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Against Wittgenstein's Reading of Freudian Psychoanalytic Methodology

Abstract

This paper is intended to examine the coherence and efficacy of Wittgenstein's notorious dismissal of Freud's psychoanalytic theory. It will examine what Wittgenstein explicitly wrote (and said) about the psychoanalytic method, as well as what he might have written if he had read Freud more carefully and utilized his own most relevant notions from the middle and later periods of his work. It will propose that Wittgenstein's critique of Freud lags behind his own developing views of hypotheses, evidence, the making of significant connections, and obedience to rules in language games. The author concludes that Wittgenstein's critique of Freud is more interesting for its deficiencies than its ability to force improvements in psychoanalysis.

Key Words

Psychoanalytic Method, Hypothesis, Evidence, Obeying Rules, Significant Connections.

Wittgenstein'in Freudcu Psikoanalitik Metodolojiyi Okumasına İtiraz

Özet

Bu makalede, Wittgenstein'in Freud'un psikoanalitik teorisini açıkça reddedişinin tutarlılığı ve etkinliği ele alınacaktır. Burada, Wittgenstein'in psikoanalitik yöntem hakkında yazdıkları (ve söyledikleri) incelenecektir. Bunun yanı sıra eğer Wittgenstein, Freud'un yazdıklarını daha dikkatli bir şekilde okumuş ve kendisinin daha ileriki dönemlerdeki çalışmalarında kullandığı bazı ilintili kavramları kullanmış olsaydı, neler yazmış olabileceği ile ilgili açıklamalarda da bulunulacaktır. Wittgenstein'in Freud eleştirisi, hipotez, kanıt, belirgin bağlantıların oluşturulması ve dil oyunlarındaki kurallara itaat konularında geliştirmekte olduğu görüşlerinin gerisinde kalmıştır. Kanımızca, sözkonusu eleştirinin en ilgi çekici tarafı, psikoanalitik teoriyi geliştirmeye yönelik katkısından ziyade yetersizliğinden kaynaklanmaktadır.

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Psikoanalitik Yöntem, Hipotez, Kanıt, Yasaklanmış Kurallar, Belirli Bağlantılar.

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It is my task in this paper to explore Wittgenstein's approach to Freud in a rather novel way. First, it is my aim to explore the central point of engagement between them: the scientific status of psychoanalysis, or more precisely, psychoanalysis's relation with philosophical prescriptions of scientific methodology.

Second, it is my intention to do so in terms of a 'thin' and a 'thick' approach. By a 'thin' critical account I mean nothing other than what Wittgenstein said and wrote about Freud in his well-known 'conversations', which can be easily summarized (LC, also Monk 437). Wittgenstein observes that in *The Interpretation of Dreams* it can be seen that psychoanalysis has no scientific viability because its hypotheses lack 'empirical grounding' or 'evidence'. Yet, in its effort to interpret the psychic significance of dreams, it offers a 'powerful mythology' that we may be inclined or disinclined to accept. Frequently, Freud makes the mistake of asserting that either he is completely right or completely wrong in his theoretical orientation. But, Wittgenstein continues, there are other ways to interpret dreams that reveal their psychic significance. For example, some dreams are overtly sexual, in which case their meanings are obvious; on other occasions, dreams exhibit fears that have nothing to do with wish-fulfillment. And the fact that some of the wishes that dreams fulfill are 'camouflaged' suggests that any wish fulfilled by a dream is not the one the dream is unconsciously 'intended' to fulfill. Altogether more generally, this 'powerful mythology' is dangerous because, if we read Freud as Freud himself seems to intend, then this single-minded effort to solve the riddle of unconscious drives can contaminate our intellectual judgment by shaping the language by which it is expressed. Ultimately, the sort of thing Freud is doing is respectable: to provide a means of therapy by addressing how language informs our intellectual judgment and, in multifarious fashion, conditions the manner in which our lives are lived. Freudian therapy, however, is wrong in all the important particulars: it repeats and reinforces errors of judgment by giving a pseudo-scientific credibility to what is already dangerous enough to intellectual judgment and ethical life by merely being a 'powerful mythology'.

Now, Wittgenstein's remarks reveal very little familiarity with the Freudian corpus beyond *The Interpretation of Dreams*. And even that, it must be said, suggests that Wittgenstein merely dipped casually into the book, without conceiving of its significant role and anomalous position in the history of psychoanalysis.

The 'thick' account of Freud in Wittgenstein's work, I propose, would explore those claims that Wittgenstein might have made about Freud's work if, first, he had a more expansive view of the Freudian corpus and, second, he had utilized many of his own contemporary philosophical perspectives in examining it.

In this light, what follows represents an effort to achieve two goals. First, I intend to demonstrate that Wittgenstein was mistaken about what Freud actually wrote and misleading about the aims of psychoanalysis. Second, I hope to show that if we ignore Wittgenstein's explicit comments about Freud and instead interpret Freud through the lens of Wittgenstein's 'later' work we have significant reason to believe that, on the one hand, Freud was actually complying with many of Wittgenstein's philosophical criteria and, on the other, disclosing this also reveals that Freud and Wittgenstein share the desire to explore connections between linguistic and psychic phenomena in a manner that is self-consciously removed from mere scientific requirements.

The Conversations

These conversations are perplexing in two ways.

First, the question of what precisely Wittgenstein believed about Freud is a persistent and timely one. Wittgensteinians tend to emphasize their master's excoriating criticisms of Freudian methodology, underscoring the notion of its lack of scientific credibility; they tend not to analyze the other, equally critical but considerably less dismissive aspect of Wittgenstein's approach. It is well known that Wittgenstein referred to himself as a 'disciple of Freud', who remained impressed by the 'enormous field of psychiatric facts which he arranges', as he declared in a lecture transcribed by G.E. Moore (PO 107). Indeed, Wittgenstein even thought of becoming a psychiatrist because he enjoyed 'inventing' similes in precisely the Freudian manner (Monk 357). Freud, he might have thought, was at least concerned with the philosophers' ignorance of their own metaphysical presuppositions and overweening arrogation of rationality, fuelled by unconscious commitments philosophy itself cannot admit before the tribunal of reason. In fact, Wittgenstein wrote to Norman Malcolm in a rarely cited letter of 1945 (just 2-3 years after the dismissal in the conversations) that Freud's thinking is 'fishy', deceitfully charming, as well as 'dangerous and foul'. Yet, he writes 'all of this, of course, doesn't detract from Freud's extraordinary scientific achievement' (LW 44-5). But precisely what is this extraordinary scientific achievement, if most everywhere else this self-professed 'disciple' denies that it has any scientific credibility at all?

My own suggestion is that it may have something to do with the somewhat rubbery notion of psychology as a '*Wissenschaft*', which encompasses considerably more than the narrow view of science as 'explanations', experiments and such like. We might think of Freud and Wittgenstein alike as being *Wissenschaftler* in the same way that, say, Goethe was, though this usage will surely baffle the English-speaker for whom none of these Germanic thinkers are straightforwardly scientific. Another kind of *Wissenschaftlich* orientation, and one that Wittgenstein shares with Freud, is that it concerns *Begriffsbildung* (concept formation) and *Übersichten* (significant connections, or more generally, surveys or outlines of relations of meaning). In fact, it is one of the intentions of this paper to locate both the Freudian and Wittgensteinian critiques of psychological interpretation in the dangerous middle ground between *Begriffsbildung* and *Begriffsverwirrung* (conceptual confusion). This middle ground enables Wittgenstein to survey the *übersichtlichen Darstellung* (perspicuous representation) than enables us to see connections (PI 122) short of which philosophy falls and the *unwägbar Evidenz* (imponderable evidence) beyond which it aims (PI 194). And this is precisely the contested area in which Wittgenstein identifies and rejects the exclusive dichotomy of the 'anarchy' of psychological subjectivism and the inoperative rigidity of objectivism, as Stephen Gerrard has described (Gerrard 1996). I should add that Freud too has this area in mind when he surveys the effects of the *Trieb* on the *vorbewusste*, especially in respect of their acquiring propositional content whose origins are not yet accessible to the secondary processes of consciousness.

Second, as we shall soon consider, what Wittgenstein is recorded to have uttered in these conversations of 1942-3 is *anachronistic*. There is no trace here of the Wittgenstein of the 'later' period: of rule-following, the private language argument, and meaning, usage and context. Instead, we find the Wittgenstein of as much as twelve

years earlier speaking here, the post-Tractarian Wittgenstein. Curiously, what he is thought to have said in 1942-3 is precisely what he rejected both in the 'phenomenalist' period of 1929-30 and then again in the *Blue and Brown Books* period of 1932-5. So, why is he utilizing theoretical perspectives that he has long since abandoned as insufficient for his purposes? It is merely a matter of speculation, but perhaps Wittgenstein's thoughts of this time about, for example, rule-following, were embryonic, too underdeveloped to enable him to update his view of Freud. Or perhaps he had formed a view of Freud in his youth, possible as a result of the discussions of the Freudian approach to dreams he had with his sister, a patient of Freud's. Thus, it is my task not only to note the shortcomings of Wittgenstein's stated views (the 'thin' critical view), but to make suggestions about what he might have said if he had used his own conceptual orientation of the time.

Hypotheses in Psychoanalytic Methodology

Wittgenstein was by no means a champion of science as the model for psychology and philosophy. Although the *Tractatus* already suggests it, we find in the *Blue and Brown Books* and *Culture and Value* claims to the effect that only damage can be done when philosophers think scientifically about anything that comes under scrutiny. Philosophy should not base itself on scientific methods, which after all it is bound to misconstrue. Philosophy is as different from science, one might say, as propositions are from hypotheses, especially in respect of their criteria of usage. He would surely agree with Freud when the psychoanalyst writes that philosophy and science share certain methods, but that philosophy departs from science when it clings to the illusion of being able to present a coherent picture of the universe, a picture that fragments with each new scientific finding (FR 785). As we shall see, generally speaking Wittgenstein does not dismiss psychoanalysis as pseudo-science, but rather for its *claim* that it is scientific when its most interesting achievements are not narrowly scientific. One might even argue that, while it may appear that he is trying to protect the purity of science from a psychoanalytic contaminant, in fact he was more concerned with protecting psychoanalytic therapy from an association with science that is misleading about the aim of its informative method and operative technique.

The 'Thin' Account of Psychoanalysis as Science

For Wittgenstein's 'thin' account, Freudian psychoanalysis, like all psychology, is 'pseudoscience' because we cannot help but take physics as our ideal science involving the formulation of laws based on empirical observation, quantification and the tracking of causal processes. Psychoanalytic claims about feelings and motivations, he avers, cannot be subject to experimentation. And he takes Freud to task for implying that psychic activity cannot be produced by chance: that 'there must be a law', and various pseudo-explanations are offered on the way to discovering it, is sufficient evidence that psychoanalysis is a merely 'speculative' activity replete with attractive 'mythological' explanations. Yet, Wittgenstein concedes that there could be a 'scientific treatment' of psychic activity by simply forming a hypothesis, verifiable *or otherwise*.

My appraisal of this 'thin' critical account consists of two objections:

My first objection is that Freud rarely proposed that there are 'laws' that bear on psycho-causal activities. When he did so, it was in reference to traditional philosophical notions of conscious thought, which, analytically speaking, he understands as primary processes consisting of logical relations amongst ideas. Not even in the 'Project for a Scientific Psychology' or 'The Ego and the Id' does he say 'I have established that the Q_n principle or libidinal cathexis is a law that shows how the psyche functions causally'. Indeed, he doesn't even say, on my reading, that hypothetical activity is directed toward the establishment of such laws. Admittedly, he conjectures that there might be psychological laws, but he is merely interested in offering explanations of the invariant patterns he notices by means of hypothetical models.

Now, on the question of 'mythological explanations', one might claim that the Oedipus complex itself would be relevant here. Yet it would not be the complex itself that would be mythological, but a certain aspect of it mentioned in 'The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex' about the compatibility of the ontogeny of the individual's complex and the phylogeny of its inheritance. Being bad Lamarckianism, this notion of phylogenesis surfaces with embarrassing frequency in Freud's work, but nowhere is it obvious that (a) it is the foundation of psychoanalytic inquiry or (b) its establishment as a 'law' is the desired accomplishment of the enterprise. Of all concepts in Freud, the phylogenetic aspect of the Oedipus complex is, in Wittgensteinian terms, the most obviously mythological in nature because it involves something best explained in terms of the repetition of something happening before. Yet, again, nowhere does Freud assert that, without a phylogenetic basis, the Oedipus complex would collapse, and along with it everything else in the system.

In fact, in Freud's core papers of the nineteen-teens, namely 'Instincts and their Vicissitudes', 'The Unconscious', and 'Repression' in particular, he is at pains to demonstrate not only that he has a correct understanding of hypotheses, but that he utilizes them by conventional standards as well. As if answering the Wittgensteinian question, 'Well, just what is scientific about your hypothesis of the *Trieb* in the economic model ('mastering stimuli')?', Freud argues in 'Instincts and their Vicissitudes' against scientific foundationalism and positivism as follows. Scientific activity begins with descriptions of phenomena for the purpose of grouping, classifying and correlating them. The 'ideas' that enable the scientist to do so are derived from somewhere other than the observations of the phenomena themselves. Such abstract ideas remain 'indefinite': they acquire degrees of refinement as they enable the material to be worked over. Not having been derived from the material, they acquire meaning through a process of imposition and refinement. But such ideas, no matter how well 'tested', are nothing other than 'conventions', which, he insists, are not arbitrarily chosen but 'determined by their having significant relations to the empirical material', relations, he continues, that the scientist can sense even before having a definite understanding of them. The more rigidly defined such ideas are, the less viability they have, the less explanatory power and scope they can bring to bear in the long run. A precise or rigid hypothesis would prove to be untenable and lack the viability we expect of explanations (FR 563-564). And of course, Freud then launches into a dramatic

exploration of all the significant relations the meaningful convention of the *Trieb*-theory will reveal.

Another excellent example of this is to be found in the paper entitled 'Repression'. He writes that we 'have reason to assume' that there is a primal repression by which the 'psychical (ideational) representative' of the drive is 'denied entrance into consciousness'. Why? Because there is an observable secondary or proper repression by which 'mental derivatives of the repressed representative' show signs of being repressed themselves. In other words, significant relations are engendered by the hypothesis of 'primal repression' because, without it, one could not explore how specific 'associative connections' are made between the contents of repressed material (FR 570). He continues by noting that, although primal repression can assume only one form, the repression proper that hypothetically reveals it occurs in a 'highly individual' manner, moving from one psychic operation to another. 'Each single derivative of the repressed may have its own special vicissitude' (FR 571). Repression does not take place once, but, stemming from the primal repression itself resulting from, for example, early trauma or the phantasy thereof, occurs repeatedly and in multiple forms as a result of the demands of an 'expenditure of force' (FR 572). Since there is psychic evidence of many different forms of repression of associative content, it is fruitful to assume a 'background' repression that repressed the material in the first place. I would argue that this proved to be so in the 'Katarina', 'Dora' and 'Elizabeth von. R' case studies, in which the consequences of a traumatic moment were hypothesized to be primarily repressed and the consequences of a later auxiliary moment were repressed in such a variegated fashion as to provide significant connections with the primarily repressed material.

Take another example, this from the paper entitled 'The Unconscious', where there is no trace of the goal to establish the unchallengeable laws the psyche inexorably obeys. Freud goes to some length to justify the hypothetical nature of the perspective and to select 'characteristics' of unconscious activities. The hypothesis is fruitful because it enables the discovery of interesting connections within unconscious activity and between the topographical systems of the conscious and the unconscious. In justification of the hypothesis of the unconscious, Freud shows that it is both necessary and legitimate to formulate a hypothesis of this kind. It is necessary to do so because 'healthy' and 'sick' minds alike symptomatically reveal 'gaps' in what is psychical, such that not every psychic state so revealed is accessible to consciousness or can be said to issue from it. Besides, he argues against those who adopt the inexpedient *petitio principii* to the effect that all psychic activity is conscious; if this were so a great deal of conscious activity would be in a 'state of latency' most of the time. Although these gaps and latent states are inaccessible to consciousness, the benefits of exploring such significant relations justify going beyond the limits of empirical experience. Of course, we should be careful how we read Freud here. He writes: If it would 'turn out that the assumption of there being an unconscious enables us to construct a successful procedure by which we can exert an effective influence upon the course of conscious processes, this success will have given us incontrovertible proof of the existence of what we have assumed' (FR 574). But nowhere in this paper does Freud justify any reading of this statement as if it meant that such 'incontrovertible proof' had been found. Indeed, one might read this as a conditional: If the hypothesis were to lead to successful treatments

of pathology, then that would provide incontrovertible proof of the existence of the unconscious. But, being hypothetical, and its testing being an ongoing process, no such proof has yet been established. So, there have not yet been any successful treatments of pathology. Notice that the emphasis here is not on the manner in which successful treatments establish proof of the existence of unconscious mental activities, but that the hypothesis is only as viable as its meaningful capacity to explore the conditions of psychic inquiry that might admit of successful treatments of pathology. Freud continues by arguing that the hypothesis of the unconscious is legitimate because it is coherent with our assumptions about the consciousness of others: if we merely infer other's unobservable consciousness from their external behavior, then why is it illegitimate to infer that 'all the acts and manifestations which I notice in myself and do not know how to link up with the rest of my mental life must be judged as if they belonged to someone else' (FR 575). Yet, Freud argues vigorously, these very same unaccountable mental states do not behave in the ways that the conscious activities we are aware of do, which is to say that they must have other characteristics than those we easily note in consciousness. These characteristics are: exemption from mutual contradiction, primary process, timelessness and replacement of external by psychical reality (FR 582). But again, these characteristics are never used as evidence to prove the existence of the unconscious; rather, they are the hypothetical characteristics that emerge when the significant relations between the hypothesis of the unconscious and the pathological symptoms of patients arise.

In fact, Freud is keen to admit when a specific hypothesis has insufficient evidence in its favor. In 'Mourning and Melancholia', Freud writes that there is a great need to understand the perplexing problem of the psychic origins and nature of melancholia. But he admits that his hypothesis that the 'predominance of the narcissistic object-choice' explains the 'disposition to fall ill of melancholia' is without sufficient support. He also notes that, however clinically successful such a hypothesis might prove to be, its 'economics', that is, the cathectic quantities of excitation and the effort to maintain an optimally low level of stimulus, remains mysterious (FR 587-9). These are not the words of someone bullishly defending a hypothesis at all costs.

In these papers, we have seen that Wittgenstein's remarks about Freud's methodology do not conform to the texts. Freud is well aware of how tenuous hypotheses are and strives to demonstrate their viability as explanatory devices. He does not insist that his hypotheses offer incontrovertible proof of anything but, on the one hand, merely spells out how this could be done and, on the other, is ready to admit when a hypothesis has insufficient grounding. In other words, Freud *agrees* with Wittgenstein that psychoanalysis does not comply with the rigorous methodological requirements set down by the philosophers, but then again, neither do the actual practices of the physicists either. Even the most assertive 'laws' of physics and psychology admit only of degrees of definition and refinement and, since the significant relations they assist in revealing have no proleptically prescribed constraints or ends, such laws are never actually established as incontrovertibly proved.

The 'Thick' Account of Psychoanalysis as a Science

Plagued by difficulties concerning the 'application of logic' so ambiguously treated in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein embarked on a 'phenomenalist' project in 1929-30, which is presented primarily in *WWW*. There, hypotheses differ from propositions by virtue of possessing another grammatical form. Propositions are descriptions of the given, or judgments about sense-data; hypotheses are laws enabling the construction of propositions (*WWW* 97, 101, 210). They include the experience of other people and the laws of nature, and they cannot be verified or falsified conclusively (*WWW* 100). Interestingly, he offered two metaphors for understanding the relation between propositions and hypotheses: on the one hand, he likens propositions to sectional cross-cuts through the connecting structure of a hypothesis (*WWW* 159), and on the other, compares it to an archeologist's imaginative construction of a temple from broken artifacts (*WWW* 210). In such a context, Wittgenstein notes that he understands all empirical evidence as 'symptoms', a curious choice of words indeed. Empirical evidence, he insists, is not a generality but a symptom of generality (*WWW* 107).

However, as Peter Hacker has pointed out, by 1932-3, Wittgenstein had dropped the hypothesis/symptom relation for one between a proposition and its criteria, a transition that figures in the *Blue and Brown Books* and the lectures of 1932-5. There he addresses the problem of the application of logic by exploring the manner in which one stipulates criteria in order to establish an evidential basis that would justify the application of a new concept. A criterion determines the meaning of a verbal expression for which it is the criterion (*AWL* 17-19). In making a claim to 'know' about psychic phenomena, the inductive ground would be a 'symptom' and the criteria would be the reason for judging this to be so in a certain way (*BB* 57).

Given what was presented above, I propose that it would have been possible for Wittgenstein to read Freudian hypotheses in terms of both the hypothesis/symptom and the proposition/criteria relations. On the one hand, the hypothesis of, say, repression or wish-fulfillment could enable the reading of verbally-articulated symptoms in terms of an imaginatively constructed model of the psyche, such as the dynamic model. Propositions about such symptoms are sectional cross-cuts of the pattern of psychic activity the model imaginatively constructs. Since the purpose of the model is to configure the unobservable, one could say that either consistency in the pattern provides some evidence of the verifiability of the hypothesis, or that what matters is not whether the hypothesis is verified, but whether it enables us to make interesting connections between symptoms and propositions.

More specifically, we might notice that Wittgenstein's 'thin' account of Freud's work commits a mistake that the Wittgenstein of the *Philosophical Investigations* is famous for pointing out. If one says that Freud's work lacks scientific credibility because it is not using a psychological rule correctly, then this implies that (a) the interpretation of how the rule is to be used is the correct one, (b) obeying the rule 'correctly' means that the rule itself 'logically compels' its usage in a specific way and (c) there is one and only one way to use the rule. If one imagines that Freud has a picture in his mind of how a rule for the usage of the concept of 'repression' is to be applied, then perhaps two criteria come into conflict here: the picture of how the rule is to be applied, and the imagined application of that rule. But Freud might as easily be

constructing a model rather than merely applying a rule by means of an imagined application. Although psychologists might customarily apply a rule in a certain way, it does not follow that the construction of this model is mistaken for not doing so. It might just as easily be an 'abnormal case' in which there is a unique kind of 'collision' between a picture and an application (PI 55-6: Remark 141). This collision, as I read it, draws attention to the fact that we cannot be certain whether any step in the application is the correct one, not even where we insist that such a step is correct when it accords with the psychological order, as if we knew what a step performed in obedience to following a rule was 'meant' to achieve. (PI 75: Remark 186). Nor can one insist that, when one came to believe that Freud was following a rule incorrectly, this was noticed because one imagined the traversal of all the steps that would follow in obedience to that rule on the correct usage of 'repression'. In other words, it is as if the steps were already in 'some unique way predetermined, anticipated', by the very form of the rule about how the concept of 'repression' should be used. Since one can leap ahead in one's imagination to know where following the rule about how the concept of 'repression' will lead, one assumes that any such following is compelled by the logic of the way that rule should be used to reach certain conclusions. One would then be implying that the very usage of the rule for 'repression' logically compels one to proceed in a predetermined way that dictates the correctness of that application (PI 76: Remark 188). But all of this means that any given predetermined usage of the concept of 'repression' has a criterion that determines how the concept is 'meant' to be used. To insist that we grasp that criterion 'in a flash' is to appeal to what Wittgenstein calls a 'superlative fact', a seductive 'super-expression' of which we have no model (PI 77: Remark 190-1). Hence, there are no pre-established psychological criteria for determining whether the rule followed in the application of the concept of repression is the correct one. There is no single way of determining how a rule on 'repression' is to be used, but it does not follow for Wittgenstein that any interpretation of how the rule should be followed will do. Merely interpreting the rule for 'repression' does not establish what steps and result the rule is 'meant' to establish. At this point, Wittgenstein presents his famous notion of the 'sign-post': to say that psychologists have been trained to read signposts in a certain way, such that they are justified in claiming that Freud misreads the signposts on how the concept of 'repression' should be used, merely tells us how they have come to read signposts as they do, 'not what this going-by-the-sign really consists in'. He concludes, then, that there is a 'regular use of signposts, a custom' for determining how psychological signposts are used. Obedience to a rule is merely customary, a non-interpretive way of obeying a rule and going against it in actual cases. Obeying a rule is a practice, such that merely thinking that one is obeying it is not to obey it, which is to say that 'thinking one was obeying a rule would be the same thing as obeying it' (PI 80-81: Remarks 198-202).

Wittgenstein helps us to identify a problem here. To insist that Freud is not using a rule on 'repression' correctly is merely to say that Freud does not follow customs for reading signposts. To suggest further that there is only one way of reading the signposts is merely to maintain that there is a customary practice of doing so. There might be other ways of reading the signposts, I propose, such as to call the customary practices into account, or alternatively, that how psychologists think they are obeying rules is different from the way they actually obey them. If Freud merely claims to be obeying a

rule by reading a signpost correctly, it does not follow that he is obeying the rule correctly, since signpost reading is a customary and not a 'private' matter. But it does not follow from this that Freud cannot hypothesize the existence of other signposts, other possible readings of signposts, and thereby the possibility of other customary practices of using the rule on 'repression'. This would not imply that Freud was conceiving an impossibly private usage of the concept, but only that he was identifying another equally customary usage of the concept, another reading of the signpost, which psychology was obeying without customarily acknowledging this. Now, if there are no predetermined criteria for determining that Freud is using a rule on 'repression' incorrectly, only customary practices of usage, then there are no non-customary criteria for determining that he is using the concept of 'repression' correctly. Since both what Freud *writes* about repression and the manner in which he uses the concepts shift from language-game to language-game, there is no sense in which Freud is assuming that psychoanalysis is establishing criteria for the *one way* in which the rule on 'repression' should be used, nor that any psychoanalyst is logically compelled by the very rule to apply it in one and only one way. Freud can be seen, then, to be identifying customary practices within psychology that permit the exploration of the criteria for using the rule on repression. He is neither implying pre-established rules nor conceiving a private practice of applying them, but orientating himself conceptually by means of psychological signposts no psychologist is reading. Freudian thought is an 'abnormal case': it is the practice of drawing attention to a specific kind of 'collision' between how psychologists imagine a rule to be followed and how they actually follow the rule they imagine. Therefore, I think there is enough here to justify the composition of an interpretive formula: *Freud is drawing attention to the disjunction between the customary practices of psychology and the equally customary interpretations of these practices*. He is tracing the trajectory of what psychology is 'doing' in order to disclose the actual rules it customarily obeys, and in doing so, directs our attention at how what it understands itself to be doing is quite different from what it customarily does. He is driving a wedge between psychological interpretations and practices, and exploring the consequences of that widening gap.

Now, even more narrowly, Wittgenstein concludes the *Philosophical Investigations* with the observation that psychology is barren because no amount of experimentation can dispel its basic 'conceptual confusion': every method just passes by the problem of its conceptual incoherence (PI 232). Tracing this notion backwards, we might notice that he insists on the difficulty of establishing the correct concepts for any psychological orientation, because, after all, there is no reason to be interested in the allegedly 'natural-scientific' basis of psychological theory. But if one could imagine that the natural facts which allegedly underlie the formation of concepts should change, then one can easily see that other concepts could just as easily have formed and been mistaken as the absolutely correct ones (PI 239). The formation of hypotheses within the exercise of a hypothetical model would seem to resolve this problem: we can simply work through the experiment in such a way as to reveal how our concepts are formed. But even if we were to imagine a psychological experiment as taking place on the stage instead of in a laboratory, then we would realize that psychological experiments force us to make a presupposition of the truthfulness of the subject under scrutiny. Such a presupposition, however, seems to imply a doubt, but such a doubt may be entirely

lacking under such circumstances. Yet, as Wittgenstein points out, doubt has an end, precisely the end that is not implied when one makes the presupposition. So, one cannot dispel conceptual confusion simply by means of hypotheses, since these carry that conceptual confusion within them, a confusion that is mirrored in the very relationship between presuppositions about conceptual formation and the alleged natural facts that underlie psychological descriptions (PI 180). After all, Wittgenstein reminds us, in reference to Moore's famous paradox, even though believing x is the case and x 's being the case can be used similarly, the hypothesis that one believes x and the hypothesis that x is the case are not used similarly. In the end, the hypotheses about believing something about psychic states are similar to hypotheses about what psychic states are. And although they are used similarly, they say much more about the form of life of the person making the report than the psychic states reported on (PI 190). Even the supposition that one believes something presupposes the grammar of the ordinary usage of the word 'believe', and no-one who formulates a hypothesis can have access to this in such cases (PI 192). Wittgenstein notes elsewhere that, even in the case of forming a hypothesis about why one has the false recollection that a city is on the left of a path rather than its right, one has no reason for the assumption that it is on the right, and yet, one might still discern psychological causes for it. At this stage, Wittgenstein admits, 'I might try as it were psychoanalytically to discover the causes of my unfounded conviction' (PI 215).

So, Wittgenstein does see that there is a role for psychoanalytic inquiry, even in spite of its conceptual confusion. We might then read his 'thin' account in the conversations differently. The problem with Freudian thought is not merely that it lacks evidence to support its hypotheses. On the contrary, it is that, being obsessed with formulating hypothesis about psychic reality as a 'natural fact', it fails to notice just what sorts of interesting connections it makes between language and psychic phenomena. Perhaps what made Wittgenstein sit up straight when he first read Freud, and even declare himself to be a disciple, was that finally there was a thinker who was striving to work through the conceptual confusions of language themselves, stirring up interesting connections through the hypothesization of significant relations between psychic phenomena that are more revealing about how we utilize language, often mistakenly, when positing psychic reality as a body of hypothesized 'natural facts'. After all, in seeking justification for its claims about psychic reality in experimental models, psychoanalysis overlooked the fact that our confidence that such claims are justifiable is shown only by how we think and live (PI 106: Remark 325), not by some knowledge worked out inductively that certain psychic phenomena are 'natural facts'. In fact, Wittgenstein would recommend that psychoanalysis simply abandon the notions of hypothesis and explanation altogether, and strive merely to work through its conceptual confusions by means of alternative descriptions. The manner in which these descriptions are presented will reveal philosophical problems which are solved by 'looking into the workings of our language, and that in such a way as to make us recognize those workings: in despite of an urge to misunderstand them. The problems are solved, not by giving new information, but by arranging what have always known. Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language', he writes (PI 47: Remark 109). To be sure, psychoanalysis is a bewitchment

of the intelligence, but it is also an illustration of the ways our intelligence can be bewitched.

We might approach this from another perspective. Even Wittgenstein in the conversations falls prey to the conceptual assertion that, since Freud fails to verify his hypotheses, he failed to obey a rule. But what do we understand by 'a rule by which he should proceed'? Have philosophers established what these are? Is it 'the hypothesis that satisfactorily describes his use of words, which we observe; or the rule which he looks up when he uses signs; or the one which he gives us in reply if we ask him what his rule is?' But if observation does not bring this rule to light, and the question itself does not clarify what we mean by 'rule' or how one goes about following one, and if Freud is able to withdraw and alter a hypothesis without knowing what rule-following is, then it is not clear how we could establish the rule that Freud is not following. If Freud does not know the 'rule', and we cannot establish any knowledge about it, then there appears to be nothing left to the notion of any certainty about there being such rules that are not being obeyed (PI 380 Remark: 82). Hence, we need to look elsewhere for an understanding of what it means in psychoanalysis to follow a rule, but Wittgenstein is insistent that this would emancipate psychoanalysis from the burden of not being sufficiently scientific, for what is interesting about psychoanalysis is what it achieves without being narrowly scientific.

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