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Motives and the Unconscious

There is, for instance, a lack of trained clarifiers, who might properly co-ordinate the various propositions with each other or try to eliminate the inequities of language in psychoanalysis.

Ernst Kris (24)

I

I WANT to do two main things: first, to reformulate, to explain, and, as far as is then necessary, to defend a thesis about the logical status of the discovery of the unconscious mind; and second, to point one or two morals which are implicit in this thesis. It is one salvaged from a controversy which began in the journal, *Analysis*, in which it was inadequately and inaccurately formulated, and unfortunately entangled with various curiously misguided side issues (33, 7, 12, 28, 29, 34, 18, and 9). But for the present, without any refinements of qualification, it is simply that the kernel of Freud's discovery was this: if you are prepared so to extend such notions as *motive*, *intention*, *purpose*, *wish*, and *desire* that it becomes proper to speak of motives and so forth which are not known to, and the behavior resulting from which is not under the immediate control of, the person who harbors them, then you can interpret (and even guide) far more of human behavior in terms of concepts of this sort than any sophisticated adult had previously realized. The morals all arise from the peculiarities of the notions which are being thus extended; these peculiarities are such as to ensure that their central and basic place in psychoanalysis must give this discipline a logical status different from, though not of course for that reason

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either inferior or superior to, that of sciences concerned with things other than human beings, and even from that of sciences concerned with less distinctively human aspects of human beings.

I shall draw most of my evidence from those of Freud's works which are classical and fundamental. It may be suggested that these are all out of date. But first, it is more than doubtful whether in the relevant respects this is true, because they are still regarded as essential in the training of analysts; and because we have been able to find plenty of parallel passages in recent works by orthodox Freudians. And, second, even if they did represent a closed incident in the history of thought, Freud's stature was sufficient to justify the study of his ideas in their own right.

II

1. a. The degree of extension required to allow us to speak of motives, etc., which are unrecognized or even honestly repudiated by their 'owners' varies from case to case. It is perhaps least of a stretch with motives and wishes: for, without benefit of Freud, people have come to admit underlying motives which they had not recognized (34, pp. 185-86); while notoriously some are as slow to realize as others are swift to mistake themselves to be in love. The stretch seems to be greatest with intentions; for surely before Freud we ought to have been at the very least extremely uneasy about talk of intentions which had never been consciously formulated, and which would not even be admitted by the intender if the question were raised and he gave an ingenuous answer after reflection. Of course Freud himself was at considerable pains to point out, particularly in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* but also elsewhere in his more apologetic works, that here he was continuing and systematizing extensions to which many sensitive observers of human nature, as well as plain men in their more percipient moments, were already considerably inclined.* But, in developing techniques for bringing to consciousness motives which had been buried much more deeply than any previously recognized, he achieved something which, if it was to be described in this way, demanded an extension much greater in degree than these, inasmuch as the time, trouble, and understanding of people needed to get a patient

* The historian of ideas might like to notice the following, for instance: "the real motives impelling him remain unknown to him . . . hence he imagines false or apparent motives" (10, p. 511, letter to Mehring).

to recognize deeply unconscious material is so immeasurably more than that needed with an ordinary unrecognized but unrepressed desire (12, pp. 12-13 [144-45] *).

b. A second extension required by Freud's conception of the unconscious is more disturbing and apparently less obvious, for it was not remarked in the earlier discussions. The first involved that bits of a person's behavior could be said to be motivated (etc., *mutatis mutandis*) in such and such a way, although he either did not know they were motivated, or did not know what the motive was, or was mistaken as to what it was.† The second allowed this, even of items which were beyond his voluntary control. Now, in general, before a piece of behavior can correctly be said to be motivated (etc.) in the ordinary (conscious) sense, the behavior must be unable honestly to deny his motive (etc.), and the behavior must be voluntary. These two things are quite different: but they go together so regularly that we have evolved a large vocabulary of terms whose criteria of applicability involve both; and the terms which Freud is stretching all belong, with greater or less degrees of definiteness, to this group. All the members of the group have their idiosyncrasies. Usage is not as precise as one could wish. Nor is membership completely determinate at the edges. But at least in the most typical cases the general rule applies: (consciously) motivated behavior is voluntary. On the other hand, where Freud wants to speak of unconscious motives, particularly for errors, dreams, and obsessive actions, typically this is precisely not the case. Again there may be some exceptions, and certainly the range and complexity both of the human situations and of the language in which responsibility may be ascribed or disclaimed is fabulously greater than is allowed for in this present rough-and-ready dichotomy between those performances which a person could and those which he could not have helped. Nevertheless, the general position is clear.

2. That Freud and his followers are concerned, in these extended senses of the words, with motives, wishes, intentions, purposes, desires, and the like is abundantly obvious from even a cursory examination of the elementary and classical texts of psychoanalysis. It is words such

* The first pages listed refer to the original article, the bracketed pages to the reprinted article. This procedure will be followed throughout this paper.

† By the way, the term "behavior" is quite properly used to cover dreams here; for Freud stipulated that "exactly what the dreamer tells is to count as the dream" (14, p. 68).

as these which are constantly employed (12, especially pp. 8-9 [144-45]): any suggestion that they are being systematically misused may be rebutted by considering typical illustrations. Take, for instance, that of the obsessional behavior which no longer seems mad when the story of the patient's traumatic wedding night has been uncovered, and we think of all her performances as repetitions and representations of her husband's ineffective efforts, ending in a bizarre attempt to convince the maid that he had not in fact proved impotent; and of these and the illness which they constitute as motivated by the desire "to shield him from malicious gossip, to justify her separation from him, and to make a comfortable existence apart from her possible for him" (14, p. 220, pp. 221-24). Further evidence of the same sort might be cited indefinitely. We labor the point only because there was some inclination in the *Analysis* discussion to overlook the fact that examination of psychoanalytic literature is a prerequisite for doing philosophy about this discipline, and even cavalierly to dismiss all such evidence.*

3. Freud himself showed inklings that the introduction of the conception of the unconscious involved changes in the notions of *motive*, etc., as when he wrote of "the psychoanalytical definition of the mind," defending the dispute about this innovation against the charge of being "an empty wrangle over words" (14, pp. 16-17). Or again he attacks as "thoroughly unpractical," in his metapsychological study *The Unconscious*, "the conventional identification of the mental with the conscious" (17, Vol. IV, p. 100: "conventional" here definitely refers to a "convention of nomenclature"; whereas "metapsychology" is not being used in what would be the philosopher's sense, *Ibid.*, p. 7). He is thoroughly aware of the main justifications for these conceptual innovations: that, obviously, the notion of the unconscious provides the theoretical basis for psychoanalytic therapy †; and that, not quite so

* "Many articles could be written showing that Freud was not overconscious of verbal and methodological niceties and I have no intention of replying in detail to Mr. Flew's onslaught" (2, p. 105 [51]). Well, perhaps; but it would be extraordinarily interesting to have even one article designed to prove the radical thesis that the regular and consistent use of terms like "motive" by Freud and his followers has been systematically misguided, though Peters himself is unlikely to produce such a paper, being inclined to dismiss out of hand "the vagaries of 'ordinary language'" (2, p. 145) in favor of a newfangled concept taking over the word "motive." Urmson has argued that this particular new conception has little if any present application (34, p. 189).

† E.g., "the assumption of the unconscious helps us to construct a highly successful practical method . . ." (17, Vol. IV, p. 99).

obviously, it makes possible a large expansion both of the frontiers of psychology* and of the understanding of phenomena within these in psychological terms.† In speaking of "psychological terms" Freud usually seems to have had in mind primarily and in the first instance just such terms as *motive*, *purpose*, *desire*, *wish*, *want*, *intention*,‡ and, standing rather apart, *meaning* **; but of course it must not be mistakenly supposed that this commits him to expelling from the empire of psychology any other phenomena previously subject to its jurisdiction.

4. All this brings out that the unconscious starts as almost a paradigm case of a logical construction, or 'intervening variable' (25); and shows out of what the construction is made, between what the variable intervenes.†† That is to say that talk of the unconscious starts as simply a particular shorthand way of talking about unconscious motives, etc. But it has not always been allowed to retain that status. Having formed a new noun from an adjective, Freud occasionally fell for the temptation to think that it was the word for a thing: not "*une façon de parler*" but "something actual and tangible" which can "produce something so real and palpable as an obsessive action" (14, pp. 234-35).‡‡ It has

* E.g., "We have widened the domain of mental phenomena to a very considerable extent and have won for psychology phenomena which were never before accredited to it" (14, p. 47).

† E.g., "All these conscious acts remain disconnected and unintelligible if we are determined to hold fast to the claim that every single mental act performed within us must be consciously experienced . . ." (17, Vol. IV, p. 99; cf. also Vol. V, p. 382).

‡ I cannot find a suitable single nutshell text: but consider the sort of evidence he brings to prove that, for example, "dreams are not a somatic, but a mental, phenomenon," which is explained as meaning that "they are a performance and an utterance on the part of the dreamer" (14, p. 82; cf. also 17 Vol. V, pp. 377 ff.). And compare, though this is no sort of evidence as to what Freud thought, MacDougall's remark: "Purposive action is the most fundamental category of psychology; just as the motion of a material particle . . . has long been the fundamental category of physical science."

** The importance of this notion has not previously been noted either here or in the *analysis* controversy. It would repay special examination: for what is involved seems to range through a spectrum of cases shading from, at one extreme, mere relevance, through the general possibility of motivational interpretation, to the other extreme where the claim is that the performances, dreams, are elements in a full-blown language.

†† For to say that a chair is a logical construction out of appearances of a chair is to say that a chair is related to its appearances not as a thing is related to the images of it in a mirror, not as a member of parliament to his constituents, but as the average plumber to plumbers, as a family to its members, as energy to its manifestations, as electrons to the evidence for electrons" (36, p. 205).

‡‡ It was partly to dispose of this sort of thing that I introduced the notion of efficient causes into the original discussion, though mainly in the hope thus to bring

been regarded as the name of a region of the mind: the elusive scene of many colorful proceedings, a country in diplomatic and topographical relations with others, such as the preconscious which was early separated from it. Again it has been given another sense, that in which it is abbreviated to ucs, and is defined as referring to a system: I am unsure how much solid content is to be given to the word translated "system"; but if the new sense is to have any point it must have some, and insofar as it has, there is need for some justification for the employment of the term (17, Vol. IV, pp. 104-9). All of which is no doubt perfectly well so long as no one forgets how empty of literal meaning such metaphorical talk about a logical construction may become (9, pp. 193-94).

5. We have noticed two conceptual changes involved in the introduction of the idea of the unconscious (1.a. and 1.b.); and we do not say, for we are disinclined to believe, that there are not others. The second of these two calls for two remarks.

a. First, this conceptual change is obviously important for assessing the ethical implications of Freud's discoveries. In his paper on "Moral Responsibility for the Content of Dreams," Freud failed to note that no one can stop himself from dreaming (in the non-behaviorist sense of "dream" into which he had here inevitably lapsed). So he concludes too easily that "the problem of responsibility for the immoral content of dreams no longer exists for us as it formerly did for writers who knew nothing of latent dream-thoughts and the repressed part of our mental life . . . one must hold oneself responsible for the evil impulses of one's dreams" (17, Vol. V, p. 156).^{*} This is all very well, providing that it is clearly understood to mean no more than that insofar as we accept the Freudian theory, we must accept that the unconscious desires (etc.) revealed in our dreams, like the recognized desires (etc., *mutatis mutandis*), of our waking hours, provide indications of the sort of people we are. But it will not do at all if it is to be taken as implying out the peculiarity of the motivational concepts which are so fundamental in psychoanalysis (12, pp. 8-15 [143-48]). But Urnson showed that this move was misconceived (34, *passim*). By the way, responsibility for certain of the remarks and illustrations attributed by Gardiner to Toulmin belongs in fact to me (18, p. 13n).

^{*}The historian of ideas may enjoy noticing Hume's remark: "Several moralists have recommended it as an excellent method of becoming acquainted with our own hearts, and knowing our progress in virtue, to recollect our dreams in a morning, and examine them with the same rigour that we would our most serious and most deliberate actions" (21, I.4, p. 219).

that a man can as fairly be praised or blamed, rewarded or punished, for the activities of his dreams as for the deliberate actions of his waking life, precisely because the former are not, whereas the latter are, under his control.*

b. Second, this conceptual change can throw light on Toulmin's extraordinary thesis that "if a fully-fledged analytic explanation is not part of a successful cure, we do not regard it as a 'correct' explanation: therapeutic failure is as fatal to an explanation in psychoanalysis as predictive failure is to an explanation in physics" (33, p. 29 [p. 138]). Against this Dingle argued simply that "the reasons why an abnormally large proportion of the phenomena with which psychoanalysis is concerned is associated with cures are clear enough" (7, p. 65); it is a purely contingent matter of humanitarianism and the practical needs to secure the cooperation of subjects and the payment of analysts. (This Freud said in 14, p. 217. He showed the same thing by his unfortunate willingness to analyze Moses posthumously and primitive peoples at a distance and, one might add, both on the basis of evidence which was quite inadequate and/or unreliable. For in these cases there could be no question of cure.) Further, Peters quoted devastatingly a passage from Freud to rebuke Toulmin's apparent ignorance of the toil, stress of soul, and conflict involved in the struggle for a cure; and provided a framework of relevant distinctions between diagnostic, therapeutic, and two different theoretical functions. The same passage shows that Freud distinguished between, on the one hand, the discovery by the analyst and, on the other, the acceptance by the patient of an explana-

^{*}For the purposes of this paper we can generally afford to neglect the differences between *desires*, *wishes*, *motives*, *intentions* and *purposes*, which might for other purposes be crucial. But perhaps we should just notice here one obvious point which applies to *wishes* and *desires* but not to *purposes* and *intentions*; namely, that even conscious *wishes* and *desires*, and a fortiori unconscious ones, are not under immediate control in the sense that we can start or stop ourselves wanting at will; what we meant above by *desires* being "under the immediate control of the person who harbours them" is that he can control their expression in action. I cannot, at least in the short run, help devoutly *wishing* for some consummation; but I can, usually at any rate, help *doing* anything about it (9, p. 179). It is all very well to echo Christ in saying "Everyone that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt. 5:28), so long as you do not permit this inspired paradox of assimilation to mislead you to overlook pedestrian but vital distinctions: between what a person can, and what he cannot, help; and between thinking of doing something, and actually doing it. Freud elsewhere quotes Plato as saying "that the good are those who content themselves with dreaming of what others, the wicked, actually do" (14, p. 122).

tion; and that it is this latter which "is often enough to relieve mental illness" (33, p. 24 [133]). It is easy, if only one goes a little beyond the first volume of the *Collected Papers*, to find further examples to show what is actually the accepted usage of analysts.* This is the sort of evidence which is appropriate here, and it must be decisive (13 *passim*), unless Toulmin can show that analysts have been misled by some radical misconception. Furthermore, not only do analysts not in fact insist that association with a cure is a necessary condition of "a 'correct' explanation," but non- and rival analysts notoriously and rightly refuse to concede that it is even a sufficient one (see, e.g., 11, Chaps. 10-12 *passim*).

But still, why should Toulmin think that the identification of explanation with cure, combined with a recognition of the distinctive concern of psychoanalysis with motives and desires, shows that there "need be nothing mysterious . . . about the therapeutic success of psychoanalysis" (33, p. 27 [p. 138])? This might be explained partly by direct reference to our distinction above between two sorts of extension necessary to make it proper to speak of unconscious motives, etc.: the one to allow of motives, etc. (more deeply) concealed from their 'owners' (than any usually recognized before); the other to enable us to attribute motives to behavior beyond our control. For if there were no distinction to be made between the recognition of one's motive for, and the ability to control, behavior, then indeed there would be no problem of why hysterical and obsessional symptoms (sometimes) vanish when their unconscious motives are recognized. Another part of the explanation might be this. Supposing it were to have been the case that "revealing to the mentally ill the contents of their unconscious minds" was simply a matter of offering them "the . . . psychoanalytic explanation . . . as presented by an analyst at the end of a series of consultations" (33, p. 24, p. 27 [133, 138]); and supposing also that association with a cure were part of what analysts meant by "a 'correct' ex-

* E.g.: "Even if psychoanalysis showed itself as unsuccessful with all other forms of nervous and mental disease as with delusions, it would still remain justified as an irreplaceable instrument of scientific research" (14, p. 217, and cf. pp. 252-53, 366-67, 373-74 and the case already quoted, at p. 221. Also 17, Vol. V, p. 124-25, in which the most categorical claims are made of an advance in understanding combined with therapeutic impotence.). Or, from a contemporary: "More often than not insight satisfies the therapist's rather than the patient's emotional needs" (8, p. 11). Surely, by the way, Peters should not, in view of his views on Freud's carelessness in methodology (see preceding note, p. 158) have been satisfied with only one citation.

planation": then indeed it might have appeared that the correlation between presentations and recoveries required no explanation. But Toulmin, accepting the two protases, is still in fact wrong to maintain the apodosis: for no manoeuvres with the meaning of the word "explanation" could really explain the brute fact of this correlation; they could at most force us to reword our questions. In fact both protases are false and there thus remains not merely one but a whole range of empirical problems which can be grouped under the head "Why do psychoanalytic cures work at all?" (33, pp. 23-24 [133]). And these are not to be brushed away, along with two paragraphs of other assorted questions, by any a priori broom, however bright and new.

I have here to admit, though this may well be merely a confession of ignorance or ineptitude or both, that I have not found either Freud's own writings or later analytic literature at all illuminating about the alleged one/one correlation between recognition of the motivation of, and the attaining of control over, symptoms (14, pp. 236-37). And I say "the attaining of control over," not "the disappearance of," deliberately; because it is logically possible that a cured patient might choose to indulge voluntarily in the performances which formerly had been compulsive.* Often in the literature it seems that no distinction is being made between the problems of why and under what conditions people come to recognize unconscious desires (etc.) and the logically independent problems of why and under what conditions behavior becomes or ceases to be voluntary;† and the theories then offered to deal with the two sets as if they were one in any case leave a great deal to be desired. When occasionally, the alleged one/one correlation seems to be recognized as such, it is apparently regarded as a fundamental brute fact in terms of which other facts are to be explained;‡ and though it may be that we shall have so to accept some very general

* Consider here the theme of Arthur Koestler's *Arrival and Departure*; and consider also some actual cases in which analysis is discontinued because analyst or patient comes to believe that in the circumstances of the patient's life the illness is for him a lesser evil (14, pp. 319-20; 17, Vol. II, pp. 294-95).

† ". . . the transformation of this unconscious material in the mind of the patient into conscious material must have the result . . . of lifting the compulsion . . . For conscious will-power governs only the conscious mental processes, and every mental compulsion is rooted in the unconscious" (17, Vol. I, p. 261, italics mine). Even if it governed not only but all, our problem would remain; for why should there be this correlation?

‡ ". . . you must recognize it as a fundamentally new fact, by means of which much else becomes explicable" (14, p. 236).

fact of the form 'people just are able to control the movements of such and such parts of themselves under such and such conditions,' this present alleged one/one correlation is surely too particular to be easily accepted as thus ultimate. Maybe it is premature to raise such questions, which certainly do not concern analysis only; but if I am right in thinking that little light has so far been thrown on the problem by analytic thinking, then at least this fact should be recognized before the problem is filed for the future.

III

1. Important implications of our main thesis emerge as soon as we recognize the peculiarity of those notions whose range Freud was systematically extending. For these are all distinctively human. They are thus radically different from the notions of rat-oriented experimental psychology. They are all, at least most typically, purposive—not in any weak 'as if' sense which would assimilate the purposive to the merely teleological, which involves no more than, as a matter of brute fact, either moving toward an end or fulfilling a function, but in the primary strong one, which involves either having an aim in mind or at least the present possibility of bringing it to mind (3, *passim*). They all, at least most typically, imply on the behavioral side a capacity to operate with words (18, pp. 123–24). (The qualification "at least most typically" must never be forgotten; for recognized usage of such mental terms is not quite as clear-cut as it appears in the precisified representations of philosophers.) They are precisely the notions in terms of which rational agents give accounts of the voluntary and deliberate conduct of themselves and of other rational agents. And they cannot be logically "reduced" to physicalistic terms.*

a. It is wrong to present Freud's "doctrine of 'psychic determinism'" as "simply that *mental phenomena are causally determined*" (26, p. 229, italics his); † and it is wrong to cite, as if it were either equivalent to—

* "We can neither assert nor deny discontinuity between the human and subhuman fields so long as we know so little about either. If, nevertheless, the author of a book of this sort is expected to hazard a guess publicly, I may say that the only differences I expect to see revealed between the behavior of a rat and a man (aside from enormous differences of complexity) lie in the field of verbal behaviour" (32, p. 442). No doubt experiments on rats are as essential as they are practically convenient; but to write "only" here is like excusing the omission of the Prince of Denmark on the grounds that he is only one character in *Hamlet*.

† And wrong again to attribute this mistaken interpretation to Hornoy (see 19, p. 18).

or at least sufficient to establish that—"all behaviour is motivated," the claim that "everyday activities are all causally determined" (37, p. 1). These textbooks fail to do justice to Freud's originality: long before his time it was a commonplace in the most tough-minded medical scientific circles that all human behavior, and hence presumably parapraxes, dreams, and obsessive actions, must be explicable in terms of physiological causes; what was new was to suggest that these were "explainable through purposive ideas" (16, p. 148)—in terms, that is, of ideas such as *motive, desire, purpose, intention*, and so forth, all suitably extended. Notice, by way of contrast to such textbook misrepresentations, that Sears undertook his survey at the instigation of the "Subcommittee on Motivation" (31, p. vii); and he writes, "Boiled down to an acceptable terminology the wish-fulfillment hypothesis becomes a statement that dreams are motivated" (*Ibid.*, p. 129; see 33, p. 28 [138]).

b. These purposive and motivational concepts which are central and fundamental in psychoanalysis are all distinctively human. Any application of any of them below the human level is at best atypical and at worst a logical solecism. It is not a matter of special snobbery, analogous to the social snobbery which bids us substitute "perspires," or even "feels uncomfortably hot," for "sweats" when speaking of a lady. The solid basis of justification for this prerogative is that the human animal is the only one which has what it takes; and what it takes is the developed capacity to use words and symbols. Any psychologists who may "have the impression that the concept of motivation has some esoteric monopoly on explanation in psychology" (23, p. 26) are surely wrong (see III, 2 below). Yet even from the most radically behavioristic point of view there is no mystery that and why we have a monopoly on motivation of behavior. This is a straightforward corollary of our effective corner in language.

These claims to human uniqueness might be challenged by students of animal behavior. Now of course there are analogies between most aspects even of the verbal and verbally-dependent behavior of human beings and some aspects of the behavior of some other animals; between the burglar intending to break into the farmhouse and the fox intending to raid the henhouse; between the pilot of the reconnaissance aircraft reporting back orally and the bee "reporting back in the sign language of the dance." And presumably all the differences between men and the other animals are differences of degree: in the sense that

it would be possible to construct spectra of actual or possible cases stretching between the distinctively human and the indisputably subhuman with no sharp breaks at which the dividing line must naturally and inevitably be drawn. But the enormous development of language in man and the vast behavioral ramifications which it makes possible nevertheless justify us, when they are considered together, in speaking as we have done of "man's unique capacity" and of "distinctively human prerogatives." For two reasons. First, because it is, in any case, quite wrong to dismiss all differences of degree as mere differences of degree; the difference between sanity and insanity is certainly, in the sense defined above, a difference of degree, and yet for Neville Clively Heath on trial for murder it was, in the most literal sense, a matter of life and death. Secondly, because, in this particular case, we are concerned not with any single difference of degree, however great, but with a massive accumulation. It is this accumulation of substantial differences of degree, rather than the possession of one component of a unique sort, which in general provides sufficient justification for an insistence on the uniqueness of man; and it is a justification which does not conflict with evolutionary theory by postulating any special creations.* Similarly, it is an accumulation of substantial differences of degree, rather than the possession of some single capacity or range of capacities altogether without parallel, which in particular entitles us to claim that man has "an effective corner in language" and "a monopoly on motivation of behaviour."

We are not committed by these claims to a pedantic refusal ever to tolerate the application of any purposive or motivational term to animals below the human level. No doubt it is all right to say of a dog (though not perhaps of an earthworm) that it wants to get in or to get out, to eat or to drink, to sleep or to chase rabbits, even though it cannot formulate these wants or express them to others in words. But we surely ought to feel very uneasy indeed at any attribution to a dog (and a fortiori to an earthworm) of *purposes* or *intentions*,

* Contrast: (a) Descartes (6, pp. 44-47) on the two supposedly knock-down tests for humanity and on the allegedly unique capacities of the soul which "must be expressly created"; and (b) the Encyclical *Humani Generis* (Catholic Truth Society, 1950, p. 30) also (5, § 3027) "Thus the Teaching of the Church leaves the doctrine of evolution an open question, as long as it confines its speculations to the development, from other living matter already in existence, of the human body. (That souls are immediately created by God is a view which the Catholic faith imposes on us)."

for here the capacity to formulate is absolutely crucial (see 18, p. 115).^{*} Nevertheless, the standard employments of all these terms are so elaborately and multiply connected with the use of a developed language, and with the complex behavioral possibilities which this opens up,[†] that we are entitled to draw sharp lines in thought here between the human and the nonhuman. "Without symbols we could not make-believe, dissimulate, or lie; we could not form plans for our future; nor hold those schemata in mind that make possible consistency in moral conduct" (1, p. 167). When Russell wrote "A desire is 'conscious' when we have told ourselves that we have it . . . it only differs from an 'unconscious' desire by the presence of appropriate words, which is by no means a fundamental difference" (30, p. 31), he was ignoring not only that there was at least one other important difference (see II. 1.b. above) but also that all these elaborate and manifold connections are of fundamental importance for most human interests and purposes.

c. The fact that psychoanalysis puts these purposive concepts in a central and fundamental position has much wider implications than a mere stressing of the importance for human psychology of verbal as opposed to nonverbal behavior. The concepts which psychoanalytic theory seeks to extend are precisely those in terms of which rational agents give account of their own conduct and of that of other rational agents. And that they do this is not a contingent but a necessary fact: for a person is a rational agent, as opposed, not to an irrational agent but to a nonrational creature, only and precisely insofar as he (logically) can give account of his motives for (reasons for) acting thus and thus,

* Compare the sharp criticism which has been made of the use of the expression "trial and error" in connection with animal learning; which does indeed become seriously misleading if we ever forget that animals which cannot use words lack the necessary qualifications for this method of investigation (4, pp. 122-26).

† The variety and the importance of these it is almost impossible to exaggerate. Those who defined "man" as "the rational animal" and those who named our species *homo sapiens* were not always and only, as Russell and many lesser men have sarcastically suggested, flattering the whole human race with attributes of reasonableness and good sense which are attained only by some men some of the time. Usually and primarily, though perhaps in an obscure and old-fashioned way, they were picking out and underlining this uniquely human characteristic, by which alone men are able to be any sort, good or bad, of arguers, makers of statements, planners, moral agents, or a thousand other distinctively human things. Consider again, for example, Descartes' "two most certain tests" whereby "if there were machines bearing the image of our bodies, and capable of imitating our actions as far as that is morally possible" these might be distinguished from men; and the whole context in which they were given.

and state the purposes, plans, and intentions which he had in mind; and it is only rational agents in this sense, as opposed to nonrational objects like animals and sticks and stones, which are (logically) capable of being irrational—by formulating or adopting foolish, inconsistent, and self-frustrating plans and attitudes. The object of psychoanalysis as a therapy is so to educate the patient that he becomes able both to recognize formerly unconscious desires and to inhibit their expression in action if he so chooses. “To strengthen the ego, to make it more independent of the superego, to widen its field of vision and so to extend its organization that it can take over new portions of the id. *Where id was, there shall ego be*” (15, p. 106, italics mine). To do this is to extend the (factually) possible area of rationality (and therefore of irrationality too), to replace compulsive and uncontrollable behavior by voluntary and deliberate conduct (20, *passim*). It is these features of the theory and the therapy which make psychoanalysis inherently a peculiarly rational enterprise, an educative force of liberation and enlightenment.* This is so despite the fact that the standards of verification and of theory construction acceptable to the psychoanalytic profession, compared with those achieved in many other disciplines which are not in this peculiar way rational, leave much to be desired. (See 9, *passim*; 11, Chaps. 10–12; 31, *passim*.) And it would remain true of the logical nature of the whole enterprise even if it turned out that in fact the theory is wholly unsound and the therapy quite ineffective.

d. It would surely be a mistake to try to ‘reduce’ these notions, at least in their standard and typical applications, to behavioristic terms.† First, because in these cases, as so often, meaning cannot be made out

* See, as texts to illustrate these points: (a) “. . . the physician makes it possible for him to do this by suggestions which are in the nature of an education. It has been truly said therefore, that psychoanalytic treatment is a kind of re-education” (14, p. 377); (b) “The making conscious of repressed sexual desires in analysis makes it possible . . . to obtain a mastery over them which previous repression had been unable to achieve” (17, Vol. V, p. 128); and (c) “But above all, all the energies which are today consumed in the production of neurotic symptoms to serve the purposes of a world of phantasy out of touch with reality, will . . . help to strengthen the outcry for those changes in our civilization from which alone we can hope for better things for our descendants” (17, Vol. II, p. 295).

And here is another, not from Freud but from a disciple, “The aim of psychoanalytical method is to achieve permanent eradication of the very root of the illness, and at the same time to put its psychic energies at the disposal of the ego or reason” (2, p. 229).

† Previously I argued that motive-propositions could not be reduced to cause-propositions, thus confounding a defensible anti-physicalist thesis about the peculiarity

to be equivalent to verification, verdict to evidence (35, pp. 181 ff.), what is being said to a conjunction of good reasons for saying it. Second, because behavioristic evidence is not all we have; for in the case of ourselves we have our own ‘experiences’; while in the case of other people we can get some idea of their ‘experiences’ from knowing what ours are or would be like in analogous circumstances (18, especially Chap. 2, Sect. 4, and Chap. 4). This most necessary technique of putting ourselves in other people’s places has the most serious dangers and limitations, of which the literature of psychoanalysis provides most abundant illustration (27, *passim*). Third, because these notions are all, most typically, applied to creatures endowed with a capacity for, and surely involve some sort of reference to, self-consciousness (in that peculiar and elusive sense not equivalent to that of “embarrassed” or “shy”). Here consider Descartes’ second test of humanity “from which it could be discovered that they did not act from knowledge, but solely from the disposition of their organs” (6, p. 45). Fourth, for a reason less hackneyed than the first three but which alone would be decisive. Every verbal performance has two aspects, one of which can and one of which cannot be comprehended in purely physicalist terms. Suppose a man emits noises from his mouth within the range of variety which could be rendered in the notation of the English language as “I wanted to do something to spite her.” This event has a purely physical aspect, about which we may ask such questions as “What were the physiological and environmental preconditions of the emission of these sounds?” But it also has another aspect, about which we may ask such radically different questions as “Does this utterance make sense?” “Is it true?” or “Does it follow from, is it even compatible with, what has been said before?” (Incidentally, both sorts of question are different from a third sort, such as “What possible reason or motive can he have had for making such a confession?” And, *pace* Socrates [see *Phaedo* 98B7-99D3], answers to questions of this third sort are not necessarily rival answers to questions of the first, physiological, sort. A great deal of misguided popular debunking, which often involves throwing out babies with precious little accompanying bath water, depends on confounding these

of the former with some forced and misguided ideas about the latter (12, pp. 13–14). But it is strange that Cohen, concluding “it is an error to assimilate purposive explanations to ‘ordinary causal’ ones,” should find it necessary to add a footnote dissociating himself from this, surely equivalent, thesis (3, p. 267).

three sorts of question.) Any account of motives and purposes in exclusively physicalist terms must neglect this vital aspect of the linguistic capacities and performances which are essential to them.

2. The scope of psychoanalysis could perhaps be defined—with no more than the amount of distortion customary in such definitions—as encompassing motives, purposes, desires, wishes, and intentions.

a. This sets the elucidation of these notions as the fundamental task in the philosophy of psychoanalysis. It involves studying the logic of both the pre-Freudian and the extended uses of the terms concerned, and comparing those of each pair, just as a fundamental, but excessively elementary, task of the philosophy of physics is to elucidate the ordinary and the physical use of terms such as “work”; and to compare the two.

The job to be done here is not at all elementary, as can be seen by considering what heavy weather was made in the *Analysis* discussion even over the pre-Freudian uses. Toulmin started with a small schema of sentence types but straightway committed two howlers in explaining them. First, “if I call out ‘I want you to come here’ it makes no sense for you to ask ‘How do you know?’ or ‘Are you sure?’ . . .” But it makes perfectly good sense to ask “Are you sure?” Second, “Over S 2 [the example given is ‘He is in pain’] it makes sense to talk of ‘evidence’ and of ‘mistakes’; but what the person himself says constitutes conclusive evidence” (33, pp. 25, 26). But it does not; for he may be lying.

Furthermore, it is a job which is bound to have some repercussions on analytic theory. For instance, what distinction in the unconscious field could really parallel the distinction, at the conscious level, between a desire adopted as a motive and a desire felt but not allowed to determine any action?

b. The same definition suggests that we might find illuminating comparisons by looking toward other disciplines concerned with men and their motives, particularly perhaps to history, as I have tried to suggest by frequent references to Gardiner’s study, *The Nature of Historical Explanation*. Just one example. To understand a piece of history, a battle or some negotiations, it is essential to understand what the participants believed the situation to be; for it is in accordance with these beliefs that they shaped their plans, adopted attitudes, and, at a less deliberate level, became mollified or resentful. But the historian needs also to master what the situation actually was—possibly a very

different matter indeed. Perhaps this is an analogy which, developed, might be of some help in elucidating the desperately involved problem of the relations between what the patient says, and presumably, usually, believes, about past influences and experiences (or, for that matter, about present ones outside the analytic hour) and what he actually did experience and what in fact did influence him. ‘Psychical reality’ is all very well when we want to understand the present, conscious and unconscious, motivation of behavior. But a knowledge of this can be at best suggestive when what we want is to find what sorts, if any, of adult traits are causally related with what sorts of toilet training.

c. To say that psychoanalysis deals with these things, that these are its fundamental notions, that it tries in the first instance to provide explanations in terms of them, and that they are not logically reducible to physiological or any other sort of physicalist terms, is not to deny either the possibility or the need to push beyond explanations in terms of conscious and unconscious motives and so forth. Once we reach the limit of explanation of this sort, in these terms, we can and should go on to ask why, in another sense of “why,” people have the basic desires which they do have and why these have in different people different relative strengths. The answer will presumably have to be physiological, telling us what are the physiological preconditions and mechanics of desire and its satisfaction, and what are the genetic determinants of physiological difference; and at this level and after, nothing more will be said about purposes, except by theologians. Freud himself, having been reared in the tough-minded epiphenomenalism of a medical school, always expected that “all our provisional ideas in psychology will some day be based on an organic substructure” (17, Vol. IV, p. 36). Yet his own effort to push beyond particular desires and to try to explain their origin and relative strengths was not physiological but introduced a ‘hypothetical construct,’ the protean libido (17, Vol. I, Chap. V.) with its baffling combination of electrical (17, Vol. IV, p. 75) and hydraulic (25, pp. 105–6) characteristics with those of a horde—a construct which will probably “have to remain only a metaphor” because of the apparent impossibility of connecting it with anything physiological (25, p. 106).

IV

To repeat, my main thesis has been that the kernel of Freud’s discovery was this: If you are prepared so to extend such notions as

motive, intention, purpose, wish, and desire that it becomes proper to speak of motives and so forth which are not known to, and the behavior resulting from which is not under the immediate control of, the person who harbors them, then you can interpret (and even guide) far more of human behavior in terms of concepts of this sort than any sophisticated adult had previously realized. I drew attention especially to the second sort of change involved in this conceptual innovation, which has perhaps been understressed. Among the many implications which I suggested were carried by this thesis were these: that the fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis are distinctively human because they can only be applied to creatures possessed of our unique capacity to employ a developed language; that these are precisely the notions which rational agents employ to give account of their own conduct and that of other rational agents *qua* rational agents; that their place in psychoanalysis necessarily makes this a peculiarly rational enterprise, though in a sense which makes this assertion quite compatible with a claim that the methods of analysts are unscientific and their conclusions ill-founded; that it would be a mistake to attempt a logical reduction of these notions to physicalistic terms; that the elucidation of these notions in their pre-Freudian and Freudian senses and a study of their differences and interrelations constitute a prime task of the philosophy of psychoanalysis; that comparisons between psychoanalysis and other disciplines dealing with men and their motives—history for example—might help to illuminate some of the dark places of the former; and that nothing we have urged, not even our anti-reductionist thesis, commits us to saying that these notions must be taken as explanatory ultimates. Finally, it must be emphasized that I have not been concerned here either with the truth of analytic theories or with the quality of the evidence deployed in their support.

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