the reconstruction of the patient's veridical history imposes criteria which it is *impossible* to satisfy on the basis of the following epistemological objections: Firstly, because the past cannot be corroborated "objectively". Secondly, because, even if it could be, the meanings and/or causes of actions cannot be observed per se, and must therefore be interpreted - there is no way of verifying these interpretations. (ibid, pp.287-297). And finally,

because the archaeological method presupposes the general laws of the metapsychology which are, if not invalid, extremely questionable. Each of these objections will be elaborated in turn.

1. Spence maintains that the truth-claims of Freud's archaeological/historical method, or the grounding of psychoanalytic explanations in terms of past (actions and) events, is illegitimate because past events cannot be verified objectively. The analyst must rely on the patient's memories which, according to Spence, "are not always real". (ibid, p.186). Spence therefore claims that:

> From the standpoint of evidence alone, we seem on firmer ground when we base our interpretations on what happens in the hour 'in plain sight' as compared to what is reported by the patient, often unsupported by other witnesses. (ibid, p.186).

2. Spence maintains that even if past events could be verified "objectively", their causal determinants would remain oblique, and subject to interpretation alone, because there is no means by which it is possible to systematically work backwards from effect to cause.

Spence elaborates the distinction introduced by W.H. Walsh (1958) between "*plain*" and "*significant*" historical narrative, in order to substantiate his claim that it is impossible to ascertain the actual causal determinants of past events.

According to Walsh, a "plain" description may be verified because it is, "a description of the facts restricted to a straightforward statement of what occurred". However, the validity of a "significant" narrative, which elaborates the *connections* between events cannot, by contrast, be validated because, "the connections between events are not open to inspection in the way

events themselves are... Causal language is of a different logical order from observation language". (Walsh, 1958, cited in Spence, ibid, p.291).

Spence maintains that a psychoanalytic narrative exemplifies a *significant* rather than a *plain* narrative. It therefore exceeds "historical" truth and, as a result, "can never be verified by pieces of the past". (ibid, p.292). This is because psychoanalytic narrative is concerned to demonstrate the connections between events which are not open to inspection. Spence concludes that psychoanalytic narrative, rather than being properly *explanatory*, is dependent upon the analyst's *interpretive* system, and upholds Gergen's view that: "The observer must bring to the event a conceptual system through which behavioral observations may be rendered meaningful. There is no means of verifying a 'mode of interpretation'". (Gergen, 1981, p.335, cited by Spence, ibid, p.292; cf. Spence, ibid, p.162).

3. Spence refutes the validity of the archaeological/historical method on the grounds that it is dependent upon the validity of the general laws of the metapsychology which he considers to be extremely questionable:

> Case-histories also rely heavily on general laws, which form the backbone of psychoanalytic theory... As metapsychology has tended to come under attack, clinical reasoning, as represented in clinical reports, tends to depend more and more on narrative fit. The aesthetic quality of the case-history has tended, as a result, to pre-empt the use of general law. Narrative truth has tended to supplant historical truth. Now we are in a position to identify one of the current problems in psychoanalytic thought. As general laws, particularly those contained in traditional metapsychology, become less persuasive, we are tempted to turn to narrative fit as a guiding criterion for what is true. (ibid, pp.185-186).

Although Spence neither directly criticizes the metapsychology himself, nor elaborates the manner in which he considers archaeological reconstructions

to involve or "rely heavily" on metapsychological laws, he clearly argues that *because* general metapsychological laws have "become less persuasive ... we are *tempted* to turn to narrative fit as the guiding criterion for what is true". (ibid, p.186, italics inserted). And clearly, Spence is not resisting temptation.

This is because Spence is not concerned to *distinguish* the "general laws" which he considers the Freudian metapsychology to instantiate from "historical truth", but merely to "pre-empt" and "supplant" both. (ibid). Because Spence construes the role of both the general laws of the metapsychology and of historical explanation in the case to be the production of a veridical history, he dismisses both on the grounds that neither in fact fulfill this purpose. In any event, *Spence dismisses both the viability of historical explanation in the case and general laws in the metapsychology at the same time and on approximately the same grounds.* Both contribute to his repudiation of the possibility of achieving veridical historical explanation in psychoanalysis.

3.1.2 Spence's Alternative Construal of the Psychoanalytic Case as Creative Interpretation

For Spence the necessary repudiation of the truth-claims of Psychoanalysis is, however, unproblematical, because a narrative construction or creative interpretation is effective in Psychoanalysis, *not* because it is *true*, or because it can account for or explain anything in a causal sense, but because it gives the patient's life-story "a kind of linguistic and narrative closure". (Spence, ibid, p.137). Spence therefore argues that: "The very process that allows the analyst to understand the disconnected pieces of the hour, when extended and amplified, enables the patient gradually to see his life as continuous, coherent, and, therefore, meaningful." (Spence, ibid, p.280).

What is important for Spence about a construction is therefore not its truth-value, but rather, its use-value for the patient. (ibid, p.168). The construction of a coherent narrative is not only "reassuring" because it facilitates self-coherence (ibid, p.171), but it allows the patient "to 'see' in a new way". (ibid, p.166). In fact, it is "designed primarily to bring about a change in belief". (ibid, p.280).

Thus a particular construct may "enable the patient to discover and construct new meanings...either by destroying an attachment to an object...or by releasing him from a permanent and unnecessary restricting commitment to a fixed moral system". (Loch, 1977, pp.245-246, cited in Spence, ibid, p.171).

On these grounds, Spence argues that the problem for epistemology inherent in psychoanalytic technique can be rendered innocuous in terms of the wholesale rejection of Freud's endeavor to achieve veridical historical reconstruction, in favour of a pragmatic commitment to clinical effect. *In short, Spence argues for the substitution of the criterion of historical truth in Psychoanalysis for what he calls "narrative truth", or "the truth of being coherent and sayable."* (ibid, p.173). Thus Spence maintains that:

> Once we give up our concern for historical accuracy, we can not only abandon the archaeological model but we can also become more comfortable with the flawed nature of the clinical data. We no longer need to be embarrassed by our "archeology of descriptions". (ibid, p.276).

He also points out that:

> Along with the shift from discovery to creation, we also have a shift in our approach to time. Working with the archaeological model;

> Freud reasoned that the past had priority and represented the proper subject matter of Psychoanalysis. Reconstructions were devoted to rearranging fragments of the patient's early life; symptoms were supposed to have their source in infantile conflict; dreams were assumed to require an infantile wish simply to come into being. But if we assume, with Viderman, that interpretation is creative and that *something may become true simply as a consequence of being stated*, then we necessarily shift our focus from past to present. (ibid, p.177, italics inserted).

Three aspects of Spence's project are central: Firstly, Spence repudiates the archaeological or historical tradition of the classical Freudian case in so far as he shifts the focus of the psychoanalytic case from the past to the present. He argues not only that veridical reconstruction of the patient's past is epistemically impossible, but also that it is clinically (i.e., technically) unnecessary.

Secondly, although many post-Freudians, for example, Kleinian analysts, are critical of Freud's emphasis on the *technical* necessity for historical reconstruction per se, it is important to notice that Spence is *not* arguing for an *alternative procedure* for actualizing the past or accessing its effects on the present, i.e., in the form of the transference-neuroses. (cf. Laplanche & Pontalis, 1985, pp.462-463; M. Klein, 1952, pp.201-202). Rather, Spence's assertion that historical reconstruction is technically unnecessary to the psychoanalytic clinic is based upon the contention that, "something may become true simply as a consequence of being stated". (ibid, p.175). Thus the notion of "narrative truth", or "the truth of being coherent and sayable" (ibid, p.173), comes to play a crucial role in the practice of psychoanalytic cure.

Finally, Spence uses this conception of "narrative truth" not only to undermine the psychoanalytic notion of veridical historical explanation which constitutes

the basic rationale for the classical psychoanalytic case-history, but also to undermine or render irrelevant the Freudian metapsychology.

3.2 Historical Narrative as Causal Explanation

In contradistinction to Spence's attempt to negate the possibility and devalue the role of veridical historical reconstruction in Psychoanalysis, it is clear that Freud's *own* position was that such reconstruction is both technically necessary and epistemically possible. Although it is necessary to concede that Freud modified his views on this point over time (Freud, 1937), it remains the case that Freud consistently construed the classical psychoanalytic case-history as a form of *causal explanation* which is radically contingent, and necessarily dependent upon an understanding of the individual's unique past. This point is generally acknowledged and does not, perhaps, need to be defended. What does however need to be defended in general, and against Spence in particular, is the possibility that such an explanatory operation can achieve epistemic validity. To this end, Danto's work on the epistemology of narrative explanation in "Narrative and Knowledge" (1985), will be elaborated.

Danto describes history as *a true narrative* and his defence of history therefore takes the form of a defence of narrative as a discreet epistemology which can pertain to the status of veridical description and causal explanation. Although Danto's defence of narrative epistemology as potentially veridical historical explanation does not address the psychoanalytic case in particular, it can nevertheless be seen to provide an understanding of the

role of history in Psychoanalysis and of the grounds on which historical operations in Psychoanalysis may achieve epistemic validity.

Danto points out that if history is that which takes past events as its object, then the role of narrative is a broader one, because narrative operations are not wholly confined to the description of entirely past, i.e., historical events. In countless instances, our capacity to pick out objects existing in the present in fact presupposes a surreptitiously narrative procedure.

Danto illustrates this in terms of the seemingly present-tense descriptive predicates "scar" and "father". To call something a "scar" is to describe a "white mark" as the effect of a past event, i.e., an injury. While to call someone a "father", rather than simply a "man", is to implicitly refer to a past event in which that man conceived a child. Clearly, much of our so-called present-tense descriptive apparatus presupposes, not just past events, but past events which constitute implicit causal explanations for what they describe. And, as Danto points out, it is in fact impossible to produce strictly present-tense descriptions of what would amount to the same things, without using such surreptitiously past-referring terms. A descriptive apparatus consisting of present-tense predicates alone would be reduced to such incomprehensible statements as: "Where is that child's man?" (Danto, 1985, pp.71-72).

If our apparently present-tense description of objects and people is often in fact past-referring, then our descriptions of events and human actions is even more so. Actions and events are irreducibly temporal and our capacity to characterize them, as events or actions, is always dependent upon the narrative language of cause and effect.

By demonstrating that narrative is a pre-requisite for describing and explaining a world anything like the one we habitually inhabit Danto is concerned, not only to undermine a supposedly secure descriptive phenomenology of the present, but also to show that narrative description, even on the simplest level, entails the postulation of causal links between prior and subsequent events. In this way, Danto lays the ground-work for his defence of narrative description as an inherently explanatory operation.

Danto defends the view that narrative already is, in the nature of the case, that *form* of causal explanation which can be defined as "historical", by showing what it is that narrative entails.

He argues that a narrative or story is an account of the events which lead up to the event in question. Thus, according to Danto, all that *explanation* is, in historical contexts, *is narrative*, since "a correct explanation of E is simply a true story with E as a final episode". (1985, p.202).

Danto gives the following example of a narrative which simultaneously satisfies the demands of both telling and explaining what happened:

> The car was driving East behind a truck; the truck veered left; the driver of the car thought the truck was making a left turn, and proceeded to pass on the right; but the truck then sharply veered to the right, for it had gone left to make a difficult right turn into an intersection which the driver of the car had not seen; and so there was a collision. (Danto, ibid, p.202).

Danto points out that were anyone to persist, after this, in saying he knows what happened, but still wants an explanation, we should justifiably be puzzled.

The fact that narrative or historical description only occurs, or is required, when what is described is not simply an event, but a process or change, instantiates this analysis of narrative description as explanation. If there were no change there would be nothing to be explained, and if narration is invariably about change, then clearly narrative is only implicated in those instances in which the need for explanation is felt and fully satisfied by a true story. Narration "set[s] the stage for the action which leads to the end, the *description* of which is the *explanation* of the change of which the beginning and the end are the termini". (ibid, p.248, italics inserted).

The important contribution which Danto then makes to our understanding of history in particular, is that a history is that kind of knowledge which *describes* events by establishing the singular *causal connections* between them. *This necessarily entails the organization of events into a temporal series or, in other words, into a continuous narrative structure.* It is for this reason that Danto describes history as a *narrative* knowledge. But it is also for this reason that he defines history as *explanation*, because the location of events within a narrative series is equivalent to the establishment of its *causal* relation to other events in the same series.

If a history both describes and explains events by establishing the causal connections between them, then the question of whether such an explanatory operation can achieve epistemic validity, while clearly a legitimate one, nevertheless remains to be answered.

In order to dispel what he considers to be the mythic privileging of scientific over historical method, Danto does not deny that there is an important specificity to the forms of criteria for historical knowledge. Rather, Danto

demonstrates precisely where this specificity both *is* and *is not* located, such that the criteria of validation for historical knowledge can properly be delineated. Danto's defence of history as a valid explanatory knowledge which is no more or less subject to relativistic factors than science turns on three central demonstrations wnich will be elaborated consequtively in the following sections. In brief, Danto points out that:

1. Unlike science, historical knowledge necessarily locates its object in the past.

2. As in science, there can be no distinction between plain and significant narrative in history.

3. Unlike science, historical knowledge cannot rely on the use of general laws to sustain prediction.

3.2.1 Against a Secure Ontology of the Present

Perhaps the major criticism of historical knowledge stems from the belief that accounts of the past are somehow less secure and valid than those of the present. Danto therefore begins his defence of history by focussing on the accepted fact that a history is that which takes past events as its object and is therefore written after the occurrence of the events it describes. He points out that if histories are written even when the past events they describe have already been recorded at the time of their occurrence, then this is because a history is a different form of knowledge of the events in question than that which could have been achieved during or immediately after they occurred.

Even the most detailed description of any event as it occurs is limited because we cannot, as eye-witnesses, characterize events in terms of later events which although subsequent to it, nevertheless modify our understanding of the initial event in question. We cannot, for example, describe a heavy snow-fall as either "the heaviest" or "the last" snow-fall of winter, until summer has come around. Likewise, it is impossible to attribute causal significance to an event without knowing not only what earlier, but also what later occurrences that event may be related to. Thus, Danto refutes Descartes claim that the knowledge that the historian must painstakingly search out could have been known as a matter of course to the contemporary eye-witness. The Roman servant girl could not have known, for example, that the events she witnesses would bring about the decline of the Roman empire. It is this sort of knowledge which is available to the future historian alone. (ibid, p.356).

In contrast to an eye-witness account, a history describes a past event with reference to its full temporal context: Not only with reference to those events which precede it, but also in the light of those which, although *past* to the historian, nevertheless antecede the event in question.

What this narrative conception of history entails is the understanding that history is that form of knowledge which must necessarily locate its objects in the past because it is a knowledge which describes any given event in terms of the later events it is related to. There is a certain sense, the historical sense, in which we can only give the meaning to events which have already occurred, because it is only in the light of later events that its *historical* significance may be assessed. (Danto, ibid, pp.8-11).

By illustrating that there is a class of descriptions of any event (i.e., *historical* descriptions) which cannot be witnessed, Danto demonstrates that there is a sense in which the description of any given event may become richer over time without that event "itself" changing at all. (ibid, p.155). This negates the view that nothing marks the difference between what the historian and the eye-witness may know. (ibid, p.344). Historical descriptions are those descriptions which have as truth conditions and hence as part of their meaning, events that occur later than themselves.

Danto argues that historical knowledge is therefore one in which "the cognitive privileges, as it were, are distributed differently than the commonplace epistemology allows", because historical knowledge, unlike scientific knowledge, is available to the later historian alone. (ibid, p.346). As a result, historical knowledge is neither equivalent to, nor subject to the same criteria of validity as, scientific knowledge.

Danto therefore undermines what is probably one of the major epistemological objections to historical knowledge: The objection that the historian's subject matter, being in the past, cannot be "seen", and that scientific knowledge is therefore necessarily more objective than historical inquiry.

Danto does not labour the point that scientists also do not, as a general rule, have access via direct observation to their subject-matter, or reiterate the now commonplace assertion that observation, even where available and appropriate, is clearly "theory-laden". Instead, he simply observes that the historian's incapacity to fulfill the role of objective contemporary eye-witness cannot be construed as detrimental to his enterprise, since to describe and explain an event historically *necessarily entails* the pastness of the event in

question. On these grounds, Danto undermines the very applicability of verifiability criterion of this kind to historical inquiry:

> For strictly speaking, in historical sentences, there *are* no experiences which verify that sentence, if, by verification here, we mean experiencing what the sentence is about under the description of it given by the sentence. *Verifiability, then, is not an adequate criteria of meaningfulness as far as these historical sentences are concerned.* The philosophical importance of these sentences, then, is this. If there are true descriptions of events under which those events cannot have been witnessed, our capacity to witness those events has, with this class of descriptions, no bearing whatsoever. For even if we could witness them, we could not verify them under *these* descriptions. (ibid, pp.61-2, italics inserted).

What Danto's analysis demonstrates is that the retrospective aspect of historical technique is mistakenly attributed solely to the *pastness of the events in question.* In fact, a historical or narrative analysis offers information inaccessible at the time of the occurrence in question, and offers, therefore, a *different* sort of knowledge to that provided by an eye-witness account; a knowledge informed by events later than the event in question. In short, a *narrative* knowledge.

3.2.2 Against Plain Narrative

W. H. Walsh distinguishes between "plain" historical narrative which describes an event or establishes a fact, and "significant" historical narrative which also establishes the connections between facts and, in consequence, cannot be verified. (1951, cited in Danto, 1985, p.119; cf. Spence, 1982, p.291). Against Walsh, Danto argues that events in themselves are no more open to "objective" inspection than the causal connections between them are.

There is no description of any historical event which can be construed as "plain" as opposed to "significant" narrative because an event is always something under a certain (i.e., limited) description. And there is no such thing as a full description of any event. A total or "plain" description of an event is neither possible or desirable, as it would imply that the description of, for example, a court trial, would have to include accounts of the number of flies in the room, what the doorman was doing with his daughter, how many particles of dust there were in the room, what they were composed of, and a (theoretically at least) infinite number of other factors.

A narrative description is therefore by definition a structure imposed upon reality, a selection and grouping of aspects of what occurred together as relevant to *that* "event", and an exclusion of other aspects of that same occurrence as lacking relevance. And since all descriptions leave things out and connect events there can be no logical distinction between a "plain" and a "significant" description. Likewise, there can be no logical distinction between the "interpretation" and the "explanation" of an event in terms of the distinction between the activities of merely observing and describing, and the activities of selecting and connecting, such events.

In both history and in science, our descriptive apparatus necessarily singles out aspects of the real world, and is not just a simple reflection of reality itself. For if our descriptive apparatus *were* wholly reflective, we would have recourse to nothing but a continuum of sensory data, all equally meaningful or meaningless. The "meaning" of events is thus endemic to the concepts in terms of which we pick those events out of the continuum of experience, as discreet "events", in the first place. The necessity of respecting "facts", as opposed to arbitrary historical "interpretation", thus cannot consist in the

mere reproduction of occurrences as they occur, without any ordering principle of selection. Danto therefore maintains that: "The difference between history and science is not the fact that history does and science does not employ organizing schemes which go beyond what is given. Both do". (ibid, p.111).

Since both history and science presuppose criteria of relevance in accordance with which things are included and excluded and cannot therefore be logically distinguished or epistemically judged on these grounds, Danto attempts to locate the distinction between them in terms of the fact that the criteria of relevance which each appeals to are *differential*.

According to Danto, the differential criteria of relevance between science and history can be located in terms of the fact that history, as opposed to science, attempts to represent and explain reality in its *SPECIFIC non-repeatable individuality.* By contrast, the primary aim of all theoretical concepts in science is the formation of GENERAL concepts, i.e., laws, in terms of which multiple phenomena can be subsumed: described, explained, *and predicted.* Danto therefore turns to the question of the role of general laws, and the associated question of the role of prediction, in history as opposed to science.

3.2.3 Against General Laws and Prediction

The question of the role of general laws in history has traditionally been approached in terms of the problem of the role of general laws in the explanation of human action as opposed to in the explanation of natural events.

Thus Hempel, the exemplary candidate for an acceptable analysis of historical explanation insists that, since an adequate explanation must in all instances include at least one general law, historical explanation is only epistemologically valid in so far as it appeals to general laws and can entail prediction. Hempel therefore contends that explanation has exactly the same structure regardless of whether it has to do with human or non-human behavior. (cited in Danto, 1985, pp.203 -204).

Croce, Dilthey, and Collingwood, on the other hand, argue that because psychical life is "free", in contrast to causally determined nature, it is incapable of being subsumed under laws, because the concept of conformity to law contradicts the concept of freedom. Since explanation entails general laws, historical events which involve human agents can only be *understood* or *interpreted*, and not *explained.* (cited in Danto, ibid, pp.205- 206).

By demonstrating that the formal distinction between scientific and historical epistemology *does* devolve upon the relative role of general laws in each, but is *not* derived from the demarcation between psychical life and the physical world, Danto simultaneously undermines both of these positions.

Danto argues that the question of whether an historical event can be subsumed under a general law and hence, predicted, is dependent upon the level at which the event is described. It is not so much "things" in themselves, but rather, how and to what end they are described, which determines whether they do or do not presuppose general laws. It is therefore not the presence or absence of general laws which can serve to differentiate between historical *explanation*, and mere historical *interpretation.* (ibid, p.217). Likewise, the presence or absence of such laws cannot serve to

differentiate between *causally determined*, as opposed to *freely chosen* actions:

> Phenomena *as such* are not explained. It is only phenomena as covered by a description which are capable of explanation, and then, when we speak of explaining them, it must always be with reference to *that* description....A phenomenon can be covered by a general law [and predicted] only in so far as we produce a description which contains no uneliminable particular designation of it. Or briefly, *we can cover an event with a general law only once we have covered it with a general description.*" *(ibid, pp.219-220, italics inserted).*

It is important to notice that by drawing attention to the fact that the question of general laws is connected with the question of how phenomena and events are described, Danto is not arguing that all descriptions are logically vacuous or indeterminate, but rather, that some descriptions logically prevent phenomena from being covered by general laws, while others do not. More specifically, it is only the abstract, and not the concrete explanatum, which serves to put phenomena under a general law.

Danto uses the example of the last *fete nationale mone'gasque*, during which the streets were decorated with national flags. Side by side with the flags of Monaco were American flags. No other national flags were displayed. (ibid, pp.220-224). According to Danto, the presence of American flags in the streets of Monaco can be described and explained in two ways, only the first of which entails the use of a general law, and the possibility of prediction:

1. Whenever a nation has a sovereign of a different national origin it will on appropriate occasions honour that sovereign in some acceptable fashion.

2. The Prince of Monaco, Rainer III, married an American actress, Grace Kelly, and the mone'gasques chose their *fete nationale mone'gasque* as an opportune day on which to honour their new sovereign of American descent, by displaying the American flag alongside their own.

Although both of these are accurate descriptions which explain the event in question, the first instantiates a general law, whereas the second gives us a great deal of additional *specific* information, i.e., that *Prince Rainer III* married the *American actress Grace Kelly*, and that the *mone'gasques* therefore displayed *American flags* at their *fete nationale mone'gasque.*

Danto points out that even were the facts of Prince Rainer's marriage known, the general law instantiated in description number one could not have been used to predict either how, or when, the mone'gasques would honour their sovereign, (at least not without recourse to further specific evidence, such as the plans for the event). It could only have generated the prediction that this sovereign would be appropriately honoured in some way at some appropriate event.

It is therefore apparent that although under certain descriptions, events in history can not only be explained but predicted as well, laws in history can only cover general descriptions, and can only be used to predict the *general* class of events likely to occur, they can never be used to predict *specific* events.

This is because those laws which function as elements of explanation in history cover a class of instances which is both open and non-homogeneous. Although it is perhaps in terms of some covering law that we can both explain

and predict that sovereigns marry foreigners and that these foreigners are consequently honoured, there are nevertheless an open set of different ways in which they may or may not have done so, and to what effect. Likewise, although we can both explain and predict that parents produce children and that children quarrel with their parents, there are also innumerable ways in which they may or may not have done either.

The fact that the *form* of an explanation in history can be achieved in terms of general laws, but that general laws cannot determine the *specific* instances indifferently covered by the same explanatum, has two related consequences for the question of explanation and prediction and their relation to general laws in history.

Firstly, in relation to the past, we cannot *explain* a specific past event simply by covering it with a general law, because the same general law covers too many distinct cases to account for one specific occurrence in particular. In order to fully explain the occurrence of a specific event, recourse to documentary or other forms of specific evidence is therefore necessary. Secondly, in relation to the future, our predictive knowledge can never be more than, at best, general and abstract, because, in relation to the future, we have no recourse to specific evidence. The role of general laws in history is thus limited to a heuristic device, a kind of *methodological directive* in terms of which the *type* of event we are looking for can be delimited.

However, Danto argues that historical description, unlike scientific description, does not in fact intend to subsume events into types or under general concepts and laws. *Rather, a history is concerned to designate and explain events in their unique specificity.* It is therefore apparent that if historical

descriptions do not produce prediction then this is not because they do not causally explain events, but because they do not explain them in terms of general concepts, and we can predict only what is general in reality.

In "Science and History: A Critique of Positivist Epistemology" (1962), Heinrich Rickett also maintains that the only valid epistemological distinction to be drawn between science and history is that the primary aim of *all science* is the formation of general concepts under which various particular phenomenon can be subsumed: "What is essential in things and events, then, is whatever features they have in common with objects falling under the same concept; everything purely *individual* is "unessential" and as such has no place in science." (1962, p.40).

It is this rigid designation of only those properties of events relevant to the formation of general concepts which gives science its predictive edge, but it is also this generality which, as Rickett points out, "constitutes in *every* case the *ultimate limit of concept-formation in the natural sciences*". (1962, pp.45-46). Thus science, or general concepts alone, *necessarily* fail to give us much of the information about events which, from a *historical* perspective we would want, because such information cannot always be stated in the abbreviated language of scientific theories.

It is now possible to see why Danto's re-structuring of the question of the role of general laws in history simultaneously undermines *all* major contenders in the debate around general laws in history as it is currently constituted.

Hempel claims that an adequate explanation, in history as in science, must necessarily entail at least one general law. This claim is logically related to Hempel's insistence that explanation and prediction are of a piece. (i.e., the thesis that if we can explain an event on the basis of its antecedent conditions, then we must be able to predict this effect on the basis of its antecedent conditions too.)

Danto argues, by contrast, that although historical explanations *may* contain and appeal to general laws, such laws are *not* essential to historical explanation. This is because it is not so much things in themselves, but rather how they are *described*, which determines whether they do or do not logically presuppose general laws. Moreover, Danto maintains that because laws in history can only cover general descriptions, they can *never* be used to predict specific events.

Croce, Dilthey and Collingwood maintain that because psychical life is "free", in contrast to causally determined nature, it cannot be subsumed under general laws, in so far as conformity to law contradicts the concept of freedom. These theorists thus conclude that since explanation entails general laws, historical events which involve human agents can only be interpreted and not explained. (Danto, ibid, pp. 205-206).

Danto argues, by contrast, that if science *always* appeals to general laws whereas history does not, then this is not because of any ontological distinction between "nature" and "spirit", or "reasons" and "causes" inherent in their subject matter. Rather, it is because of a difference in our purpose when describing an event *historically* as opposed to *scientifically.* (Danto, 1985, p.178).

This view that the free will debate has no bearing whatsoever on the question of the role of general laws in history is also supported by Rickett, who writes that even if history "dealt with nothing but puppets, history would always have to show what individual and particular strings set in motion here these and there those historically important puppets". (1962, p.111). Historical explanation cannot rely on general laws alone, *regardless* of whether human actions are causally determined or not.

Although science and history *can* be distinguished in terms of the criteria of relevance in terms of which they describe and causally explain events, they can *not* be differentiated in terms of the distinction between the *explanation* of causally determined events as opposed to the *interpretation* of teleological or "free" actions. If science stands in sharp contrast to history, or to the description and explanation of the non-repeatable particular, then this is by virtue of its abstract generality alone.

If Danto's model for the philosophy of history is taken into account, then it must be concluded that a history is *that form of causal explanation*, or knowledge, which, in order to achieve epistemological validity must:

1. Necessarily locate its objects in the past.

2. Necessarily determine its object in accordance with *historical* criteria of relevance.

3. Necessarily describe and explain its objects in terms of their *specific* causal preconditions rather than in terms of general laws, regardless of whether such objects be physical or psychical in nature.

It remains to be shown that the Freudian case-history demonstrates these necessary features of a history and *can* therefore pertain to the criteria for epistemological validity relevant to a historical knowledge.

3.3 Narrative Epistemology and the Psychoanalytic Case

Three major aspects of Danto's work are central to an understanding and justification of the Freudian case-history. Broadly, Danto's argument that the description of an action by virtue of its position in a narrative series is necessarily a form of causal explanation makes it possible to defend the psychoanalytic case-history as an explanatory rather than an interpretive or aesthetic activity. More specifically, Danto's demonstration that the description of an action is in an important sense dependant upon its position in a series provides an epistemological underpinning for the Freudian understanding that the capacity to identify and explain any particular symptom depends, not on its observable features or its aetiological preconditions, but rather on its position in an individual history. And finally or by extension, Danto's account makes it apparent that to the extent that a particular symptom can only be picked out and explained in relation to its position in a historical or narrative series, the symptom is by definition an object which can never be determined or predicted in advance on the basis of general laws.

3.3.1 Historical Narrative As Causal Explanation in Psychoanalysis

What a psychoanalytic history attempts to provide is a coherent narrative, or, in other words, a full case-history. To this end, it must explain those aspects of a patient's behaviour and experience which act as breaks in a full narrative. If the overall field of evidence in the psychoanalytic case is the patient's speech in the form of free-association in general, and the symptom, dream and parapraxes in particular, then this is because these are significantly *not* narrative structures. Instead, these are operations which *cannot* easily be appropriated by narrative or causal explanation - gaps or fractures in the mental which must be explained if a coherent psychic history is to be produced. In the first two chapters, the question of the way these symptomatic operations at first resist, but can finally be reclaimed for, explanation has already been broached. Precisely because the symptom, dream and parapraxis are actions, affects, words or thoughts which, as disguised and compromised forms, do not appear to have reasons as their causes, the analyst's attempt to produce a full history must entail the reclaiming of these phenomena for narrative explanation, i.e., their re-alignment to the reasons which caused them.

Freud's understanding of the role of the historical series in the psychoanalytic explanation of the specific symptom is explicated in section E of his "Notes upon a case of Obsessional Neurosis". (1909). Here Freud argues that the interpretation and explanation of obsessional ideas:

> ...is effected by bringing the obsessional ideas into temporal relationship with the patient's experiences, that is to say, by enquiring when a particular obsessional idea made its first appearance and in what circumstances it is apt to recur... We can easily convince ourselves that, once the interconnections between an obsessional idea and the patient's experiences have been

> discovered, there will be no difficulty in obtaining access to whatever else may be puzzling or worth knowing in the pathological structure we are dealing with - its meaning, the mechanism's of its origin and its derivation from the preponderant forces of the patient's mind. (1909, pp.186-187).

Freud illustrates his point with the example of the Rat-Man's ostensibly senseless obsessional running, which could only be accounted for as a meaningful or motivated action, in terms of the history of the Rat-Man's tendency towards self-punishment, in conjunction with the history of his relations with his love-object and his potential rival for her affections, Dick. (1909, pp.188-189).

In order to finally explain both the form and the meaning of the Rat-Man's symptom, Freud provides a comprehensive narrative account on the events leading up to the Rat-Man's compulsive running and simultaneously, a full causal explanation for this behavior. The wish to be rid of a rival, the conflictual guilt (or wish to be rid of this wish), and the resulting slippage across the word "Dick", together constitute a causal explanation of the Rat-Man's pathological running.

Freud, like Danto, demonstrates that historical narrative is both a legitimate and necessary *explanatory* operation because it involves establishing the causal connections between events which are essential to describing particular actions both meaningfully and accurately. In both a Dantonian and a Freudian narrative, telling what happened and explaining what happened are done simultaneously, such that narrative description and historical explanation are of a piece.

If Freud's method is a pre-eminently narrative one, however, then this is not only because it is in terms of a historical or temporal account that any given action is causally explained. It is also in terms of its temporal location that any given action is picked out and classified as symptomatic or not, in the first place.

3.3.2 The Symptom and the Series

In the last chapter, it was contended that no actions are, in and of themselves, necessarily symptomatic. One and the same action can, under different circumstances, be both symptomatic and non-symptomatic because what makes an action symptomatic or not is neither the reasons which cause it, nor the actions which result, but rather, *the relations between a reason and the action which results*. What this implies is that the identity-conditions of an action as normal or pathological depends on its position in a temporal *series*, rather than on either, firstly, its manifest features as an action or, secondly, its aetiological preconditions. These two points will be addressed consecutively:

1. The recognition that the ascription of symptomatic status to any given action depends upon its position in a temporal series rather than on its manifest characteristics, is instantiated in multiple and diverse ways in Psychoanalysis.

On the simplest level, it is apparent that while some actions *may* be extreme or unusual enough on an observable level to suggest their symptomatic status, this is not usually or necessarily the case. The Rat-Man's jogging or putting of stones in the road, for example, cannot be recognized as

pathological on the basis of the direct observation of those actions alone. Certainly, if the jogging of the Rat-Man and an Olympic runner, or the stone locations of the Rat-Man and a farmer, can be distinguished, then this is not on the basis of any general account of jogging or stone-laying behavior as symptomatic or not. It is impossible to know on the basis of observation alone, for example, that the Rat-Man was not using stones to mark an exact location in the road, but planning to upset his lady-friend's carriage. (Freud, 1909, pp.116-117). This is because it is not an action in and of itself, but rather, its *relation* to its causal determinants, which determines its status as symptomatic or not.

This is not to argue that the actual historical determinants of an individual's actions must be understood in each instance, before particular actions may be classified as symptomatic or non-symptomatic ones. The Rat-Man may or may not know *why* he spends his time jogging or re-locating stones but he knows full well that his actions are nonsensical and undesirable precisely because he cannot fully explain them rationally. And even if it may be possible for individuals at times to rationalize symptomatic actions to themselves, it remains the distress caused by these actions which, at least in part, brings the patient to analysis in the first place.

Thus the phenomenological or conscious experience of subjects as they report it, for example, in an interview, is often quite sufficient to determine whether the actions they describe are symptomatic or not. However, if individuals can spontaneously perceive their actions or thoughts to be symptomatic ones, then *this is because* they recognize these actions or thoughts to be in an unsatisfactory relation to what they consider to be rational or desirable determinants for them. In short, it is *because* the

symptom functions as a *gap* in narrative or as an *anomaly* in the series, that it is experienced as inexplicable or undesirable. Thus it remains the case that the pathological can only be both picked out and experienced as such on the basis of its position in a causal or temporal series. No-one merely *watching* the Rat-Man jogging could have known, without prior knowledge or having been told, that this behaviour was pathological. A symptomatic action cannot be recognised as such on the basis of its *manifest observable characteristics* alone.

A similar but more substantial version of this argument is presented by Freud in "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917[1915]). Here Freud is clearly concerned to demonstrate that what distinguishes a non-symptomatic mourning response from a symptomatic melancholic one is not necessarily explicit on any manifest level. Thus both mourning and melancholia may be precipitated by the actual loss of a love-object:

> The exciting causes due to environmental influences are, so far as we can discern them at all, the same for both conditions. Mourning is regularly the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one... In some people the same influences produce melancholia instead of mourning and we consequently suspect them of a pathological condition. (Freud, 1917[1915], pp.243-244).

The only distinguishing features between mourning and melancholia are, in such instances, firstly, the persistence of those reactions attendant upon grief, (i.e., its prolonged position in the series), and secondly, the subjective sense of worthlessness and guilt which defines melancholia alone. Thus Freud writes that, "only the disturbance of self-regard is absent in mourning; but *otherwise the features are the same*". (ibid, p.244, italics inserted).

Clearly, it is the absence of any actual determinants for this disturbance of self-regard in melancholia, regardless of whether a loss has or has not occured, which allows for its characterization as a pathological condition, as opposed to mourning. And only a history can determine whether an event justifying this disturbance has occured. Although two mothers may both feel guilty about the loss of their sons, one may through negligence or intent have in fact caused his death, whereas the other had not. It is a history alone which can determine whether the mechanism characteristic of melancholia alone, whereby aggressivity towards a lost object is internalized, is operative or not. In all other respects, as Freud points out, the characteristics of mourning and melancholia may be the same. (Freud, 1917[1915]).

2. In psychoanalysis the extent to which pathology is construed in terms of a fundamentally narrative epistemology is, however, more extensive. For it is not only in terms of *past determinants*, but also in terms of *future effects*, that the symptomatic must be both defined, and explained.

Danto reveals that it is mistaken to believe that it is the status of its object *as past*, which is alone significant to a characterization and understanding of a historical knowledge. A knowledge is a historical one in so far as it entails not only those events which preceded the events in question but those which succeeded it. It is for *this reason* that it is only possible to do a history of the past. Just as in a conventional history, the retrospective explanatory technique is attributed, mistakenly, to the pastness of the events in question alone, so too in Psychoanalysis, the rationale for Freud's historical method is attributed solely to his conviction that the psychoneuroses, unlike the actual anxiety

neuroses, are a distinctive structure with aetiological determinants from the past.

On the basis of Danto's analysis it would seem, at first sight, advantageous to argue instead, that what renders Psychoanalysis a necessarily narrative technique is, rather, that like other *past* events, unconscious psychic events whether historically real or fantastical, are, by definition, inaccessible to eye-witness (or even introspective phenomenological accounts), and therefore require a distinct epistemology. And this is true.

However, if the cause of the neurosis is, a priori, inaccessible *in the present tense*, then this is not *only* because it is practically in the past, or unconscious, and therefore inaccessible but also, because it is that *kind* of cause which *is* accessible - but by way of its effects or derivatives alone. It is *this* understanding that makes Freud's analysis of the determining factors of pathology a fundamentally historical or narrative type of causal analysis.

Laplanche and Pontalis (1980) substantiate this aspect of narrative epistemology in Psychoanalysis by recognizing the concept of deferred action to be a major and consistent part of Freud's conceptual apparatus. If the concept has been ignored by many psychoanalytic theorists and clinicians, and brought into focus as a central mode of psychoanalytic explanation predominantly by J. Lacan (1953-1955, 1977, 1979), then the reasons for this comparative omission, and re-appropriation, are clearly instructive. (J. Mitchel, 1986, pp.25-26). Equally illuminating are the permutations through which both the meaning, and the developmental location, of the concept have passed in Freud's original writings.

For our purposes, however, it is perhaps sufficient to point out that with the notion of deferred action, Freud insists that past events can be, not *altered*, but "rearrange[d]", "transcribed". (Freud, 1950[1892-1899], p.233, cited in J. Laplanche & J.B. Pontalis, 1980, p.112). As Laplanche and Pontalis point out, this understanding of retrodiction or deferment should not be taken to suggest an existential-type Psychoanalysis, i.e., a view whereby consciousness constitutes its past and alters its meaning, nor, on the other hand, should it be taken as a matter of the delayed discharge of accumulated tension due to the temporal gap between stimulus and response. Rather, deferred action is, quite specifically, the repression of a memory from the past which has only become *traumatic* after the event. It is only in this sense that it may be said that in Psychoanalysis memories may be altered, receive new meaning, and become effective, as a function of new experiences, or of the arrival of a different stage of development. (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1980, pp.111-114).

The notion of deferred action clearly presupposes two events separated in a temporal series, the first of which becomes, retroactively, a traumatic or significant one. Thus the concept forecloses a reductive conception of the history of the subject as a linear determinism involving only the action of the past on the present. Instead, it highlights the way in which a cause can become operative, as cause, long after its actual occurrence. The concept of deferment implies the recognition that one cannot pick out the cause of the symptom without knowing its future. A psychic event acquires its identity-conditions, as pathogenic or non-pathogenic, not only by virtue of what caused it, but equally, by virtue of what effects it has. An explanation in Psychoanalysis is necessarily a narrative description of events: It consists in

filling in the temporal end-points of a change. Both beginning and end, or cause and effect, are necessary in explaining a given symptomatic action.

In this respect, there is something of knowledge which is uniquely available to the future analyst which cannot have been observed by the eye-witness, since part of the identity conditions of the pathological must always depend on the nature of its effects. Thus, in Psychoanalysis, as in all historical inquiry, "the cognitive privileges, as it were, are distributed differently than the commonplace epistemology allows". (Danto, 1985, p.346).

If the status of something as pathogenic or not cannot be picked out on the basis of either what caused it, (i.e., its aetiological preconditions), or its manifest features, then the ascription of symptomatic status to any given action depends upon its position in an individual history. It is likewise for this reason that it will now be argued that the symptomatic can never be determined or predicted in advance, in accordance with general laws.

3.3.3 The Role of General Laws and Prediction in Psychoanalysis

It has been argued so far that an individual history or what amounts to the same thing, the patient's phenomenological experience of the symptom as somehow anomalous in his life, is required not only to explain any particular symptom, but in order to determine whether it is in fact a symptom at all. Attendant upon this is the delimitation of the role of general laws in Psychoanalysis, or more specifically, in the psychoanalytic explanation of the symptomatic in particular instances and in particular individuals.

Clearly, it is the Freudian metapsychology which emerges as the strongest candidate for the case in favour of general laws in Psychoanalysis. Certainly, it has often been claimed that the Freudian metapsychology, to the extent to which it makes general statements about the (topographic, dynamic and economic) nature and functioning of the psychic apparatus in both pathological and non-pathological configurations, instantiates the use of general laws. On this basis it is also often maintained that the metapsychology is determinist and excludes the necessary role of intentionality in human action. (Guntrip, 1973, p.105). This criticism is based on the assumption that general statements about the nature of the psychic apparatus amount to general laws which entail exact/specific prediction and hence, exclude the possibility of freedom of choice.

In order to refute the notion that general metapsychological statements about the psychic apparatus in fact constitute the kind of laws which allow for prediction it is necessary only to point out that no *specific* symptom, nor in fact any action or compromise-formation in general, can be either explained or predicted in accordance with general metapsychological statements or laws, *regardless of whether these occurrences are construed in terms of absolute causal conditionality or not.*

If the metapsychology constitutes a general account which explains human behaviour, then this is only on the level of its most *general* preconditions. *A metapsychological account can neither explain nor predict specific actions or symptoms.*

It is for this reason that Freud points out that the explanation of symptoms such as obsessional ideas is, "effected by bringing the obsessional ideas

into temporal relationship with the patient's experiences". (1909, pp.188-189). A particular causal history of the Rat-Man's relations to his acquaintances must be re-traced if his obsessional running is to be explained. A general metapsychological law of the type: "a wish under sufficient super-ego injunction will be repressed and seek an indirect route to satisfaction", is *not*, in and of itself, an explanation of the Rat-Man's particular *running* behavior. It is an explanation of no more than how behaviour of this very general, i.e., indirect or symptomatic kind, is possible. But it cannot locate the particular wish involved, nor the nature of the super-ego injunction which caused its repression. Furthermore, even if the nature of the repressed wish was known, and the symptomatic status of the action established, the *form* of the symptom as it manifests itself - in compulsive running - would still remain to be explained.

The causes of the symptomatic in any given instance are thus never defined a priori. The explanation of any specific symptom is, rather, always radically contingent and specific. The upshot of this is therefore that the symptom as it is construed in classical Psychoanalytic terms is not syndromic; its form can never be determined, nor its future predicted in advance, in accordance with general laws.

If the classical metapsychology can appeal to general laws, then this is because in the metapsychology what is purely individual falls into the background - as at most an example of some broader principle or characterization, usually of a set of possible relations, for example, between agencies. It is thus necessary to locate the Freudian metapsychology on a different epistemological level to the narrative epistemology of the Freudian

case-history, in so far as the narrative epistemology instantiated in the case is both radically contingent and specific.

Thus if Freud can readily describes the metapsychology as replaceable, as a "speculative superstructure" (1925[1924], pp.32-33), then this is because, as Danto allows us to see, explanation can be produced without it, at least on the level of the particular if not on the level of the general or abstract.

However, there are also general statements in Psychoanalysis (firstly, about the aetiological preconditions, secondly, about the operation and function, and thirdly, about the classification of the symptom) which, although not necessarily "metapsychological" in the strict sense, nevertheless seem to instantiate general laws. For the purposes of this argument, however, it is necessary only to point out that these general statements on the more clinical side of the psychoanalytic spectrum parallel metapsychological ones, in so far as they too never entail the explanation or prediction of the specific symptoms of individuals in particular instances. In short, it is necessary to demonstrate that although there are general characteristics which can be ascribed to groups of symptoms or, for that matter, to all symptoms alike, these general characteristics do not operate as general laws *in so far as general laws entail prediction.*

1. It has already been pointed out that there are no aetiological predeterminants which operate as *sufficient* conditions for the prediction of pathology in Psychoanalysis. Although constitutional or hereditary factors such as the strength of libido or the quantity of the drive, as well as actual traumatic events in the world such as seduction by a parent in early infancy or the experience of frustration or deprivation, may well play a part in the precipitation of

neurosis, there is no regular or necessary relation between such factors and the incidence of neurosis. This aspect of Freud's thought is so consistent across his work that almost any text, for example, "Heredity and the Aetiology of the Neurosis", (1896b, p.147), "My Views on the Part played by Sexuality in the Aetiology of Neurosis" (1906[1905], p.276), through to "An outline of Psychoanalysis" (1940b[1938],pp.183-184), all make this point quite clearly.

In chapter VII of "An Outline of Psychoanalysis", Freud points out that general laws, although explanatory, cannot be used to pick out the "neurotic" from the "non-neurotic" constitution in any given circumstance, but only allow us to "pick out the 'weak points' in a normal organization" which are operative in, but not sufficient to account for, the generation of a neurosis. Such "weak points" are thus not general laws in the traditional or full predictive sense, but rather, the conditions of possibility for, any given neurosis. This is because although generalities such as the developmental weakness of the ego during childhood, the biological preconditions of the drive, the nature of the sexual constitution, and the possible occurrence of traumatic real events, facilitate and therefore explain neurosis in general, they cannot account for its occurrence in particular individuals as opposed to others. For such an account, a particular interaction of causes, rather than a general theory of mental illness, is required. (1940b[1938], pp.183-184).

Freud's recognition of the fact that the presence of pathogenic preconditions for the symptomatic can never justify prediction, and his consequent appreciation of the necessarily narrative or historical structure of the psychoanalytic explanation of any particular symptom is again made explicit in a lengthy section of "The Psychogenesis of a Case of Homosexuality in a Woman", in which he writes:

> So long as we trace the development from its final outcome backwards, the chain of events appears continuous, and we feel we have gained an insight which is completely satisfactory or even exhaustive. But if we proceed the reverse way, if we start from the premises inferred from the analysis and try to follow these up to the final result, then we no longer get the impression of an inevitable sequence of events which could not have been otherwise. We notice at once that there might have been another result, and that we might have been just as well able to understand and explain the latter. The synthesis is thus not so satisfactory as the analysis; *in other words, from a knowledge of the premises we could not have foretold the nature of the result....Hence the chain of causation can always be recognized with certainty if we follow the line of analysis, whereas to predict it along the lines of synthesis is impossible.* We do not, therefore, mean to maintain that every girl who experiences a disappointment such as this of the longing for love that springs from the Oedipus attitude at puberty will necessarily on that account fall a victim to homosexuality. On the contrary,... (Freud, 1920, p.167).

2. Although there are many general characteristics above and beyond aetiological factors which Freud ascribes to all symptoms in general, none of these generalities allow us to determine either the form or the course that any one symptom will take in advance.

Thus although *all* symptoms are the disguised satisfactions of repressed wishes, and operate in terms of thing-presentations rather than word-presentations, this neither allows us to extrapolate from the fact that a wish *has* been repressed that a symptom *will* occur, nor to determine what particular form of thing-presentation that particular compromise-formation might take.

3. In the same vein, it is impossible to determine, on the basis of the classification of symptoms or constellations of symptoms into classes (such as conversion hysterias, anxiety hysterias, and obsessional neuroses), the

particular form, course or outcome of any one (somatic, paranoid or obsessional) symptom in particular.

On a *general* level, conversion hysteria can be distinguished from anxiety hysteria to the extent that in conversion hysteria, a libidinal wish is satisfied through somatization rather than through phobia. Likewise, both forms of hysteria can be distinguished from obsessional neurosis in which it is the relative strength of a super-ego injunction which results in disorders on the level of thought and action. The fact remains, however, that these broad distinctions hardly delimit the almost infinite plenitude of forms any one type of neurosis may take, or determine the temporal unfolding (i.e., course or outcome), of any one particular symptom. It is for this reason that Freud relates *Dora's* case or the *Rat-Man's* case in detail, rather than merely outlining a hysterical or obsessional configuration alone. The description of a type of pathology on a general level can never account for the form, nor predict the result, of any one symptomatic configuration in particular.

Perhaps even more crucially, if general laws entail the regular relation between cause and effect, then such Freudian taxonomies can never operate as general laws in so far as they *do not entail aetiological discriminations.* No particular causal preconditions account, let alone *sufficiently* account, for one general class of symptom rather than another. Although Freud describes obsessional neuroses as those neuroses which *entail* a disproportionate super-ego strength in relation to the other agencies, he never argues that certain aetiological factors cause obsession *rather than* either conversion or anxiety neurosis. In fact, the process whereby one type of psychoneurosis rather than another is decided is so indeterminate that it is described by Freud as the "*choice* of neurosis". (Freud, 1913, pp.318-319).

As Laplanche and Pontalis point out, in consistently describing this process as a "choice" Freud is clearly suggesting that, "an act on the subject's part is required if the various historical and constitutional determinants which psycho-analysis brings out are to become meaningful and attain the force of motivating factors". (1985, p.69).

Likewise, the distinction Freud draws between all psychoneurosis alike on the one hand, and psychosis on the other, is clearly distinguished by him from any aetiologically determined classification. Thus Freud writes that, "the aetiology common to the onset of a psychoneurosis and a psychosis always remains the same". (1924[1923], p.151).

The distinction between the use of general classifications and the explanation of specific particular symptoms is again made explicit by Freud in a brief paper entitled "Libidinal Types" (1913). Although Freud classifies libidinal types into the *erotic*, the *narcissistic*, and the *obsessional* varieties, he makes it clear that these psychoanalytic taxonomies neither explain the presence, nor the "choice", of neurosis and cannot, therefore, entail prediction. He writes:

> It must be required of all such types that they shall *not coincide with clinical pictures*. On the contrary, they must comprehend all the variations which according to our practical judgement fall within the limits of the normal. ... [Thus] the setting-up of these libidinal types throws no new light upon the genesis of the neurosis. Experience shows that *all these types can exist without any neurosis*. (ibid, p.217, italics inserted).

Freud's analysis of libidinal types is thus emphatically distinguished from an analysis of the aetiological or causal preconditions of specific neuroses. In fact, it is also distinguished from a syndromic analysis of types (or choice)

of neurosis. Thus Freud points out that although it would seem easy to infer choice of neurosis from libidinal type, "these inferences, too, share the uncertainty which I have just stressed". (ibid, p.220).

It may be concluded that although general accounts and classifications can describe and even explain classes of actions on a general level, they cannot be used to explain or predict instances of these classes. It is for this reason that the case-history is an essential, and partially discreet, part of psychoanalytic epistemology. Likewise, it is for this reason that the last two chapters have been devoted to the explanation of the symptomatic and its conditions of possibility on a general level alone. It is necessary to argue for a narrative epistemology in the Freudian case-history, as the prerequisite for explaining any particular given symptom. A different epistemological operation is necessary to achieve knowledge of a particular symptom, as opposed to the general conditions of possibility for the *class* of things called "symptoms" per se.

If Freud did not explicitly defend narrative epistemology in contradistinction to the epistemology of the natural sciences, then it is nevertheless true that he did recognize that one of the major consequences of the necessary explanation of the symptom in terms of the past is that this mode of explanation does not admit of projection into the future, because the symptomatic cannot be explained or predicted in accordance with general laws. Danto's contribution to Freudian Psychoanalysis is, then, only to show that it is in this sense alone (albeit a crucial one), that the structures in accordance with which narrative or historical explanations are effected are not like scientific theories.

3.4 Narrative Explanation versus Narrative Interpretation in the Psychoanalytic Case

If Danto's narrative conception of history sheds an important light on the classical psychoanalytic method in the case, then it also provides the basis for specifying some of the criteria of validation for that method. It is now possible to return to Spence's major objections to the validity of Freud's historical method, and to argue that these objections are grounded in certain basic epistemological misconceptions.

Spence's argument against Freud's archaeological method has been seen to include three major contentions:

Firstly, that psychical events which occurred in the past cannot be corroborated and cannot, therefore, legitimately be used in an attempt to construct an accurate causal analysis.

Secondly, that even if these past events could be corroborated, their meaning would remain dubious, and the particular meaning or significance attributed to them can therefore pertain to the status of an "interpretation" alone.

And finally, that to the extent to which the archaeological method depends upon the legitimacy of the general laws of the meta-psychology, this method is extremely suspect and open to valid criticism. Spence's objections will be addressed consecutively.

1. Spence argues that the truth-claims of Freud's archaeological method - the grounding of psychoanalytic explanations in terms of past events - is illegitimate because past events cannot be verified. Thus he claims that:

> From the standpoint of evidence alone, we seem on firmer ground when we base our interpretations on what happens in the hour 'in plain sight' as compared to what is reported by the patient, often unsupported by other witnesses. (1982, p.186).

Spence's argument for the construal of Psychoanalysis as a *non-historical* narrative technique is clearly based on the failure of the historical method to fulfill the criteria of the natural scientific model of verification. As Danto points out, however, this scientific model is inappropriate to historical epistemology in the first place. Historical methodology cannot, therefore, be held liable on such grounds. The whole point of history is *not* to know about actions as witnesses might, but as historians do, in connection with later events and as part of temporal wholes. Historians have the unique privilege of seeing things in temporal perspective, i.e., in ways that could not have been witnessed at the time. The historical method of Psychoanalysis must therefore be recognized, not as a limitation, but rather, as a defining advantage. A narrative technique in fact sheds more light on the causal construction of the symptom than the strictly positivistic approach which Spence considers to be the hallmark of causal explanation.

It is only Spence's construal of the archaeological method along the lines of a positivist verificationist model which leads to his failure to recognize that there is more at stake in the psychoanalytic case than a simple duality between observable fact and negotiable interpretation. More specifically, Spence fails to recognize that the construal of Psychoanalysis as a narrative

technique does not, as he assumes, preclude it from the field of causal explanation.

Where Spence defines narrative in the psychoanalytic case in contradistinction to a causal history, Danto allows us to recognize them as identical operations. And where Spence concludes that psychoanalytic narrative must therefore be interpretive, Danto allows us to conclude that psychoanalytic narrative is, in the proper sense, explanatory.

Certainly, Danto's location of the historical method as an alternative epistemology facilitates the recognition that the historical method of the psychoanalytic case requires criteria of validation distinct from those of a natural science; and more so, from those of *a pure science of observation*. For natural science itself does not in fact demand that its theoretical propositions necessarily be ontologically realizable (i.e., observable) but rather, that secondary statements generated or derived from the theory be amenable to experimental observation, usually in a predictive sense. In short, the unobservability of subject-matter is too common a feature of scientific work for it to raise, *in and of itself*, any special problems for Psychoanalysis.

What is fundamentally incoherent about Spence's argument for the justification of narrative interpretation on the basis of what happens in the present during the clinical hour is, however, that it does *not* in fact address the problem of validation in psychoanalytic epistemology. It is of no avail to re-locate the evidential field of Psychoanalysis within the present *rather than* the past because, to the extent that events in the clinic are construed as *evidential*, they necessarily go beyond what is observationally given. As Danto points out:

> Just to apprehend something as evidence is already to have gone beyond the stage of merely making statements about *it*: to count something as evidence is already to be making a statement about something else, namely, that for which it is taken as evidence. And taking E as evidence for O is already to see E differently from the way we would if we had no notion at all about O... (Danto, 1985, p.91).

Unless events during therapy are construed, not simply as events in themselves but as an evidential field, then the phenomenon of the "transference" could not be understood as such, and the words of the patient could not be understood to shed light on anything, except his or her momentary whim. But to the extent that events during therapy *are* construed as an evidential field, they are no more verifiable or less suspect *as* evidence, than are the memories of the patient. To re-locate the evidential field of Psychoanalysis within the hour does not, therefore, address the problem of validation in psychoanalytic epistemology.

If Spence privileges present experience over memory, then this is because he argues that present factors shape and distort our memories of the past. He fails to recognize, however, the fundamental psychoanalytic proposition that *past* factors shape and "distort" our experiences in the present.

Moreover, Spence's concern with historical accuracy in terms of supporting eye-witness reports (as well as the "reality" of memories), constitutes a fundamental failure to recognize the subject matter of Psychoanalysis as *psychic reality*, as opposed to the intersubjective reality available to outside observers. In other words, Spence fails to appreciate the legitimate status of *fantasy events* as historically operative psychic determinants. It was Freud's fundamental recognition that it is only the consequentiality of an event which determines its status as pathogenically causative and hence, explanatory. It

is for this reason that Freud was concerned to describe and explain any given symptom historically, that is, retrospectively and in terms of its full temporal context, *rather than* on the basis of its inherent features in the present (including its status as *fantasy* or *reality*).

Far from being problematic, the recognition of the role of fantasy is, rather, of unquestionable significance in Psychoanalysis. (Laplanche, J, Pontalis, J.B., 1968). Without upholding fantasy as a legitimate causally efficacious aspect of psychic reality, Freud could never have conceived of the super-ego itself, as that agency which punishes us not merely for our actions but similarly, for our thoughts, desires and dreams, i.e., those hopes and wishes which never took a pathway to action at all.

Like real events, fantasy events may or may not act as pathogenic causes. The criterion of external corroboration for the legitimation of the analysand's memories is thus clearly another positivist misconstrual of the psychical field in general, and of the symptom and its determinants in particular.

2. Spence's second objection to the archaeological method of classical psychoanalysis is that even if remembered past events could be verified objectively their meaning or causal significance would remain oblique, amenable to subjective interpretation alone.

This is because the unconscious (and even conscious) determinants which motivate human action are invisible and therefore not open to inspection or verification in the same way that events are. (Spence, 1982, p.291). Spence

concludes that: "To a significant degree, the narrative that emerges from analytic work can be regarded as a kind of theory, and to an important extent, theories remain independent of facts." In consequence, psychoanalytic narrative or the historical method is "a mode of interpretation", and not an explanatory procedure as Freud claimed. (ibid, p.292).

If there are crucial differences between interpretive activities and explanatory ones, Spence manages to elide them here. This curious fact is perhaps again best explained in terms of Spence's erroneous conception of what objective explanation might consist in, which leads him to conclude that there are inherent defects in the explanatory method of Psychoanalysis which have nothing corresponding to them in the more "objective" sciences.

If the determinants of human action are not open to inspection then neither are the determinants of events. Even clouds cannot be *seen* to mean rain. They do not wear signs saying: "When you see me take out your umbrella. I cause rain." Causality is an attribute which we must, necessarily, always infer. Events in the present may well be directly available to perception in a visual parade but causes, in and of themselves, can never be witnessed *as causes.*

In this regard, Spence is correct that theories remain independent of facts and necessarily go beyond what is observationally given. But he is wrong to conclude *on these grounds*, that Psychoanalysis is interpretive rather than explanatory. Or, if he is correct, then he is correct not only about psychoanalysis, but about science, and for that matter, about the whole structure of empirical knowledge. Spence's prejudice in favour of what we can see over what we must infer (i.e., what Spence calls "theory"), is not an

objection which can legitimately be levelled against Psychoanalysis in particular. While there can be little doubt that observation is an essential feature of empirical knowledges, it is by no means the whole of it. As Duhem writes:

> It is impossible to leave outside the laboratory door the theory that we wish to test, for without theory it is impossible to regulate a single instrument, or interpret a single reading. (Duhem, 1954, p.182, cited in Danto, 1985, p.101).

Danto likewise points out that:

> Were a physicist to take seriously the idea that there is some incompatibility between his desire for objectivity and his use of theories, it is not easy to see how, except by finding employment elsewhere, he could continue to regard himself as an objective person. He had better not seek employment as a historian, however. (Danto, 1985, p.102).

It is for this reason that Danto argues that even Walsh's distinction between "plain" and "significant" narrative is a fallacious one. Even a specific description, like a general theory, is a structure imposed upon reality. And if there is no such thing as a "plain" narrative then for the same reasons, there can be no such thing as a "plain" science. In any discipline there are implicit guidelines for the selection of what counts as significant or relevant to a phenomenon or event, and attendant criteria for the selection of what counts as evidence for that event. In short, the relation of theory to evidence is, in the final instance, always overdetermined.

Spence's discrimination between the psychoanalytic case-history and veridical causal explanation is grounded upon the misguided assumption that the causal determinants of natural events, unlike those of human actions, are open to

observation, and that the explanation of human actions alone is therefore independent of observable fact or a structure *imposed* upon reality.

3. Spence's third objection to the archaeological method concerns what he perceives to be Freud's conflation of clinical happenings and general laws:

> Freud failed to make a distinction between clinical happenings and general truths, and we have tended to follow in his footsteps; one - time insights tend to be inflated into general laws. If we confuse narrative truth with historical (and, more generally, with theoretical) truth, we will never make the necessary distinction, and our theory will never rise much above the level of metaphor. (1982, p.33).

Freud explicitly theorized the distinction between these two epistemological levels in his work. For what Freud's historical method entails is the fundamental recognition that the description and explanation of any action, be it symptomatic or not, depends upon its position in a radically contingent and specific narrative series. And what Freud's historical method therefore logically excludes is the description, explanation, and prediction of the symptomatic in terms of a priori general laws.

By juxtaposing "narrative truth" with "historical (and, more generally, with theoretical) truth", it is Spence rather than Freud who fails to appreciate these distinctions. In the same vein, Spence supports George Klein (1973) for arguing for a "renewed emphasis on the clinical theory in favour of the metatheory - an argument, in our terminology, in favour of narrative truth over historical truth". (Spence, ibid, p.185). Thus Spence concludes that not only the archaeological method, but also the metapsychology, should be discarded, in favour of the criteria of "narrative fit":

> As metapsychology has tended to come under attack, clinical reasoning, as represented in clinical reports, tends to depend more and more on narrative fit. The aesthetic quality of the case-history has tended, as a result, to pre-empt the use of general law. Narrative truth has tended to supplant historical truth. (ibid, p.186).

Spence's blurring of the epistemology of general laws in the metapsychology and the epistemology of historical reconstruction in the case is clearly unfounded. Freud would never have bothered with the case-history if everything could be established in advance on the basis of general laws. Moreover, it is doubtful whether the clinical reports Spence invokes in fact construe themselves as aesthetically pleasing narrative fictions, *rather than* as legitimate explanations, as he claims. (ibid). For at the very least, it must be assumed that the words of the patient constitute the raw material from which a veridical psychical reality may be reconstituted. Without the metapsychology, but with this basic presupposition, it remains feasible to proceed. And yet, it is this fundamental premise which Spence claims can, and has been, denied.

In any event, Spence's spring-cleaning of the psychoanalytic edifice is so hasty that no time is expended on discrimination between disposables. To use another metaphor, it might be said that the metapsychological baby sinking (almost indiscernably) with the archaeological bath-water is of no concern to Spence.

Conclusion

Spence's rejection of the historical method of classical Psychoanalysis in "Narrative Truth and Historical Truth" (1985), is based on the dual contention that veridical causal reconstruction of the patient's past is not only, firstly, epistemologically impossible but also, secondly, unnecessary to psychoanalytic technique.

Although only the epistemological aspects of Spence's work are, strictly speaking, relevant to this thesis, the critical upshot of his reformulation of the Psychoanalytic case-history as a pragmatic (albeit aesthetically pleasing and rhetorically persuasive) narrative fiction are perhaps too important to omit mentioning entirely. For it is on this basis that Spence argues for the reconstrual of the psychoanalytic process of the cure as a form of interpretive closure in which the only possible form of truth is, "the truth of being coherent and sayable". (1982, p.176). Spence also uses his conception of narrative interpretation *rather than* narrative history in order to undermine, or render irrelevant, the Freudian metapsychology.

To address this last point first, Spence's repudiation of the metapsychology is hardly surprising in the light of his reconstrual of Psychoanalysis as a form of "linguistic and narrative closure". (ibid, p.137). This is because if psychoanalytic technique could be reconstrued as a narrative interpretation rather than as a narrative history, then not only Freud's archaeological method in the case-history, but also his topographic, dynamic and economic conception of the mind would be rendered incomprehensible, irrelevant and in fact, spurious. In its stead would be a theory of the mind in terms of which psychic reality is divested of its power; open to revision as easily as the

unpublished drafts of a book and in which the persistence of neurosis in the first place would make little sense.

Secondly, and in relation to the question of cure, what Spence's reformulation of psychoanalytic technique fails to properly appreciate is not only Freud's fundamental understanding of the psychic apparatus as that which bears the indelible, if distorted, imprint of its own developmental history, but also, the very notion of the unconscious and of a divided psyche and the attendant necessity for the overcoming of resistances and the lifting of repressions. In other words, if cure via "narrative fit" alone were possible, then the psychoanalytic endeavor would be rendered incomprehensible. Spence's apparent reworking and justification of the notion of narrative in and for Psychoanalytic theory and practice would no longer pertain to that theory and practice at all but would rather, undermine its very justification.

Minimally, it is only if the aetiology of neurosis can convincingly be disconnected from the past, that Spence's argument for the superfluousness of veridical construction would assume coherence. But Spence does not argue that the psychoanalytic construal of the origins of neurosis in the past is *incorrect*, he simply chooses to ignore its implications.

Although many post-Freudian clinicians have argued, like Spence, against the technical necessity for actual historical reconstruction in its original classical form, such arguments are predicated upon the understanding that there are alternative means for the reclaiming of the past, most specifically in terms of its actualization in the transference. Unlike Spence, such clinicians do not, therefore, deny the fundamental necessity for re-accessing the veridical past altogether.

Finally, it has been argued in this chapter that Spence's fundamental or primary contention that the historical reconstruction of the patient's past along classical psychoanalytic lines is epistemologically impossible, and therefore *not legitimately explanatory*, can be repudiated.

In short, both Spence's claim that the historical method of Psychoanalysis is not legitimately explanatory, and his consequent reconstual of Psychoanalytic technique as a form of creative interpretation alone, are the consequences of an insufficient command of the logical content of Psychoanalysis and of what may consequently constitute both confirmatory evidence, and potential curative efficacy.

It therefore remains to return to Danto's alternative construal of narrative *as history,* or more specifically, *as causal explanation of the historical kind.*

Danto argues that narration describes an event which is ongoing in time from its beginning to its end, thereby establishing connections between causes and effects and explaining the changes which occurred during the course of that event. A narrative history therefore necessarily takes the form of a causal explanation.

By exploring Danto's work on the epistemology of narrative explanation and its possible intersections with classical psychoanalytic epistemology, psychoanalytic epistemology in the case has been defended *as narrative*, but *against* Spence's construal of it, on three important points:

1. Since any *particular* symptom in the classical psychoanalytic case is best described on the basis of its position in a narrative or temporal series, the

description of any one symptom necessarily takes the form of a causal explanation.

2. Since the explanation of any particular symptom depends on its position in a narrative series the symptomatic can only be explained in terms of the past. Psychoanalytic epistemology in the case-history must therefore be defended against *positivistic* criteria of present-tense verification procedures. Psychoanalysis necessarily takes a differential relation to evidence from the purely observational sciences.

3. Finally, since the explanation of the symptom depends on its position in a series, no particular symptom can be explained in Psychoanalysis a priori. The explanation of a particular symptom is always radically contingent and specific. The symptom as it is construed in psychoanalytic terms is therefore not syndromic, i.e., its occurrence can never be predicted in advance, or even *fully* explained retrospectively, on the basis of general laws alone. It is for *this* reason that a different epistemological operation is necessary to achieve knowledge of a particular symptom, as opposed to the general conditions of possibility for that class of actions/events called symptoms in general.

Crucially, it is not because Psychoanalysis does not fulfill the criteria of the natural scientific model that it must be construed in terms of an alternative narrative epistemology, but rather because its concern, unlike that of the natural sciences, is to explain *particular* actions or compromise-formations with reference to the specific temporal or historical series in which it is situated. It is for this reason that the explanatory procedure of

Psychoanalysis necessarily takes the form of a case-history; a history of particular "errors" in the field of past actions.

By locating historical knowledge as an epistemology which must be contrasted not only to the natural sciences in so far as it is *radically particular*, but also to the interpretive sciences in so far as it is *causally explanatory*, Danto provides the grounds not only for locating psychoanalytic explanation in the case as a legitimate form of narrative epistemology but also, for formulating the relation of the metapsychology to the case, as two logically discreet epistemological levels which cannot be made to do the same explanatory work. If the metapsychology explains the possibility for the symptomatic on a general level, then the case-history alone picks out the symptomatic in any given instance, and explains it in its unique specificity.

CONCLUSION

What this dissertation addresses is the question of what sort of knowledge classical Psychoanalysis might be. This inquiry hinges on the nature of the psychoanalytic description of its primary object, the symptom. This is because it is only in terms of Freud's constual of the nature and status of his object of knowledge, that it is possible to assess the method appropriate to its study, or more broadly, to establish the logical features of psychoanalytic explanation.

It is suggested that Arthur Danto and Donald Davidson together provide an account of the Freudian symptom which is both coherent, and faithful to the original Freudian texts. On the basis of their account, it is argued that a construal of Psychoanalysis in terms of an interpretive or human-scientific epistemology is both inappropriate to the classical Freudian texts, and problematical in its own right. Certainly, Freud's own characterization of the symptom makes it clear that it is an object logically requiring *explanation* rather than *interpretation*.

However, it is also asserted that the necessary *explanation* of any particular symptom can never be achieved a priori, on the basis of general laws. To this extent, Psychoanalytic explanation is characteristic of a historical rather than a natural scientific knowledge.

The status of Psychoanalysis as a knowledge is, in consequence, best understood (and assessed) in terms of a third alternative, that is, neither as a natural science nor as an interpretive science but as a separate historical epistemology. And since the psychoanalytic method in the case in fact instantiates all those characteristics appropriate to a historical method, it is argued that the status of Psychoanalysis as a coherent form of "explanation" rather than "interpretation" can be defended, while the case against Psychoanalysis as a natural science is nevertheless granted.

At the same time it is maintained that understood as a historical knowledge, the relation of the case-histories to the metapsychology is clarified. For what a historical epistemology entails is the understanding that the explanation of particular actions, events or symptoms must be achieved in each instance through a specific history rather than in relation to any predetermined definition of what the symptomatic *is*, in the first place. Psychoanalytic formulations and conceptions at a metapsychological level must then be understood not as laws of which particular instances are merely examples, but rather, as a partially discreet account of what the psychic apparatus must be to make such instances possible.

In concluding a study of this kind however, it is as important to make it clear what has not been argued as it is to give some idea of what has, hopefully, been achieved.

If Psychoanalysis has been subjected to rigorous criticism in recent years then this has been predominantly on two levels. Firstly, although theorists such as Carl Popper (1962) and Hans Eysenck (1963) have argued that psychoanalytic theory is "unfalsifiable" or not open to refutation,

psychoanalytic theory has nevertheless been substantially criticized on the basis that its fundamental tenents, usually described as "metapsychological", *can* be invalidated. (Timpanaro, 1976; Grunbaum, 1984). Secondly, Psychoanalysis has been criticized because its clinical or curative procedure is not widely believed to be efficacious. (Fischer & Greenberg, 1985, chap. 8). It is therefore important to emphasize that this dissertation has attempted both to define and defend Psychoanalysis as a *form of knowledge* without implicating a defence of either of these two areas.

1. Although the logical coherence of Freud's explanatory model of the symptom on a general level has been defended, this dissertation is not a defence of the fundamental tenents of Psychoanalysis themselves by way of an examination of how they relate to evidence. Thus although it has been argued that psychoanalytic postulations, for example, regarding the compromise-formation and its status as the satisfaction of the wish, do not function as general laws which can either fully explain, or predict, any one symptom in particular, the empirical or factual status of fundamental psychoanalytic postulations such as the symptom, the parapraxis, the unconscious, the transference, and the Oedipal complex, has not been explored.

This is because the establishment of Psychoanalysis as a body of knowledge which is (a) coherent and (b) capable of being operationalized in a method is not equivalent to an inquiry which involves the empirical legitimation of its fundamental tenents. In short, to establish that Psychoanalysis *can* support *on its own terms* what counts as its evidential field, and why this evidential field rather than another is appropriate, is not to establish that the fundamental

tenants of Psychoanalysis are "true", but only to determine the relevant criteria in terms of which they *may or may not* be invalidated.

2. Finally, it remains to point out that a defence of Psychoanalytic epistemology is not a defence of Psychoanalysis as a curative procedure.

This is because Psychoanalysis is not only a knowledge of its object but a practice upon it, and these two aspects of Psychoanalysis, although interdependent and overlapping, are not entirely equivalent.

Although Freud insisted on the *necessity* for the reconstruction of the patient's lost history and the attendant explanation of his or her symptoms as a prerequisite towards the possibility of cure, he nevertheless never construed historical explanation as a *sufficient condition* for curative efficacy.

In fact, if knowledge of the origin of the neurosis were all that were at stake in the process of psychoanalytic cure, then psychoanalytic technique need never have deviated from its original roots in hypnosis. For it was Breuer's discovery that hypnosis could be used, not only for the purposes of counter-instruction and suggestion, but also for the uncovering of the origins of the symptom in the past. (Freud, 1914, p.16).

In "Constructions in Analysis", Freud makes it clear that cure exceeds reconstruction when, after comparing psychoanalytic reconstruction to archaeological excavation, he concludes that, "our comparison to the two forms of work can go no further than this, for the main difference between

them lies in the fact that for the archaeologist the reconstruction is the aim and end of his endeavors while for analysis the construction is only the preliminary labour". (1937, p.260).

The capacity to explain how something came to be the case, and took the form it did, is not equivalent to the capacity to intervene in, or alter, what exists. A knowledge of the unconscious alone has, as Freud puts it, "as much influence on the symptoms of nervous illness as a distribution of menu-cards in a time of famine has upon hunger". (Freud, 1910, p.302).

However, the fact that the psychoanalytic process of the cure does not implicate the operation of narrative in an explanatory position alone, is not to say that an epistemologically grounded account of the curative procedures which Freud does support could not be produced. It is also not to say that a knowledge of the symptom achieved in the clinic does not facilitate an understanding of how cure can be effected, but only that the production of a full explanation (i.e., case-history) is not *in itself* curative. A defence of psychoanalytic treatment *entails* the capacity to produce a full history, but is not reducible to it. To this extent, it is important that the defence of Psychoanalysis as an explanatory history and as a curative procedure should not be confused.

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