

## THE FACTS OF OBSERVATION IN PSYCHOANALYSIS\*

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### A. GENERAL REMARKS

The discussion as to whether psychoanalysis is a scientific method or an "amateurish vagary," has somewhat calmed down. Neither the elaborate and influential rejections nor the passionate and summary apologies carried the day. Now, neither do the friends agree how far psychoanalysis can be trusted, nor do the sceptics know where precisely the error begins. The present writer thinks that this uncertainty should be overcome. To this end he wishes to contribute this examination of some of those features of the psychoanalytic method, which most repel the outsider and which the analysts have least carefully considered.

Until only a few years ago a theory was accepted as scientific, if it presented its object in terms of atoms, cells, and brain-parts, between which physical forces carried on their trade. This criterion has recently become obsolete. The theories lost their splendor and their attraction; their terms have become rather a matter of taste and mood, barely tolerated in science. Today our concern is with the procedure of the investigation. To start off with the observation of facts, to draw from them predictions which are verifiable by other facts—that is the modest endeavor of the scientist today. From seeking to gain insight into Nature we have shifted the emphasis to agreeing with our fellow scientist on an intersubjective body of knowledge.

Measured by either of these yardsticks Freud's mind and aims are scientific. He belongs among the great inventors of theories. But he distrusts theories, even his own. He never attempts a consistent system; he is eager to observe things; his speculations, at times far reaching and amazing, are only for the purpose of handling his cases better, of discriminating more sharply, of prognosticating with more certainty. And he seems quite satisfied when they yield not "in-

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sight" but a first orientation from which action might be taken.

Nevertheless the psychoanalyst obviously deviates so greatly from the general and well founded methods of observing, that he is either a scientist (but in a ridiculously amateurish way); or he is something quite different—more like a preacher, a confessor, or an artist. Between these two evil categories it is hard for him to choose.

I propose to consider a third possibility. Let us not take "scientificity" as a fetish, as another eternal, unmovable absolutum. Let us speak about scientific methods of observation as we would speak about any other way of getting knowledge of things. The scientific methods are nothing more than every day techniques, specialized, refined, and made verifiable. Historically these every day technics are the origin of the scientific methods and logically their models. Might not the repelling aspects of psychoanalysis come from Freud's taking a model heretofore unused in science? Have we not here a young scientific method in the process of developing? That is the third possibility which I propose to consider. Of course amateurs and beginners are much alike, they are both clumsy and audacious.

#### B. CONVERSATION, THE MODEL OF PSYCHOANALYTIC TECHNIQS

The psychoanalyst gets his basic facts from the psychoanalytic treatment, a process of actively influencing the object observed. There is no other way of getting them. In saying he is "passive" the psychoanalyst differentiates his attitude from that of other psychotherapists. Certainly, compared to the psychologist in his laboratory the psychoanalyst is highly active. He does not watch an object which is independent of his observing.

From the beginning, this fact has given rise to objections. No sooner did Freud drop hypnosis as a means of curing, than it was said that all his findings were suggestions. This argument gradually became unfashionable, later to reappear in various forms. At one time telepathy was said to be responsible; or that acquaintance with psychoanalytic literature taught the patient what kind of material to produce. Lately even the startling discoveries of physics have been brought into the strife. Does not the psychoanalyst, like the physicist who changes the place of the electron by determining its speed, influence his object by observing it?

The psychoanalyst assures that such arguments are not valid. But

there is no doubt that he does do something new and has not yet made clear in what exactly the novelty consists. That arouses suspicion.

The psychoanalytic procedure is not based exclusively upon the familiar models of scientific observation. This latter originates—as is said—in the attitude of the hunter, who invisible and with tense immobility watches his game. I wonder whether the history of science could prove this romantic legend. In any case the psychoanalyst's model is the most banal event of every-day life. He simply conducts a conversation with the object of his observation. More exactly, Freud has introduced some elements of the ordinary conversation as a tool for scientific purposes, not instead of the acknowledged method of observation, but in addition to it.

This hint at the model of psychoanalytic procedure will certainly not lessen the suspicion, because in the minds of scientists is deeply rooted a well founded distrust of the reliability of the ordinary conversation as a source of knowledge. Conversing in every-day life we want contact, stimulation, gossip, pastime; we are anxious to give and to get the expression of feelings. It is not important whether or not we learn anything through conversation. Therefore everybody is easily convinced of the futility of the procedure, at least in science.

In addition, language is notorious throughout the ages as "this prating cheat" and each of us knows from his own experience how frequent and how strong is the temptation in talking to conceal one-half of the truth and to adorn the other. Our off-hand opinion on the value of conversation is biased by our weaknesses.

Nevertheless it is quite as safe to state the contrary: In every-day life we get an enormous amount of information and knowledge by this very unreliable means. When in meeting your friend you greeted him with "*How are you?*" you did not get a literal answer to your question, nor did you expect one. But you learn that he still likes you because he interrupts his walk for a few minutes to chat with you. Besides he told you a few stories about John and Tom. By speaking and listening you gather information, some of which could hardly be got in any other way. Indeed it would not be easy to get along without this valuable instrument.

The apparent contradiction is solved by the fact that conversation is the undifferentiated primitive tool of communication, capable of

development into either merely contact talk or fact finding procedure. When the information element in a conversation is so disagreeable that the emotional gratification of the contact talk is not sufficient compensation, we are inclined to doubt the content and to start questioning our interlocutor. We transform the give and take of the conversation into an inquiry. In the extreme case the rôle of one of the persons has shrunk to passively answering yes or no to questions selected and put by the other. This extremity conversation has long been used as a model in psychology for various purposes. The reason is clear why the inquiry may serve as a method of scientific observation. If we reduce the activity of the inquiring partner to the point where he functions like an apparatus presenting stimuli, the familiar situation of the hunter peeping out of his ambush is nearly restored.

Freud does not confine himself to the extremity case. He deals with conversation proper, and by this one step forward creates the problem which may be stated: Can we, without restricting the activity of either of the interlocutors, refine the procedure to such an extent and in such a direction as to make it useful for psychology.

### C. OBSTACLES TO COMMUNICATION AND THEIR REMOVAL

Studies in the psychology or the logic of conversation to which one might refer hardly exist. Without attempting to fill this lack I shall only touch upon the points of the topic which are closely connected with the foregoing question.

Starting in medias res, take a trivial event. A friend telephones and says he wants urgently to see you. He comes. The conversation starts vividly, but you feel that what he is talking about is not what he came to talk about. To your direct question he replies unconvincingly that there is no special reason for his calling on you. Thereupon the conversation becomes heavy. By chance you notice that the door of the room is open and automatically you close it. "*By the way,*" says your friend, "*would it be possible for you to lend me \$10.00? But please don't tell anybody.*"

What happened to your friend is simply that only when by closing the door you created an encouraging atmosphere did he feel sure of the complete confidentiality which he desired. The open door was an obstacle to the communication. By the interference of the obstacle a certain complex of his thoughts got set against the rest as being

not communicable at the time. We shall call such a material a secret. After the removal of the obstacle the secret will be communicable and can be, as we say—confessed.

In every-day life we discriminate between producing confessions, and influencing by suggestions. Suppose that you had not closed the door at the right time; but, bored by the sticky conversation, you proposed to your friend an inspection of some new prints you had got. He showed interest, and you rewarded: "*You heard that Jim had given me one of his latest prints and you just had to see it. Wasn't that what you really came for?*" He agreed that it was. You felt certain in a vague way that aesthetic curiosity was not the motive for his visit, but you let it go at that.

The two cases are in some respects similar. In both, the conversation at a certain point has been actively directed by one of the persons by whom the other has been influenced. In the first case the content finally communicated remained independent of the interference: The influence affected the readiness to confess the secret. In the other case the content of the communication itself was influenced, and the secret was kept dark. It will often be difficult, sometimes impossible, to decide whether your interlocutor is confessing his secret, or communicating something else. Nevertheless we do frequently discriminate confession from suggestion.

Thus, if one does not more than stress the fact that one of the persons is influencing the other, the description of a conversation is highly incomplete. Of course it is not the interlocutor but his readiness to confess, or the content of his communication, which is influenced. And which one it is, determines the fact-finding value of the conversation.

Generally the obstacles to communication are not external—like an open door. They are internal, as when distrust or shame obstructs the confession. Then the removal of the obstacle will not consist in changes of the environment, but in attempts to induce confidence or to dissipate shame. In every-day life various means are used for this purpose, many of which may be questionable. But if they release the secret undisguised and complete, we subsume them under the concept of "removal of obstacles," and discriminate them from suggestions. Sometimes by suggestions and even by hypnosis we get a communication of content which is not in the least "suggested." It is the language only which creates the paradox of this formulation;

because we may use the procedure of suggestion not to suggest certain contents, but to "suggest" the conditions necessary for the removal of distrust or shame.

#### D. SOLUTION OF RESISTANCE IN PSYCHOANALYSIS

The technique of removal of conversation obstacles is widely used by the psychoanalyst. For illustration I should like to use an example—too simple to be typical, although even simpler situations sometimes occur.

Telling the story of last evening's party, the patient mentioned a certain Mr. X. whom he knows to be a friend of the analyst. The report on the remarks of some of the people present was obviously incomplete and the patient resisted completing it. "*As you know,*" said the analyst, "*in psychoanalysis it is one's duty to say things which in ordinary life would be stamped as gossip.*" Thereupon the patient admitted that he had heard some unfriendly remarks about Mr. X. and that he felt uneasy in his rôle as gossip. He then repeated the insults against Mr. X., some of which were new to the analyst. This episode is very similar to the removal of obstacles in everyday conversation above discussed. Under the pressure of the fear of appearing a gossip, or of making the analyst cross, a part of the material had become "secret." In reassuring the patient, the analyst removed this obstacle and the confession was forthcoming.

In terms of psychoanalysis the psychoanalyst solved a resistance by an interpretation. The decisive remark, it is true, was not of the grammatical form of a classical interpretation, but it does have exactly its function. Although I do not contend that all the different meanings carried by the terms *resistance* and *interpretation* in psychoanalysis can be reduced to this scheme, it is worthwhile to give closer study to this one type of resistance solution even though it may not be the most frequent or the most interesting.

Somehow the analyst understood the whole situation of the patient and guessed the obstacle. The ways by which such an understanding is experienced belong to a psychology of psychoanalysts, a fascinating topic with which we are not now concerned.

From the point of view of logic, the procedure is composed of four phases: (a) The existence in the mind of the psychoanalyst of a "theory" of getting at the secrets by removing obstacles, internal or external. This theory does no more than articulate every-day

life experience. (*b*) Observations by the psychoanalyst of indications of a state of mind which he assumes to be due to an effort to keep secret a part of the material and which he diagnoses as "resistance." (*c*) A guess by the psychoanalyst at the obstacle to communication; i.e., the construction of a hypothesis as to the causes of resistance. In the example just given: The patient was afraid of being a gossip. (*d*) A conjecture as to the hidden content. In our case: The patient had heard some injurious remarks against Mr. X., whom he knows to be a friend of the analyst.

These four phases are closely but complexly connected, but the psychoanalyst very often conceives them as an entity, as a single intuition. The theory (*a*) motivates the action of the analyst psychologically, but it is obviously not an essential logical part of the sequence, since it could be replaced by any other motive, even that of proving the fallacy of psychoanalytic theories. But the diagnosis (*b*) is indispensable. If the analyst fails to note the resistance, he misses completely the opportunity of getting a confession. Even should the patient spontaneously reveal the content which he at first had tried to hide, the analyst could not register the story as a "confession." The diagnosis leaves the analyst helpless unless he finds a clue to the obstacle. As soon as a hypothesis (*c*) concerning it, is at hand, he is able to act. The hypothesis is as necessary as the diagnosis. But he does not need any idea of the secret content (*d*) for acting in the direction for removing the obstacle. So the phase (*d*) is not essential. The hypothesis concerning the obstacle (*c*) is independent of the conjecture as to the secret (*d*). This is a highly important fact, which is generally overlooked. In questioning the value of the psychoanalytic method the arguments are frequently based upon the incorrect assumption that the psychoanalyst's interpretations aim exclusively at the secret. Even an extremely clear and plausible conjecture as to the hidden content is not instrumental by itself. Without understanding the obstacle the analyst can do no more than say: "*You are hiding this or this.*" Even if this succeeds he is not using the technic outlined. (Except in the case where the "resistance" breaks down because the analyst knows the secret anyhow.)

Thus the two essential phases are the diagnosis and the hypothesis. Our example, like all the more typical cases, seems, on the contrary, to indicate that the obstacle hypothesis is essentially linked

with the content conjecture. In fact, the analyst, taking into account the whole situation, felt in the air something injurious to Mr. X. This gave form to his guess about the obstacle. But the exact content of the secret had been neither known nor guessed. As usually happens, it came as news to the analyst. Insofar as the content and the obstacle are complementary, knowing one, makes it easier to guess the other. But the obstacle hypothesis—and it alone—(from wherever it has been derived and whatever may have suggested it) does the trick.

#### E. THE VERIFICATION OF THE CONFESSION

Let us summarize briefly: The analyst uses the banal technique of removing communication obstacles. By saying the right things at the right time he creates the conditions under which the patient is likely to confess secrets. These communications are the facts to be observed, and the analyst gets them without illegitimately "influencing" them. I hope that by the use of these terms, the feature of the psychoanalytic procedure which before was strange, will become no longer repelling, but fairly familiar to the scientifically minded reader. Efforts to refine the method will no longer seem absurd, though many and serious doubts may accompany them.

The most complex of the remaining questions concerns the "verification." How does the psychoanalyst make sure that the communication presented is the expected confession?

In discussions about psychoanalysis this relatively simple question has been much confused. Firstly it was confused with the truth of the confessed content. In this article we are clearly not concerned with the verification of the propositions which may be contained in a confession. It is of no concern to us for instance, whether Mr. X. is not trustworthy in business matters, as, according to the patient's report, he was said to be. Secondly it is less obvious but nevertheless the case that we do not care—in this connection—whether or not the patient told the "truth"—for instance whether he actually heard the remark at the party or sometime earlier; whether he heard a few words only and made up the rest of the story, or invented the gossip completely. A lie can be a confession.

These distinctions hold in every-day life, too. Listening to your friend above you felt that his request for money was the confession



of the secret which he had concealed. You did not consider whether he really needed money and wanted exactly \$10.00, and whether the story he told you concerning his lack of funds was true or not. You evaluated the communication as genuine confession without verifying its content.

All we want to know therefore is how the analyst settles his doubts as to whether the patient has told precisely and completely that story which for some time he had withheld.

In practice the analyst frequently obtains certainty by questioning the patient. But fortunately he does not depend upon this. The answers are accepted or rejected in accordance with the absence or presence of indications of a secret, resistance, etc. Thus obviously the content of the answer does not "verify" anything, but is subject to the diagnosis and subsequently to the whole procedure analyzed above. Therefore we must not consider the questioning as in any way a checking procedure.

Confessions have their peculiarities. In communicating a secret our behavior is different from the usual—we lower our voice, we use gestures, we experience and express emotion. Everyone is acquainted with these physiognomic patterns characteristic of the confession; every psychoanalyst is expert in this field, but so far as I know, no study of this complex of facts has ever been published.

I do not need to go into the matter of the physiognomy of the confession, because it is not the sole nor the complete means of recognizing the confession. You accepted your friend's "touch" as the confession not merely because of the physiognomy which he betrayed in uttering it. You felt that his desire to get money was a plausible motive for his call and explained some of the circumstances attending it. You felt further that after confessing, your friend resumed his natural way of talking—that the conversation flowed while before it had stuck. Thus in addition to the physiognomic proper and instead of it, the confession in every-day life is characterized by certain relations with the whole actual situation, with the usual behavior of the person, with the attitude he showed after the confession, and with his personality. It is a highly complex but definite pattern, the characteristics of which have as yet not been analyzed.

In spite of this lack of definition, the psychoanalyst, like anyone else, simply perceives a given communication as confession. Of

course there are cases where this naïve perception does not carry conviction. Then the need for clear criteria becomes urgent.

This is true when several confessions occur during the interview and create a doubt as to which of them is the right one, is the expected one. In this case the psychoanalyst is likely to follow the rule which Freud has formulated. He enumerates indications of resistance by which this state of mind may be recognized. After having made the right confession the indications of resistance vanish and the patient resumes his usual speaking behavior. It is this subsequent event which, according to Freud, is the essential criterion of the right confession. In formulating this criterion Freud was not aware that he was defining the structure confession correlative to the secret (or resistance). Nor has the psychoanalytic literature—as far as I know—elaborated upon this hint of Freud.

We have three different phases: The usual behavior (*u*), the state of hiding a secret, of resistance (*s*), the confession (*c*). A case of resistance—solution by removal of communication obstacles comprises all three and in addition the interference of the psychoanalyst (*i*). These phases have a characteristic succession: *u-s-i-c-u*. By the experience of every-day conversation we are familiar with this succession. So much so that each of the phases seems to be recognizable independently of the other, while closer consideration reveals that the secret and the confession are defined correlative to each other and segregated from the usual behavior as their common background.

Thus the differentiation between confession and non-confession, between the right confession and all the others, is made in exactly the same way as we decide whether a figure is a triangle or a circle. We see it; and should we have any doubt, then we remember the definitions of triangle and circle and make sure of the presence or absence of the defining signs. Only, contrary to the triangle, the analysis of the pattern *u-s-c-u* is a matter for future research.

Thus, very simply, the question above is answered. Considering confessions as observation facts, we need not worry about their verification. Observation facts are never verified or disproved—as the modern logicians of science have convincingly demonstrated. Contrary to an earlier belief observation facts are subject only to the quite different requirement of intersubjectivity.

This answer may seem to be much too simple. I therefore should like to defend it by mentioning two points, which commonly are con-

founded with the question of verification. (a) In addition to the two confusions mentioned above, frequently the question of recognizing the "right" confession is mixed up with the verification of the interpretation. In this connection the analysts nearly always use the pragmatic criterion. They contend that the interpretation is correct if it removes the obstacle. This is a rather shaky argument. It only gives non-psychoanalysts the impression that our work is founded upon a vicious circle. The verification of the interpretation is a problem; but this question whether the interpretation is right or not must be distinguished from the problem now under discussion—is the confession the right one? (b) There is the every-day life occurrence of deception. You felt that your friend made a true confession in asking you for money. How do you know that he was not acting this scene for some ulterior purpose? If you don't suspect it, and if he acted superbly you certainly are at a loss. Someone acts superbly if he reproduces all the signs of usual behavior, of resistance and of the confession followed by the resumption of the usual behavior. He thereby proves that "confessions" are recognized by certain signs. If those are exactly imitated, the false and the genuine confessions are not to be discriminated.

The possibility of deception has been used as a strong argument against any attempt to introduce into psychology elements of conversation, especially confessions. The advocates usually try to find a protection against deception; but there is no such protection. In every-day life, on the other hand, there is usually a way of discerning the fraud, even a masterpiece. Very few persons are capable of giving a perfect imitation. None will be able to exercise this art under every physical and psychological condition. If you know that your visitor likes practical jokes and is a perfect actor you will be suspicious. This factor will enter into your evaluation of the whole situation on which depends the diagnosis—"confession," and you will try to learn whether a secret is being made of the fact that sometime before the call your visitor had decided to deceive you. If there is nothing to make you suspicious it is possible that you will discover something later. When that happens you will say that the confession was a good piece of acting.

Clearly then, in discriminating between perfect imitation and the real thing we do not refer to the pattern *u-s-c-u* but to facts which preceded it. We refer to the life history of the confessing person.

The same holds for a discrimination of a painting by a master from a perfect imitation of it. Since they are exactly alike we cannot tell them apart. In saying that one of them is a fake, we mean that their histories are different; one was painted in Siena 300 years ago and the other one was painted in Paris last year.

Sometimes you may have to diagnose a confession without enough information on the life history of the confessing person. Then there is danger that you may have to revise your previous statement. This statement as a recognition of the pattern *u-s-c-u*, was correct if the imitation was perfect. But in every-day life we are primarily interested in discriminating the real thing from the fake. And so we give the name of confession to a pattern when we feel that no matter how much time has passed, we will never have a reason for reversing our judgment. Meaning that the definition is not based upon the present pattern, but includes guesses about the past and the future.

The psychoanalyst is in an advantageous position; he does not deal with one single confession; he has an extended series of hour-long interviews; he gains increasing knowledge of the life history of the patient; he observes him confessing in various emotional and physical states. The risk of deception is not excluded though minimized.

In psychoanalysis we observe present patterns *u-s-c-u*. In the process of the psychoanalytic interview according to certain facts of the patient's life history we are able to subdivide them into the two groups—confession and perfect imitation. This complexity does not at all decrease the value of the conversation as a scientific method. It compels us either to formulate the conclusions we draw from the observation of the pattern in such a way that they hold for confession and for perfect imitation; or to find out whether there are not some certain hitherto unnoticed peculiarities distinguishing the two varieties in question.

#### F. THE REQUIREMENT OF INTERSUBJECTIVITY

It is very likely that many of my psychoanalytic colleagues will argue that the preceding discussion fails to consider the points of view of dynamics and of causality predominant in psychoanalysis.

The psychoanalysts it is true, do not conceive confessions and resistance as patterns. They have the idea that the resistance in question is created by the secret, that the confession is made possible

by the interpretation, and that the resuming of the habitual behavior is the effect of the confession. In psychoanalytic theory this idea is carefully formulated in dynamic and causal terms. Every psychoanalyst thinks, speaks, and writes in these terms. In fact I did just that in speaking of obstacles. But in the present article I do not deal with psychoanalytic theories and in the preceding chapter I did not consider the verification of them.

The well known psychoanalytic theories are based upon material observed during psychoanalytic interviews. Here we are dealing with this material, therefore we cannot presuppose the theories which originate from it. Observing repeated occurrences as communication obstacles and confessions, and studying closely the regularities of these occurrences, psychoanalysts learn to describe them in terms of dynamics. I am talking of the simple facts of observation which logically precede the dynamic theories; therefore I must eliminate the notion of causality. While I am not able to avoid words bearing dynamic meaning, I must at least isolate this connotation, and not use it for inferences.

This procedure, which may seem hair splitting to many psychoanalysts and psychiatrists, should help to solve some of the misunderstanding about psychoanalysis as a scientific method. In using some of the elements of conversation, psychoanalysis appears to most psychologists to be exposed to specific mistakes; and its theories suspect, because not to be tested by the usual scientific methods. Before one can discuss the testing of a theory one needs to know what should be considered as fundamental facts of observation, and what as theory—making causal statements about the occurrence of these facts. I tried to show that the patterns called resistance and confession, are of the groups of observation facts we deal with in psychoanalysis.

Knowing what the simple facts of observation in psychoanalysis are—or at least one important category of them—we should discuss how far the confession pattern meets the requirement of any scientific fact—i.e., of being intersubjectively accessible.

“The events occurring during the psychoanalytic interview cannot be repeated, therefore the observations made by the psychoanalyst are not subject to control by other psychologists.” That is the most usual way of stating one of the major objections against psychoanalysis as a scientific method.

Evidently it is technically possible to record any psychoanalytic interview by sound cinematography and the interview would then be available to control. Psychoanalysts have good reasons not to use these means of intersubjectivity. But should their reputation as scientists be at stake they could persuade themselves to be photographed and could surely find clients who would lend themselves for such "screen-tests."

But that is not really the question under discussion. As is well known, neither do the facts in physics repeat. Nevertheless physics has not done so badly. What really is required if the principle of intersubjectivity is to be warranted amounts to the following: We need a constructive prescription—what to do with certain things to get a certain experience. Put your finger first into this vessel and then into that and you will feel that the liquid contained in the second is warmer. Look at the thermometers connected with the two vessels and you see that on the second one the mercury is higher. (Of course, supposing you know what is understood in this country by the words warmer, higher.) The observer doing as prescribed either sees and feels as predicted or he does not. If he says "yes," that's all that there is to it. Things described in this way, are intersubjectively described, because a relevant group of people can reach an agreement as to whether or not the predicted effect takes place.

The facts of observation in psychoanalysis are describable in this way also. You use the rules of psychoanalytic method and your patient will show resistance, will confess, etc. If the patterns named resistance, confession, etc., are well enough defined to be recognizable the requirements are met.

Yet there remains one difference from the usual prescriptions in science. The vessels to be tested in physics are usually present and are available at practically any time. In psychoanalysis it may take some undetermined time before a resistance or a confession appears. The detective knowing that the criminal for whom he is looking and whose description he has will be on the corner of First Avenue and B Street at ten o'clock on Monday would be in the lucky position of the physicist. Had he got the assignment to sit on his front porch and to watch the people coming and going, waiting for the well described person to show up, he would be in the position of the analyst, exposed to some impatience, but possessing a formula not less reliable than that of the physicist. At least the psycho-

analyst knows by experience that his criminal lives in the town and never misses taking his constitutional. The biologist who collects plants may not know as much about his object, but in taxonomy he is sure to use intersubjective methods.

The facts which the physicist or the psychologist in the laboratory faces are simpler than the confession pattern. But after we have eliminated everything other than fact, the pattern *u-s-c-u* which remains, is different from the facts of physicists only in being more complex.

### G. IMPROVING THE METHOD

The answer to the question how to improve conversation so as to make it a reliable method of research follows almost automatically from the preceding study. But I should like to make first a few remarks concerning the relation between psychology and psychoanalysis.

Psychologists think of this relation somewhat as follows: The facts, statements, and theories of psychoanalysis are subject to proof by the usual methods of psychology—at least of one of the psychologies. That part of psychoanalysis which can stand such a test should be integrated into psychology proper; the rest is simply not true and ought to be discarded once and forever.

Psychoanalysts on the other hand prefer to believe that psychoanalysis is a specific method and therefore not at all dependent upon results achieved by other schools. Rather these are subject to the psychoanalyst's judgment, whether or not their statements are true or at least deep enough.

I feel both parties oversimplify the thing. In using the technic of removal of obstacles to communication the psychoanalyst gets knowledge of facts which are not at all available to observation without that technic. The pattern of secret-confession does not occur if you do not actively produce it; the secrets confessed would have been permanently withheld from the psychologist had he not removed the obstacles to communication. Thus this technic is equivalent to the use of a new observation instrument. What we see through the microscope we cannot check by eyeglasses. The observation made by the technic in question cannot and need not be checked by other, so-called usual, methods. Insofar as psychoanalysis uses technics equivalent to new observation instruments it is not subject to the approved "other methods."

But psychoanalysis is not just a new observation instrument. By no means. Its goal is not to observe people, but to cure them. It uses a great variety of instruments, old and new, along with procedures which are not equivalent to instruments. What is valid for one of the instruments probably holds for some of them, but certainly not for the whole vast aggregate called psychoanalysis. Thus it is not a specific method beyond every examination by outsiders, it is not a dubious method, subject to verification by reliable psychologists. Both attitudes are too simple because they fail to evaluate correctly the complexity of psychoanalysis. An analysis of this complex is the necessary first step in the direction to a satisfactory answer.

In the preceding study we isolated logically the removal of obstacles. For the purpose of improving this instrument, it ought to be taken out from the setting of the psychoanalytic interview. We must use it in the laboratory of experimental psychology. By making the microscope an object of specialized investigation, by uncovering the physical laws of its structure and function, we refine and perfect it for application to histology. Similarly our pattern—secret, interpretation, confession—must become the object of research which is not interested in the confessions as observed facts but in the procedure itself as a means of producing facts.

The task is twofold: (*a*) to increase our knowledge concerning secrets and confessions, so as to make the definition of the pattern and of its parts increasingly more precise and subtle; (*b*) to discover the dynamics of the removal of obstacles. This point is highly important. As explained above the point of view of dynamics is outside the scope of the present article. But evidently, if we wish to improve the technique, we have to increase our knowledge as to how one recognizes obstacles and how one removes them effectively. Finding the laws of this removal is equivalent to establishing the optics of our instrument—to go on with the metaphor. The analyst, in removing actively the obstacles, is a part of the instrument. Contrary to the stimuli-presenting psychologist the analyst does not give interpretations automatically, according to a premeditated and predetermined scheme. Thus our instrument is an intelligent one, selecting out of a practically indefinite manifold the reaction adjusted to a specific situation. Of course, the study of such an instrument's structure and function is up to the psychologist.



These tasks can be accomplished by making conversation—or a characteristic part of it—the object of psychological research, whereas in psychoanalysis conversation is the means of research. In psychoanalysis the confessions somehow procured serve as the starting point for mainly historical investigations. In the required program the confessions produced are certainly not interesting data of a history. On the contrary, the investigation, aiming at dynamic laws, is “systematic,” in Kurt Lewin’s language. Theoretically such experiments are not impossible, though practically they will be difficult—and fascinating. The recent development of experimental psychology has shown that ingenuity has overcome obstacles to experimentation which formerly appeared to be unsurmountable. The work of Lewin and his pupils, which in many respects is related to the program which we are speaking of, is an example.

It is not my plan to sketch this program any further in detail. Regardless of the question of my competence, even the briefest concrete elaboration exceeds the space available here. Paradoxically a few lines only are needed for outlining the much more ambitious program of relating psychoanalysis in general to psychology. To close this paper with a positive statement I take this opportunity and summarize the initial phases necessary for this project:

The ground is laid by a logical analysis defining the observation facts of psychoanalysis. These will be divided into a number of classes according to the specific technics by which they are procured. Some of these technics will belong to the well known and well reputed methods of observation. Some of them are new: commonplace ways of knowing and handling men and their affairs used in psychoanalysis as means of research. These technics, as far as they are equivalent to new observation instruments, will be physically isolated from psychoanalysis and subjected to specific, appropriate study of their structure and function, in general by experimental psychology. Thus hallmarked and improved they can be freely used by psychology and psychoanalysis and will yield various applications to theory and practice.

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