

U N C O N S C I O U S

I N T E N T I O N S

by

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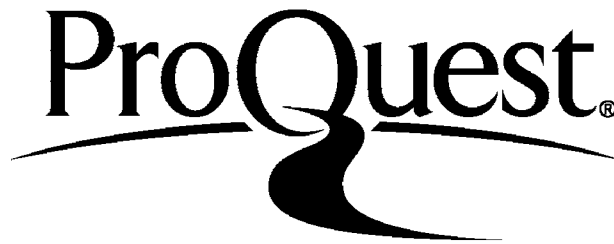
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A B S T R A C T

I should like to take this opportunity of thanking Mr. A. B. Feltz and Mr. Brian O'Shaughnessy for their assistance in the preparation of this thesis. This thesis consists mainly of an extended critical examination of three recent writings on the subject of unconscious intentions. This is followed, in the final chapter, by a shorter and more speculative attempt to show that there are no good reasons for supposing that there are such things as unconscious intentions. Chapter 1 can be treated as an expansion of this abstract.

Although I criticise their arguments and disagree with their conclusions, I take their work as a starting point and, without it, this thesis could not have been written.

My thanks are due to Miss Winifred K. [Name], of Cambridge, who typed my manuscript at short notice with great efficiency. Any errors which may remain in the text are entirely my responsibility.

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

I should like to take this opportunity of thanking Mr. A.B. Savile and Mr. Brian O'Shaughnessy for supervising me during my M.Phil. course. Mr. O'Shaughnessy's interest and experience in the philosophy of mind have contributed greatly to the choice of topic for this thesis and to any merits it may have.

I wish also to record my debt to Professors Donald F. Gustafson, D.W. Hamlyn and Frederick A. Siegler. Although I criticize their arguments and disagree with their conclusions, I take their work as my starting point and, without it, this thesis could not have been written.

Finally, my warmest thanks are due to Miss Winifred K. Allsworth, of Cambridge, who typed my manuscript at short notice and with great efficiency. Any errors which may remain in the text are entirely my responsibility.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 In the past, at least three writings have appeared in the philosophical journals, specifically on the subject of unconscious intentions. These are:

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 In the past decade, at least three writings have appeared in the philosophical journals, specifically on the subject of unconscious intentions. These are: "Unconscious Intentions" by Professor Frederick A. Siegler (Inquiry, 1967); "Unconscious Intentions" by Professor D.W. Hamlyn (Philosophy, 1971) and "On Unconscious Intentions" by Professor Donald F. Gustafson (Philosophy, 1973). It will be the foremost objective of this thesis to review these papers, at some length and (hopefully) quite thoroughly.

All three writers argue for the view that there are, or at least may be, such things as unconscious intentions (though it takes Siegler some time to arrive at this conclusion). We shall try to present good reasons for believing that all their arguments fail, and that consequently we ought not to think that there are such things as unconscious intentions. Also, in Chapter 6, we shall try to give some more general reasons for not believing in the existence of such things. For example, we shall argue (see 6.5 to 6.9) that there are no such things as intentions at all, and that, consequently, there could not be any unconscious intentions. If this argument is correct, it may be quite important, since it seems to make nonsense of the traditionally accepted connection between intentions and responsibility.

1.2 We shall also claim that, while there are no good reasons for believing that unconscious intentions exist, there may be a powerful but not very respectable motive for this belief. That is, people are commonly thought to be responsible for their intentions, hence, if someone does something which we dislike and we can persuade ourselves that he did it intentionally (even if he was not conscious of this), then we can hold him responsible for what he did and either simply justify our dislike of him or, possibly, "punish" him in some way. In this context, see 2.10, 3.7, 3.8, 4.2 and 4.4.

1.3 In the next chapter, we shall discuss the first part of Siegler's paper. There, Siegler is concerned with what Freud had to say about unconscious intentions. Siegler argues that Freud did not succeed in showing that there are unconscious intentions. We shall reply that Siegler fails to show that Freud was talking about unconscious intentions as opposed to unconscious wishes.

In Chapter 3, we shall review the second part of Siegler's paper. There, he attempts to show that the notion of an unconscious intention is incoherent. We shall argue that this attempt fails because it rests on the mistaken notion that when a man sincerely says "I intend to X" he cannot be wrong. Finally, we will quote two footnotes in which Siegler completely reverses his position, claiming to show how there might be unconscious intentions after all.

In Chapter 4, we shall consider Hamlyn's paper. Hamlyn is in no doubt that there are unconscious intentions, but we will argue that he is mistaken. His argument depends on unlikely examples and on the coherence of the notion of self-deception, both of which we shall criticise.

In Chapter 5, we will deal with Gustafson's paper. We shall see that Gustafson tries to show how there can be unconscious intentions by capitalizing on a possibility hinted at in one of Siegler's footnotes. However, we shall argue, this attempt fails since the phenomena Gustafson discusses appear not to be intentions at all.

In Chapter 6, we shall argue that there is no need to postulate the existence of any such discrete, inner, quantifiable over things. Our claim will be that all that is obviously true (in this area of human existence) is that people do intend, and that this fact can be analysed out, completely, in terms of the fact that people desire and believe. Consequently, the postulation of such things as intentions (conscious or unconscious) is superfluous. We will also suggest that the prejudice that intentions are things may be built into the structure of our language. In this context see 6.12.

1.4 The use of quotations marks in the literature on this kind of subject is very inconsistent, at least as between one writer and another. In this thesis the following conventions will be adopted. The use of single quotation

marks will be quite precise. It will indicate only that something is being asserted about the enclosed expression. On the other hand, double quotation marks will be used more loosely. They will be used for reported speech, and to indicate that judgement is in abeyance about the propriety of using the expression in question (for example, if no better expression seems to be available). Thus, for example, when we talk about "ghosts" in 6.10, this indicates that we suspect that 'ghosts' has no extension. The only deviations from these conventions will occur in passages quoted from other works.

References are given by the surname of the author of the work in question, as it appears in the bibliography. Where more than one work by the same author is listed, that being referred to is indicated by the date of publication.

But, in the last sentence of his abstract, Sieglar seems to be contradicting himself. If it is true that the notion of an unconscious intention is incoherent, there cannot be any unconscious intentions... just as there cannot be any square circles. Incoherent notions cannot be instantiated. Sieglar tells us this himself: "If, as I shall argue, the concept is not coherent, then Freud's evidence could not really count as evidence for the conclusion, since nothing could count as such evidence." (p25). The conclusion here

Chapter 2: Sieglar On Freud On Unconscious Intentions

2.1 At the beginning of his paper on unconscious intentions Sieglar presents the following abstract:

"In this paper I investigate the notion of an unconscious intention as it is discussed and defended in Freud's A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis. I am concerned with two issues: first, whether the evidence that Freud adduces supports his conclusion that there are unconscious intentions, and, second, whether the notion of an unconscious intention is coherent. I call into question some of Freud's arguments to support the notion, and I present a case for the incoherence of the notion. Finally, I suggest how one might begin to reconcile my argument for its incoherence with an argument for the existence of unconscious intentions." (Sieglar 1967/p251)

But, in the last sentence of his abstract, Sieglar seems to be contradicting himself. If it is true that the notion of an unconscious intention is incoherent, there cannot be any unconscious intentions... just as there cannot be any square circles. Incoherent notions cannot be instantiated. Sieglar tells us this himself: "If, as I shall argue, the concept is not coherent, then Freud's evidence could not really count as evidence for the conclusion, since nothing could count as such evidence." (p251) The conclusion here

is that unconscious intentions do exist. But if Freud's evidence could not count as evidence for the conclusion, given that the notion of an unconscious intention is incoherent, why should Siegler suppose that he can reconcile the supposed incoherence of the notion of an unconscious intention with an argument for the existence of unconscious intentions?

Siegler makes his attempt to reconcile the putative incoherence of the notion of an unconscious intention with an argument for the existence of unconscious intentions in a footnote. This footnote gives the impression of having been written later than the main body of his paper. In it, as we shall see later, he implicitly retracts his most polemical conclusion. That is, he withdraws from the position which holds that the notion of an unconscious intention is not coherent and hence cannot be instantiated. It has to be admitted that Siegler modifies his position in this way since, in this footnote, he presents what he takes to be a genuine example of an unconscious intention at work. We shall consider this example later, but, in the meantime, let us see how Siegler handles the first of the two main issues with which he says he is concerned.

2.2 Siegler's first major objective is to establish whether the evidence that Freud adduces really supports the conclusion that there are unconscious intentions. Siegler says, "I shall not dispute the actual facts he brings up; rather, I am concerned with the soundness of the arguments

by which he gets from the empirical data to the conclusion." (p251)

One of Freud's examples is as follows. He claims that the President of Parliament, who, at the opening session, said "I declare the session closed", betrays an intention. If it is allowed that the President made a mistake, Freud insists that this mistake "is surely not ambiguous. The intention of this slip is that he wants to close the session" (Freud/1956/pp44-5... I take quotations from Freud directly from Siegler since I have been unable to obtain the edition/translation which Siegler uses).

Siegler remarks at this point that whether the President wants to close the session is not at all the same question as whether he expresses an intention to close the session, and allows that "It may or may not be coherent to say 'He has an unconscious want'." (Siegler/p252) This seems to be correct. That is, there are many things which we can want to do without thereby intending to do. I could want to go to Spain for a holiday without having any intention of doing so. Whether one can intend to do something without (in some way) wanting to do it is another matter, which we shall consider in a later chapter. Another point which Siegler might have made, in relation to the case of the President's mistake, is that while it is perfectly possible to want to do something which cannot be done, it is not at all obvious that it is possible to intend to do something which cannot be done. I can want to walk to the moon, but can I intend to walk to the moon? We

shall consider this question at greater length, later. The point about it here is: if the President could not close Parliament (and it seems that this must have been so since, as he was just about to open it, it must already have been closed) then he could not intend to close it, given that it is not possible to intend to do that which cannot be done. And if the President could not, at any level of consciousness, intend to close the session, then, clearly, he could not have an unconscious intention to do so.

But, granted that Siegler is right to point out that wanting and intending are not the same (and that the notion of an unconscious want may well be coherent even if the notion of an unconscious intention is not), and even if he had argued that it would be conceptually impossible for the President to close the session, it would still be arguable that Siegler was not being quite fair to Freud.

Thus, Freud claims that it would beg the question to say that the President is the best judge of his intention, for "we agreed to consider the error by itself" (Freud/p45). Against this, Siegler complains that it is not fair to take the President at his word when he says "I declare the session closed", if we do not take him at his word when he says "I intended to say 'I declare the session open'" or "I did not intend either to say 'I declare the session closed' or in any way to close the session".

But this raises the question of the precise object of the unconscious intention which Freud imputes to the President. So far, Siegler has been talking as if the

object of the presumed unconscious intention could only be the closing of the session. And we have seen that it could be argued that there could not be an unconscious intention to close the session if the session cannot be closed. But now it appears that the President's unconscious intention might only be to say "I declare the session closed". In this case, it might be argued, we have two elements: an unconscious want (to close the session), and an unconscious intention (to say "I declare the session closed").

2.3 Rieff notes that Ernest Jones, one of Freud's most devoted followers, "reports that Freud 'was apt to be careless and imprecise in his use of terms, using, for instance, 'perception' as interchangeable with 'idea' and the like.' The admission is sweeping, for this is no matter (as Jones seems to think) of linguistic imprecision; it cuts off a vast area of psychological investigation." (Rieff/p18; Jones/p371)

What Rieff is thinking of here is that "by making "perception" interchangeable with "idea," Freud showed that he was interested only in the contents of mind, in intrapsychic rather than perceptual functions." (Rieff/p18) This furnishes us with another approach to Siegler's criticism of Freud. That is, Freud was concerned with the analysis of the contents of individual minds rather than with the analysis of concepts and language use. Hence, if Freud was apt to use 'perception' and 'idea' as interchangeable, it is quite likely that he was also apt to use

'want' and 'intention' as interchangeable. This view seems to be supported by a quotation from Freud which we have already given: (concerning the President's mistake) "The intention of this slip is that he wants to close the session." (Freud/p44)

It looks then as if Freud was not greatly concerned with the conceptual ramifications which beset notions such as that of an intention. For instance, it seems likely that Freud would not be much interested in whether or not it is logically possible for someone to intend to walk to the moon, or square the circle. He would, most probably, pay more attention to the contents of the mind of the putative intender. If this is correct, all that Freud need require for 'intention' to have application is that whatever is supposed to be the intention has or takes an object. But this requirement applies just as much to the use of 'want'.

If the argument in the last three paragraphs is to the point, it looks as if Siegler's criticism of Freud is largely misplaced. In other words, if Freud uses 'intention' and 'want' as interchangeable, then Siegler's present quarrel with Freud collapses. Because Siegler acknowledges that "It may or may not be coherent to say 'He has an unconscious want'." (Siegler/p252) All that remains for Siegler, in this case, is to bewail Freud's linguistic imprecision.

However, Freud's writings are voluminous and full of revisions and apparent contradictions. It is quite possible that Siegler could cull from them another argument to the

effect that Freud did not use 'intention' and 'want' as interchangeable. Let us now suppose that such an argument has been formulated, and return to Siegler's strongest criticism, so far, of the position he attributes to Freud.

2.4 We saw that Siegler held that it was not fair to take the President at his word when he says "I declare the session closed" if we do not take him at his word when he says "I intended to say 'I declare the session open'" or "I did not intend either to say 'I declare the session closed' or in any way to close the session".

But it is difficult to see what force there is in this complaint. First, it is just not true that we take the President at his word when he says "I declare the session closed". It would be difficult to know how we could take him at his word in this case, because it is not possible for him to close the session, since it is not yet open. What Freud does, in the present case, is to argue that the President's utterance is evidence of an unconscious intention or want. And we have seen that it could be argued that the President's utterance is evidence of both an unconscious intention (to say "I declare the session closed") and an unconscious want (to close the session). To claim that the President's utterance is evidence of all this is hardly to take him at his word.

Second, it is not wholly true that we do not take the President at his word when he says "I intended to say 'I declare the session open'" or "I did not intend either

to say 'I declare the session closed' or in any way to close the session". Freud would certainly allow that these protestations are true of the President's conscious intentions. The important question here is whether, in these protestations, the President would be telling the whole truth. To assert that he would be telling the whole truth would beg the question against the existence of unconscious intentions. On the other hand, it might be argued, to assert that he would not be telling the whole truth would be to beg the question for the existence of unconscious intentions. But the balance of evidence seems to be in favour of the view that the President would not be telling the whole truth. Because, on the view that he would be telling the whole truth, it remains a total mystery how and why the President did not execute his avowed intention. Normally, after all, we do execute our consciously avowed intentions unless we are interfered with, or unless subsequent events make us change our minds. But the President has not been interfered with. Nor does he confess to having changed his mind. Moreover, it would be difficult to argue that his utterance was a complete accident. What the President said was not nonsense. It was linguistically well-formed and seemed to be pregnant with some sort of meaning. These facts seem to be curiously inexplicable on the view that, in his retrospective protestations, the President is telling the whole truth about the intentions underlying his original utterance.

2.5 Let us now suppose that, in his retrospective protestations, the President is telling the truth but not the whole truth. This could be accounted for if it could be shown that more than one intention lay behind his original error. But Siegler is rather hostile to the view that more than one intention may have been involved. He quotes Freud as saying that errors in speech "are not accidents: they are serious mental acts; they have their meaning: they arise through the concurrence - perhaps better, the mutual interference - of two different intentions" (Freud/p48, quoted from Siegler/p252). Siegler holds that this is a conclusion which Freud jumps to "without warrant or argument". But we have seen that there are reasons for thinking that such errors in speech as the President's mistake are not accidents. Thus, if such errors were accidents, they might just as well take the form of linguistic nonsense. But what the President said was not linguistic nonsense, and this has to be explained. And, in any case, even if such errors as the President's were classified as accidents, we still have to explain how accidents take place. No event (at least in the world of middle-sized objects which human beings occupy) is totally accidental, in the sense of totally random and without cause. So, however we classify the President's mistake, it still has to be explained. And, in all his criticisms of Freud, Siegler offers no alternative explanation.

2.6 But the fact that the President's mistake requires explanation does not, by itself, justify Freud's supposed conclusion that there are such things as unconscious intentions. While lamenting the nature and paucity of Freud's arguments, Siegler says "He sometimes seems to suggest that his point about unconscious intentions needs no evidence at all." (Siegler/p253) To support this he quotes Freud as saying (again concerning the President's mistake) "It is evident...if we have the courage to let the slip speak for itself. The president who said the opposite of what he meant - it is clear that he wishes to open the session, but equally clear that he would also like to close it. That is so plain that it needs no interpretation." (Freud/p51)

But does this quotation from Freud provide any support for Siegler? Siegler's claim is that Freud sometimes seems to think that it is self-evident that there are such things as unconscious intentions. But there is no talk of intentions in the quotation from Freud. Freud suggests that it is clear that the President wishes to open the session, and that it is equally clear that he would also like to close it. This could only be construed as indicating that Freud takes the existence of unconscious intentions to be self-evident if it were also allowed that Freud uses 'intention' and 'want' as interchangeable (a possibility which we argued for in 2.3). But if Siegler allows that Freud uses 'intention' and 'want'

interchangeably, his criticism evaporates. This is because he has already acknowledged that he is not arguing against the existence of unconscious wants.

2.7 After saying that Freud sometimes talks as if the existence of unconscious intentions requires no demonstration, Siegler acknowledges that, in other cases, it is clear that Freud thinks there must be some supporting evidence. He quotes Freud as saying (concerning two examples other than that of the President's mistake) "One had to ask the speaker why he made the slip, what explanation he could give. Without that he might have passed it by without seeking to explain it. Being asked, however, he gave as his answer the first idea that occurred to him. And see now, this little intervention and the result of it constitute already a psychoanalysis, a prototype of every psychoanalytic investigation that we may undertake further." (Freud/pp51-2, quoted from Siegler/p253)

Siegler agrees that this passage is likely to appear more convincing, in so far as if the person who made the slip admits afterwards that he intended such-and-such by it... this might be thought to settle the question. Nevertheless, Siegler is not happy with this notion, and produces a number of objections to it. Since the question of "interventions" and "retrospective admissions" is (or should be) quite central to all discussions of unconscious intentions, we had better examine Siegler's objections.

2.8 First, he objects that it is obvious that "interventions" will not always produce straightforward admissions of intention. What does Freud say if someone finds his questions peculiar and has no answers for them? "Usually, that the person is unable to acknowledge the unconscious intention. But surely there is something wrong with accepting a person's positive response to the request for the explanation of a slip and rejecting his negative response. And such a logical oddity suggests that Freud already assumes that there is an explanation in terms of unconscious intentions and that the remaining issues are whether the person knows it and what it is." (Siegler/p253)

Now it may be true that Freud already assumes that there is an explanation in terms of unconscious intentions. Or it may be that, in Siegler's terms, Freud would be content to admit that he assumes that there is an explanation in terms of unconscious wants, but let us not pursue that issue here. Siegler's criticism seems to fall down where he objects to Freud's accepting a person's positive response to the request for an explanation of a slip and rejecting his negative response. Now, the negative response which Freud rejects, according to Siegler, takes the form of finding Freud's questions peculiar and having no answers for them. But surely Freud is quite entitled to reject this response in this context. The negative respondent has made a slip of some sort and is being asked for an explanation. It will not do for him simply to say he finds the request peculiar.

He might find it offensive, but that is another matter.

If he had made no mistake and was asked why he said what he said, he could give reasons. For example, he might say "I said that because I wanted to shock you".

Correspondingly, it is reasonable to expect him to have some idea as to why he made a certain mistake. He may say "I'm sorry, I just don't know why I said that". But he may not say "I just said it, that's all, there is no explanation", at least if he wants us to take him seriously. So it is not a "logical oddity" that Freud accepts the positive response and rejects the negative one. Freud is entitled to reject the negative response as an explanation since it tells us no more than we already know, and hence does not qualify as an explanation.

2.9 Second, Siegler objects that, even in cases where the "intervention" elicits a positive response from the person who made the slip, it is not at all clear that this settles the question of whether the person unconsciously intended something by the slip. This is an important point, and we shall pursue it later. Siegler, however, seems not to exploit it properly. He says "Freud seems to make much of the fact that, when the little intervention is successful, the 'patient' says the first thing that comes to his mind. Sometimes, of course, when a person gives 'as his answer the first idea that occurred to him' we have the correct answer to a question he has been asked or a good insight into what is the correct answer. But this is not always so. Of

what importance is 'the first idea that occurred to him' when the person has forgotten the right answer to some question and is searching about for it? Of what importance is 'the first idea' to questions which the speaker cannot answer because he lacks competence, or to questions which are senseless, such as 'Why did you allow the sun to rise today?' or, 'What was your intention in breathing yesterday?' Why is 'the first idea' important in establishing an unconscious intention?" (Siegler/p254)

Now it may be that Freud does make much of the fact that "when the little intervention is successful the 'patient' says the first thing that comes to his mind." But it does not follow from this that when the "patient" says the first thing that comes into his mind we have a sufficient condition for the intervention to be successful. But this seems to be what Siegler thinks Freud says, and what he attacks him for. Also, Siegler talks as if Freud holds that, when the "patient" does say the first thing that comes to his mind, this necessarily provides (in terms of unconscious intentions) the correct explanation of the slip. But this is surely not what Freud holds. Nor can it be legitimately extrapolated from the quotation which Siegler is considering. Freud says, of the speaker who is asked why he made a slip, that "Being asked, however, he gave as his answer the first idea that occurred to him." But Freud does not suggest that the speaker's answer is necessarily correct. Indeed, presumably, if the speaker's first answer were necessarily correct, there would be no point either in

people training to become psychoanalysts or in prolonged psychoanalytic investigations.

But it is not even clear that Freud holds that it is a necessary condition of the success of the intervention that the "patient" says the first thing that comes to his mind. It is Siegler who suggests that Freud holds that "when the little intervention is successful, the 'patient' says the first thing that comes to his mind." But Freud does not say this, at least in the quotations given by Siegler. All that Freud says in discussing a specific case, is that the speaker did in fact give as his answer the first idea that occurred to him. It may well be that Freud is excited by this not because it immediately provides the correct answer to his question, or because it guarantees that a correct answer will ever be given, but simply because it indicates that the "patient" is willing to engage in a psychoanalytic investigation.

2.10 Thirdly, Siegler objects, that "when a person does say he did intend such-and-such, it is not at all clear, even on Freud's own views, that his statement has any (or much) more weight than that of a psychoanalyst who makes a claim about his unconscious intention by considering 'the error by itself' without making any intervention at all.

Necessarily, the intention of the person who made the slip was unconscious (otherwise, obviously, such cases provide no support for Freud's views). Consequently, his belief

that he had a certain intention is really just a hypothesis that he has adopted to explain the error. He may have adopted it on the basis of what he was thinking and feeling at the time he made the error. But this kind of evidence is, in principle, just as available to the analyst as to the person himself." (Siegler/p254)

Let us take the last point first. Is it true that "this kind of evidence is, in principle, just as available to the analyst as to the person himself."? It is surely not true if Siegler is suggesting that the analyst has just as direct access to the patient's past thoughts and feelings as the patient himself. But, given that the patient recalls having certain thoughts and feelings, and given that he verbalizes this recollection, it might be argued that this makes these thoughts and feelings just as available to the analyst as to the person himself. That is, the analyst is at least as able as the patient to make inferences from the patient's past thoughts and feelings, once he knows what these past thoughts and feelings were.

But, since the analyst must rely on the patient to find out what the patient's own past thoughts and feelings were, then, if he is to impute an unconscious intention to the patient as the result of an inference from the patient's thoughts and feelings, he cannot be said to be considering "the error by itself". In this third objection Siegler seems to be conflating two quite different cases. In the first case the analyst considers "the error by itself" and, somehow, manages as a result of his consideration to

attribute an unconscious intention to the person who made the mistake. In the second case the analyst advances a hypothesis based on information supplied to him by the patient.

It is worth noting that the first case, if it were ever given any credence, could result in unfortunate consequences for the person to whom the unconscious intention was imputed. This is because of the widespread opinion (or prejudice) that people are responsible for their intentions. Given this belief, bringing people to admit that at some time in the past they had certain intentions, when there is no independent means of establishing that they did have those intentions, might prove to be a powerful political weapon. That is, people might be persuaded by politically motivated interlocutors (not necessarily psychiatrists) to admit that they did have certain intentions: and then find themselves being held responsible for those intentions and possibly injured in some way as a result. This possibility should be sufficient to show that the question whether or not there are such things as unconscious intentions is of more than purely academic interest, and we shall return to it later (see 3.7, 3.8 and 4.2).

2.11 Fourthly, Siegler's last objection to Freud on "interventions" relates to denials rather than "admissions". Freud, Siegler says, "imagines a case in

which 'an assistant of the guest of honour, perhaps already a junior lecturer himself, a young man with the brightest prospects' who as an after-dinner speaker, calls upon the company to hiccough (aufstossen) to the health of their guest (his chief) (p.52) rather than to drink (anstossen) to his health. Freud says that he 'intended an insult' (p.53). He claims that impatient and sudden outbursts and energetic repudiations by a speaker 'betray a strong personal interest in making out that his slip has no meaning' (p.53.)" (Siegler/p254-5)

Siegler, commenting, says "One difficulty here is that in considering a case of vehement denial and not a case of simple straightforward denial, there is the suggestion of there being something to hide, and also the suggestion that the speaker is simply lying about his intentions. Yet he is looking for a case of unconscious intention in a slip of the tongue." (Siegler/p255)

But it is difficult to see how this constitutes a problem for Freud. In this example, it is clear that the young man very much regrets his slip. If this is so, he cannot be simply lying about his intentions. If he were simply lying, he would have intended to say what he said and then denied having any such intention. In this case his utterance would not be a slip. Also, he would have no cause for regret. If the speaker is lying about his intentions (but not simply lying), this might be because he suddenly became aware of what he had intended by the slip. The

vehemence of his denial could then be attributed to his horror at realizing what he had done. Again, if he were unaware of having had any such intention, the vehemence of his denial would be explained by his belief that he was innocent combined with the fact that the imputation of intention, if generally accepted, could harm his career. Another reason why denials in such situations are apt to be vehement may be that it is commonly realized that such errors, whatever their true explanation, are never purely accidental. It may just be a fact about human nature that, given a non-accidental, well-formed piece of behaviour, we are prone to forming explanatory hypotheses in terms of intentions. Whether or not this fact could constitute support for Freud is another matter. That is, the fact that people believe in unconscious intentions could no more prove that such things exist than the fact that people believe in God could prove that God exists. But the fact that people believe in unconscious intentions could explain why we sometimes vehemently deny having had such intentions.

2.12 We have seen that Siegler's objections, to Freud's arguments for the existence of unconscious intentions, are not as convincing as they may at first appear. But, even if Siegler's individual objections are not acceptable, does this invalidate his general thesis regarding Freud? Siegler's conclusion, at this point, is that "It still does not seem that Freud has presented very convincing evidence or arguments to support his view that errors can betray an

unconscious intention. He has established only three points:

- (1) a sentence uttered (in a slip) sometimes has a clear meaning
- (2) a claim can be made about what the person's intention was in saying what he did say, and
- (3) when asked to explain a slip the speaker will sometimes explain it by saying what he intended, or talk about what he was thinking or feeling at the time, and sometimes he will vehemently deny that he had any intention at all.

I have tried to show that none of these three points provides much support for Freud's views." (Siegler/p255)

But Siegler is still begging a number of important questions. First, the kind of error which Freud and he have been considering is non-accidental; it involves a piece of meaningful, well-formed linguistic behaviour; it is quite legitimate to demand (as Freud does) that such errors be explicable. Siegler offers no alternative explanation of them. Second, at no point does Siegler consider the question of the essential nature of an intention: what kind of thing is an intention? If someone were to characterize intentions in purely behavioural terms, then 'intention' might be defined such that a piece of meaningful, well-formed linguistic behaviour can only stem from an intention. Then the view, which Siegler attributes to Freud, that speech errors betray unconscious intentions, would become not so much an argument as a tautology. Siegler does not consider such possibilities. Thirdly, we saw in 2.3 and 2.6 that

there are good reasons for believing that Freud means no more by 'unconscious intention' than Siegler means by 'unconscious want'. If this is so then Siegler, in his criticism of Freud, has been largely pushing at an open door, since he has no quarrel with the notion of an unconscious want.

So, at present, the question of whether or not there are such things as unconscious intentions is wide open. Siegler has not managed to show that Freud failed to demonstrate their existence, partly because he has not shown that Freud was trying to do this. Since it is not clear that Freud was trying to prove the existence of unconscious intentions (as distinct from unconscious wants), and since there are good grounds for believing that Freud was not much interested in conceptual analysis, let us leave Freud at this point and turn, in the next chapter, to the second of Siegler's main questions: is the concept of an unconscious intention a coherent one?

And it seems just as possible to argue that our ordinary way of talking does treat certain sorts of error as intentional in some way. This seems to be especially true of "slips of the tongue". We do talk, after all, of slips of the tongue. This can be construed as suggesting that the utterances in question are not accidental but rather reveal things which the speakers would like to keep concealed. So, Siegler's argument, in the paragraph just quoted, does not show that there is

Chapter 3: Siegler On Whether The Concept Of An
Unconscious Intention Is Coherent

3.1 Siegler holds that "Normally we do think of a slip of the tongue - along with the other kinds of errors Freud talks about, such as mislaying or forgetting an appointment - as, by definition, not intentional. Slips of the tongue and other errors or mistakes are not, in our ordinary way of talking, intentional, but contrasted with intentional distortions of words, and other acts. This, however, may not seem altogether convincing since it only shows that there is something odd or implausible about talking about unconscious intentions in connection with errors." (Siegler/p255-6)

But it is surely not quite true that in our ordinary way of talking we do not think of slips of the tongue and other errors as intentional. It is true that we do not think of them as consciously intentional. But that is not what is at issue. And it seems just as possible to argue that our ordinary way of talking does treat certain sorts of error as intentional in some way. This seems to be especially true of "slips of the tongue". We do talk, after all, of slips of the tongue. This can be construed as suggesting that the utterances in question are not accidental but rather reveal things which the speakers would like to keep concealed. So, Siegler's argument, in the paragraph just quoted, does not show that there is

something odd or implausible about talking about unconscious intentions in connection with errors.

3.2 Next, Siegler tries to find a more positive argument to show that the notion of an unconscious intention is incoherent. He asks "Can a person say 'I intend (or do not intend) to X' and be mistaken in what he says?" (p256) His reason for asking this question is that he thinks that (provided the person is not lying) if there is no such possibility, then the concept of an unconscious intention is incoherent. In other words, Siegler thinks that if it is impossible for a person to sincerely say "I intend (or do not intend) to X" and yet be mistaken, then the concept of an unconscious intention must be incoherent. And Siegler does think that it is impossible for a person to sincerely say "I intend (or do not intend) to X" and yet be mistaken. In support of this he contrasts 'I intend to finish the work tonight' with 'He intends to finish the work tonight'. As regards someone who utters the latter sentence, Siegler says "One is inclined to say that he makes an inference about my intentions on the basis of evidence, the evidence being obtained by observation of my behaviour, hearsay, or what-not. And so he can obviously go wrong: he can misinterpret or misjudge my actions or fail to see through a transparent lie, etc., and make the wrong inference and so be mistaken in what he says." (p256)

Now it may be that one is inclined to say this in the present case. But this may only be because of the nature of

the example. Suppose we contrast 'I intend to finish the work tonight' with 'No, he's only kidding himself, what he's really going to do tonight is play squash and then go for a drink'. In this contrast the third person can still be mistaken, but it also looks much more possible for the first person to be mistaken. Yet when Siegler asks, concerning his contrast, whether the first person can go wrong in the same way as the third person, he says "Clearly not, for it is absurd to suggest that I find out what my intentions are by observing my behaviour, still less by hearing myself say, 'I intend to...'" (p256)

Now it may be absurd to suggest that I find out what my intentions are by observing my own behaviour. Because then I should end up observing myself observing myself observing...to infinity. But it is not so obviously absurd to suggest that I can find out what my intentions were by observing my own behaviour. For instance, a Freudian "intervention" might take the form of playing me tape recordings of my own past speech, or showing me videotapes of my own past actions. And it may be that, as a result, I could come to acknowledge that I did have a certain intention of which I had not been aware at the time. Whether or not this would mean that I did have then the intention which I now acknowledge is a question which cannot be answered until we decide on an account of what an intention actually is. If our arguments in Chapter 6 are correct (see 6.5 to 6.9), and it is true that there are no intentions at all, then it must be denied that such acknowledgements as Siegler is

considering could ever be correct.

But, in any case, let us try, in the next section, to support the present criticism of Siegler with another argument to show that his key notion (that it makes no sense to talk of a person's being mistaken in saying "I intend to X") is mistaken.

3.3 It has been argued, by Thalberg, that it is possible to intend to do something which one believes to be impossible. However, this view seems to be false, and Thalberg's arguments for it are not convincing since they all depend on conflating rather different senses of 'impossible'. For example, Thalberg says "Why do I deny that it makes an essential difference in what one can intend, when one realizes that a goal is out of reach? One reason is that our criteria for saying 'He thinks it's impossible' are impossibly obscure. For the majority of hazardous enterprises, there is at least one example of past success. So probability of success is greater than zero." (Thalberg/p51)

Now, this seems to be simply confused. If, for a "hazardous enterprise", there is at least one example of past success, then that enterprise need not be believed to be impossible. If probability of success is greater than zero, then success is not impossible. This is undeniable unless one uses 'impossible' in a metaphorical way; to mean, perhaps, 'extremely unlikely'. But, given that 'impossible' is not being used metaphorically, 'He intends to X though he

believes X is impossible' must be equivalent to 'He intends to X though he believes that X has zero probability'. Consequently, the former expression is self-contradictory. This is because, if one believes that X has zero probability, there is nothing which one can do which could constitute even the most humble first step in the doing of X. In other words, if one believes that X has zero probability, then one knows that one cannot try to do X. But, if one cannot try to do something, one cannot intend to do it. Hence one cannot intend to do X.

But, if one cannot intend to do something which one believes to be impossible, it is clear (as against Siegler) that one can be mistaken about one's own intentions. For instance (to take Miss Anscombe's example), suppose a man says "I am certain that I shall break down under torture, but I intend not to". Then either he is putting on a brave face or he is mistaken. For we should be entitled to reply to him "No, if you are really certain that you will break down then you do not intend not to, though you may intend to try your hardest not to". (Strictly speaking, he cannot even try not to break down; but he might "make an effort" or offer some "token resistance".) In this case the man would be mistaken about his own intentions through ignorance of the correct analysis of the concept of an intention.

Another way in which a man might be mistaken about his own intentions is as follows. Suppose I know that some man insulted my wife at a party last week, but she refuses to tell me the man's name. Then I might say to a friend "I

intend to kill the man who insulted my wife". Now, suppose also that the man who insulted my wife is John Smith, who died suddenly of a heart attack two days after the party. I know John Smith is dead, and (unlike Thalberg) I believe that it is impossible to intend to do things which one believes to be impossible. I believe that it is impossible to intend to kill dead men. What happens, then, when someone informs me that it was the late John Smith who insulted my wife at the party? My original statement is now seen to be equivalent to 'I intend to kill John Smith'. But I acknowledge that I cannot intend to kill John Smith. Therefore I must acknowledge that my original statement was mistaken, and that all I was really entitled to say was "I intend to kill the man who insulted my wife, if humanly possible".

3.4 In the last section we saw two ways in which a man could be mistaken about his own intentions. But, in 3.2, we saw that Siegler's entire argument that the notion of an unconscious intention is incoherent hinges on his view that "It makes no sense to speak of a person's being mistaken in saying 'I intend to X.'" Consequently we must, again, reject Siegler's argument for the view that the notion of an unconscious intention is incoherent. We do not claim to have shown that the notion of an unconscious intention is coherent, but only that Siegler has not shown that it is incoherent.

The remainder of the main body of Siegler's paper is based on the assumption that he has shown that the notion of

an unconscious intention is incoherent and that therefore there are no such things as unconscious intentions. He considers some reasons why people might be tempted to suppose that such things do exist, and also what status ought to be ascribed to Freud's retrospective "admissions". Since we have already spent quite some time discussing Siegler's position and, especially, since we have now shown that his main assumption is mistaken, we shall not consider his remaining remarks.

However, we said in 2.1 that there is a footnote to Siegler's paper in which he seems to retreat considerably from the position he adopts in the paper itself. In fact there are two such footnotes. And, since, in them, Siegler seems not only to retreat but also to contradict himself, we shall now examine them. They are also important because of their connection with Gustafson's discussion of unconscious intentions, which we shall examine in Chapter 5.

3.5 Siegler's first retractive footnote is appended to the conclusion of the argument in which, as we saw, he fails to demonstrate that the notion of an unconscious intention is not coherent. He says:

"I have argued so far only that a person cannot mistakenly think that he has an intention which he does not have (or vice versa). There might be some doubt about whether this is sufficient to show that Freud is wrong in thinking that there are unconscious intentions. One might

argue that being mistaken is not the only way of being wrong, or in error, or ignorant. Could one say that it is possible to be ignorant of one's intentions when the ignorance is not owing to any mistake? A person might just not know what his intentions are, even though we cannot explain his failure to know as a result of his going wrong somewhere (making a mistaken inference, misjudgement, mis-observation, etc.). Is this possible?" (Siegler/footnote 5, p.265)

Now this seems curiously weak. Siegler, surely, should not just ask whether it is possible to be ignorant of one's own intentions when the ignorance is not owing to any mistake; he should also attempt to answer the question. What he has just raised (though not explicitly) is the question of self-deception, which is (or ought to be) central to any discussion of unconscious intentions. We shall see this in the next chapter, when we examine Hamlyn's treatment of the topic. In the meantime let us look at Siegler's second retractive footnote.

3.6 Siegler qualifies his concluding remarks with an extremely long footnote, suggesting that he has had second thoughts about some of the points in the bulk of his paper. Since, in this footnote, he makes a distinction which is important to Gustafson's discussion, and since he also

provides an interesting example, we shall quote the note in full. He says:

"It might be contended that for an action to be intentional there must be some intention with which it was done and the agent must know that intention. But further, it might be suggested that there could be other intentions with which that particular act was done, and the agent might be ignorant of one or more of these. If this is so then we should look to clear cases of intentional acts for instances of unconscious intentions. Such an analysis would preserve the connexion between an intentional act and knowledge of an intention with which it was done, but it provides for the possibility of unconscious intentions as other intentions with which one acted but of which one was ignorant.

Now we might find some use for the distinction between 'intention with which one acted' and 'intention in acting'. If we are looking for a person's unconscious intentions it seems less plausible to say it is an intention with which he acted than to say it is his (one of his) intentions in acting. The notion of an intention with which one acted seems to be more closely related to

knowledge than the notion of an intention in acting. 'The intention with which he acted' suggests the intention which he formed and by which he explains the action. Again, 'intention with which' seems less susceptible to plurality than does 'intention in acting'.

If this distinction is at all plausible and helpful then we should first give an outline of a description and then look for a case to which such an outline might apply.

We want a case in which A X-es intentionally, which entails, according to our analysis, that he knows the intention with which he acted. We want to be able to say that there was (he had) another intention in acting, of which he was ignorant. Which intention is more important we have not said. But because A is said to be ignorant of an intention in his action we might be inclined to think of that intention as his real intention, what mattered to him, what was important but unbearably shameful (for example) to him. In accordance with our analysis we should say that the intention with which he acted is N, his real intention in acting was M.. This further suggests that the real intention in acting of which he was ignorant

was what guided his action, more so than, though not necessarily to the exclusion of, and perhaps necessarily not to the exclusion of, the intention with which he acted.

Now a case. Suppose that A is very critical of his wife, especially of her behavior in social situations among their friends. Suppose he readily explains that his criticisms are meant to be constructive and to help her behave in more suitable ways. He tells her not to talk so much and listen more carefully to others, to forbear from boisterous laughter, and from telling stories about their personal life. Suppose that all these criticisms are justifiable in that his wife does behave in slightly untoward ways in such situations. Thus we have intentional actions, his criticizing his wife, and we have the intention with which he acts, namely to help her behave in more suitable ways. But now suppose that his wife is from a wealthy family, has a better education than he and is quite well known as an artist, while he is a struggling insurance salesman. Suppose that he feels entirely insecure with her and is shamed by her social and professional prominence. Suppose that this is one of the very few areas

in which his wife can be criticized and the only area in which he is in a position to recognize and criticize her faults. Suppose further that he is often terribly hurt when his wife is invited to openings of exhibitions and to dinners, etc. when his name is only sometimes included along with (and after) hers. He is often hurt when she defers to a professional colleague on certain matters but never to him, for she knows as well as he that he has no artistic sensitivity. He would be ashamed to acknowledge a desire to hurt his wife, for his reasons for wanting to hurt her are so base. That is, he wants to hurt her to show that he too can be a critic in some matters, and he too can be firm in his judgement in some matters. Suppose that he often begins a course of study in art acknowledging a desire to know something about her field. But he abandons it after some efforts which end with an embarrassing attempt by him to say something clever about a painting at an exhibition. Suppose, then, that he wants to hurt his wife, but has little opportunity to do so, and is ashamed to have such a desire since it is due to base motives (i.e. to the desire to get back at her for her damned competence and superiority). Suppose,

further, that when his wife behaves in her slightly boisterous way and she is perfectly well received because of it - say, the party was lively and she was partly the cause - her husband criticizes both her and the others at the party for their crudeness. He fails to appreciate or enjoy such parties and is even angrier after such parties than at ones in which her manners are not so well received. Furthermore, when she does not behave boisterously he shows no particular pleasure, and even seems a bit sullen afterwards, as though he was disappointed in her manners.

Do we not have here a plausible case in which we might say that in criticizing his wife he intended to hurt her feelings? We agree that this is not his acknowledged intention, and therefore not the intention with which he criticizes her. It is something he intends in criticizing her. He intends to hurt her feelings.

We could, in a parallel description of a situation, develop the case to permit a further intention in acting, e.g. an intention to assert his importance in the marriage, an intention to get her attention and perhaps also her admiration or respect. Thus we could in principle develop the case so that there were

consequences many intentions in acting of which he is unaware or at least not entirely aware. How a person could be unaware or at least not entirely aware of his intention in acting (where it is granted that he is aware of the intention with which he acted) seems to require analysis and explication. If anything can be made of the notion of 'unconscious intention' it would seem to be along these lines." (Siegler/footnote 9, p.265)

3.7 The footnote just quoted raises a number of questions. First, if there are such things as unconscious intentions and if both Freudian slips and the case of the man who hurts his wife's feelings are examples of unconscious intentions, it is clear that the wife hurting example is much more important. That is, if a man habitually denigrates his wife and does it intentionally, we should (normally) be quite indignant about it. But if the President says "I declare the session closed", and says it (somehow) intentionally, when he is supposed to be opening parliament, we should be more likely just to laugh politely. This connects with what we said in 2.10 about the relation between intentions and responsibility. In general we hold someone more responsible for what he does intentionally than for what he does accidentally. This is reflected in the legal distinction between murder and manslaughter. We might be less outraged by an action having harmful

consequences if we thought it stemmed from an unconscious intention than if we thought it stemmed from a conscious intention; but we should still be more outraged than if we thought the action was completely unintentional.

(Whether it makes sense to talk of unintentional actions is another question in need of discussion, but we shall not pursue it here.) If cases such as that described by Siegler in the above footnote are instances of unconscious intention, the analysis of unconscious intentions could become important in legal contexts (for instance in divorce suits which cite "mental cruelty").

3.8 Second, related to the last point is the question of how to restrict the number of unconscious intentions which might be said to be present in a given case. Siegler, we saw, says "Thus we could in principle develop the case so that there were many intentions in acting of which he is unaware or at least not entirely aware." But who is to individuate these intentions, and on what basis? What happens if the person in question denies having the intentions attributed to him? This takes us back to the dangers discussed at the end of 2.10 of people being unfairly stigmatized by politically motivated observers.

3.9 Thirdly, related, in turn, to the last point is the question of what could count as evidence that the kind of case outlined by Siegler involves an unconscious intention. At least Freudian slips obviously require some sort of

explanation. The person who has made the slip may find the request for an explanation unwelcome, but he cannot deny that he has made a mistake and that, therefore, there is something to be explained. But in Siegler's example it is not so obvious that there is anything to be explained, especially if the struggling insurance salesman denies having the intentions attributed to him. He may say "No, I had no such intentions. It's true that I criticized my wife, and it's true that I did so intentionally. I did so because she embarrasses me." If he does say this, how can he reasonably be accused of having further, unconscious intentions in criticizing her? He might be so accused if it is thought that his own explanation of his action is not adequate. Thus, Siegler says "because A is said to be ignorant of an intention in his action we might be inclined to think of that intention as his real intention, what mattered to him, what was important but unbearably shameful (for example) to him." But we would only postulate a further intention to explain his action if we found his own explanation (in terms of his avowed intention) unconvincing.

This raises the question of how intentions can explain actions. What is the relation between an intention and an action such that the former can explain the latter? In a trivial sense, intentions could explain actions if 'X is an intentional piece of behaviour' entails 'X is an action'. Then, for any piece of behaviour, if we could show that there was an intention behind it, we could "explain" that it was an action. Less trivial forms of explanation fall, broadly,

into two categories: causal and teleological. Causal explanations cite causes and take such forms as "It happened because the factor of safety was too low". Teleological explanations cite reasons and take such forms as "I did it because I thought it would benefit mankind".

Now it is difficult to see how an unconscious intention could figure in a teleological explanation. 'I did it because of my unconscious intention to hurt her feelings' could not count as a teleological explanation because reasons must be consciously entertained. If reasons are cited which were not consciously entertained, then the kind of explanation being given is a rationalization, and therefore is either deceitful or causal, or both.

So it looks as if unconscious intentions must figure in causal explanations if they are to figure in non-trivial explanations at all. But how? What kind of causal relation could exist between an unconscious intention to X and the doing of X? It cannot be a simple cause and effect relation, because the unconscious intention is unobservable. So there can be no question of a Humean constant conjunction in the mind of an observer. It might be suggested that the unconscious intention is a necessary causal condition of the doing of X. But the same objection obtains. That is, the unconscious intention cannot be observed; it seems, in this kind of conjecture, to be a purely theoretical entity. The postulation of such entities is permitted in physics if it leads to useful predictions. But it is not obvious that any useful

predictions result from the postulation that certain actions (or behaviours) were caused (or conditioned) by unconscious intentions. On the other hand, as we have seen, such postulations may be useful to those who make them, as a means of acquiring power over those about whom they are made. This possibility is doubly undesirable in view of the fact that, if unconscious intentions are held to figure (somehow) in causal explanations, it is difficult to see how the putative agent could be held responsible for them. That is, people cannot be held responsible for causally determined events, except perhaps by subscribers to esoteric doctrines concerning karma. But it appears, from the considerations adduced in this section, that if one is held responsible for one's unconscious intentions one is being held responsible for causally determined events. Let us ask, in the next section, how such a strange and potentially tragic state of affairs could arise.

3.10 According to the Frankforts, "Our view of causality, then, would not satisfy primitive man, because of the impersonal character of its explanations. It would not satisfy him, moreover, because of its generality. We understand phenomena, not by what makes them peculiar, but by what makes them manifestations of general laws. But a general law cannot do justice to the individual character of each event. And the individual character of the event is precisely what early man experiences most strongly. We may explain that certain physiological processes cause a man's

death. Primitive man asks: Why should this man die thus at this moment? We can only say that, given these conditions, death will always occur. He wants to find a cause as specific and individual as the event which it must explain. The event is not analysed intellectually; it is experienced in its complexity and individuality, and these are matched by equally individual causes. Death is willed. The question, then, turns once more from the 'why' to the 'who', not to the 'how'. ... death considered emotionally is the act of hostile will." (Frankfort/p24-5)

Also, Mrs. Anthony remarks that "Professor Piaget's studies of the child's conception of causality present evidence of the operation of thinking which may be described in the terms Professor Frankfort has used of early man. The definition of dead as killed or murdered shows a double leap in the child's thinking; he not only leaps to the assumption of the purposeful will as cause, but avoids direct attention to the what, the fact or object." (Anthony/p20)

It is only a small step from here to the realization that we are all prone to the same phenomenon, when we are not being wholly rational. When we are tired or depressed or harassed, we are apt to "project" our troubles and aggressions outside ourselves and, especially, on to other people. This seems to be a universal human tendency which has given rise to all sorts of persecution: of jews, blacks, communists, witches and (according to Szasz) involuntarily institutionalized psychiatric patients.

Now it seems a priori likely that if we can convince ourselves that our "oppressors" are doing that which upsets us intentionally, we will be much happier, because we will be better furnished with justification for our indignation and such reprisals as we may engage in. Also, in the kind of case outlined by Siegler in his footnote 9, it will be especially easy to imagine that that which upsets us is being done deliberately. This is because the agent admits that he is doing something deliberately. In this case he says that he is intentionally criticizing his wife's behaviour. All that we have to do to make out a case that he has other, unconscious intentions is to give a different description of what he actually does. He says he is criticizing his wife's behaviour, and doing it intentionally. We say he is hurting her feelings, and doing it intentionally. Of course, it may be that what he is doing is hurting her feelings, but it does not follow that he is hurting her feelings intentionally. If we are fond of his wife and dislike him, it may make us feel better if we can believe that he is hurting her feelings intentionally. Because then we may feel entitled to intervene and impose social sanctions on him.

It cannot be claimed that the above considerations prove that there are no such things as unconscious intentions, but they should be sufficient to arouse our suspicions that that may be the case. It is, after all, curious that unconscious intentions never seem to be good

intentions. This, coupled with the fact that unconscious intentions are always (in the first instance) imputed by persons other than the putative intender, is sufficient to make us wonder whether unconscious intentions have any independent existence, or whether they are invented by those who impute them to others.

3.11 In this chapter we have seen that Siegler fails to show that the notion of an unconscious intention is incoherent. Moreover, we have seen that he outlines a possible type of case of unconscious intention which, if it were instantiated, would be more important than the Freudian slip type of case. We considered some points arising from the type of case which Siegler outlines. And, in particular, in the last section we saw that there are some grounds for thinking that there are no such things as unconscious intentions, in so far as these are supposed to be independent existents for which the putative intender can be held responsible. We shall argue more fully for the view that there are no unconscious intentions (in the sense just specified) in Chapter 6. But in the next two chapters let us see what Hamlyn and Gustafson have to say on this topic.

Chapter 4: Hamlyn On Unconscious Intentions

4.1 Hamlyn begins by asking whether it is possible to do something intentionally and yet be unconscious of so doing. He suggests that many philosophers would reply that it is not possible, on the ground that it is of the essence of intention that if we do something intentionally then we do it knowing what we are doing. Then he says:

"Yet there appear to be cases where a man does something intentionally or apparently so and yet is not aware of what he is doing. It may be that he thinks that he is doing something else, or at least claims that he is doing something else, to all appearance with sincerity; or it may be that he seems not to be aware of doing anything at all. In the first category of case falls that, for example, in which a man behaves consistently brutally towards another person yet maintains with apparent sincerity that he is giving him his deserts. This kind of case is to be explained, it might be suggested, by saying that the person concerned is just insensitive. Yet, if he is not generally insensitive, if to every other person he behaves with great sensitivity, we should perhaps be forced to seek another explanation for the case in question; we might feel constrained to say that his brutality is

intentional even though he is not aware of this. In the second category of cases fall all those in which, if the man in question is aware of what happens at all, he describes it as a mere happening or accident; it is not, according to him, that he does anything. To this category belong all those cases which Freud describes in the Psychopathology of Everyday Life - the slips of the tongue, the cases of forgetfulness, etc., which, perhaps, happen too frequently to our mind to be mere accidents. There is probably a wealth of cases in both these categories - or at least so we have come to believe since Freud. But here, I believe, Freud has merely drawn our attention to something that was always known, at any rate by the more percipient observers of humanity."

(Hamlyn/p12)

4.2 We can see from the above quotation that Hamlyn's proposed categories of unconscious intentions are much the same as Siegler's. That is, both put Freudian slips into one category and cases of insensitivity into another. One difference between their discussions is that Siegler only comes to cases of insensitivity in a footnote (in the case of the struggling insurance salesman), whereas Hamlyn makes them more central. We saw that Hamlyn suggests that

"There is probably a wealth of cases in both these categories". Now it is undeniable that there is a wealth of cases of Freudian slips. And it is undeniable that many cases of insensitivity are observable in the world in which we live. What is not undeniable is that Freudian slips and cases of insensitivity are to be explained by reference to unconscious intentions. For instance, it might be that some cases of insensitivity are to be explained by reference to unconscious intentions while most are not. The case which Hamlyn outlines in the passage just quoted sounds rather peculiar. Thus, if a man "is not generally insensitive, if to every other person he behaves with great sensitivity, we should perhaps be forced to seek another explanation for the case in question; we might feel constrained to say that his brutality is intentional even though he is not aware of this."

But it is difficult to imagine a wealth of such cases. If a man is insensitive, he is usually generally insensitive. If he appears to be insensitive to one person only, then it is less plausible to suppose that he could be unaware of his insensitivity. But if he is not unaware of his insensitivity then it is not insensitivity, but rather intentional brutality. Alternatively, in his account, he is not guilty of insensitivity at all but genuinely is giving the other person his deserts. But if we dislike his behaviour then we may describe it as brutality and attempt to explain it in terms of unconscious intentions. But it is,

in principle, just as open to him to explain our behaviour in terms of our (unconscious) refusal to see that the person being punished, say, actually is receiving his deserts. It thus appears that, in this kind of case, the imputation of unconscious intentions (or unconscious perversity generally) can be turned into a kind of game in which the boot can be endlessly put on the other foot. And we have seen (in 2.10, 3.9 and 3.10) how such a game might have a tragic outcome. The outcome depends on whose account of the situation is accepted. And that in turn depends on who has most power and authority. Thus the patterns of imputation of unconscious intention begin to look rather like the patterns of imputation of madness in modern institutional psychiatry (as characterized by critics such as Szasz and Laing).

The suspicion that there is not such a wealth of cases of insensitivity explicable by reference to unconscious intentions will receive support from our discussion of a very odd example which Hamlyn gives later in his paper. We shall consider this shortly. In the meantime let us look at some remarks which Hamlyn makes about Freud's terminology.

4.3 In 2.3 and 2.6 we saw that there are some grounds for believing that Freud's use of terminology tends to be imprecise, and that where he appears to be talking about unconscious intentions he may only be talking about unconscious wants. Hamlyn acknowledges this possibility, but does not appear to regard it as important. Thus, he

says, "It has been maintained by Peters (e.g. The Concept of Motivation, pp. 62ff) that Freud did not speak of motives at all, but rather of wishes. This, I imagine, is technically correct. It is, however, somehow beside the point. Apart from the incoherence in Freud's own use of the concept of a wish, a great deal of what he wanted to say could be expressed in terms of motives, and this for a good reason." (Hamlyn/p12)

Hamlyn's reason is that "In my view, more or less anything can figure as a motive for an action, provided that it plays a certain role in a pattern in terms of which we explain and interpret actions." (Hamlyn/p13) Thus "to give the motive for an action is to put it in a certain light. We need first to recognize the action as intentional; and with unintentional actions the question of motive does not arise." (Hamlyn/p13) Also "reference to motives presupposes the context of a demand for explanation, a demand that an action should be made intelligible as an intentional action of a certain sort." (Hamlyn/p13-14)

Now it may be true that reference to motives presupposes the context of a demand for explanation, but it is surely begging the question to say that we need first to recognize the action concerned as intentional. This is because, while there seems to be no objection to the notion of an unconscious motive, the question whether there are unconscious intentions is precisely what is at issue. Hamlyn's line of thought seems to be as follows:

- (1) to give a motive for an action is to recognize it as intentional;
- (2) there are unconscious motives;
- (3) therefore actions explicable in terms of unconscious motives are unconsciously intentional;
- (4) therefore there are unconscious intentions.

But whatever force (1) has seems to derive from the fact that, generally, to call a piece of behaviour an action is automatically to characterize it as intentional. The question which we really ought to consider here is: If, in an attempt to explain a given piece of behaviour, we refer to an unconscious motive, does this automatically characterize that piece of behaviour as intentional? And the answer is surely that it does not, unless we interpret 'intentional' somewhat weakly, perhaps as being equivalent to 'volitional'. But, if we take such an interpretation, the responsibility load which 'intentional' is normally thought to carry immediately vanishes. Consequently, Hamlyn's transition from (1) to (4) does not show that, in Freud's terms, there are any unconscious intentions, if these are supposed to be anything more than unconscious wishes.

However, Hamlyn does not base his entire case on Freudian theory. His next step is to try to make out a case for the existence of unconscious intentions which is independent of Freudian theory. This attempt is what we shall consider in the following section.

4.4 Hamlyn says "There are cases, I suggest, in which the very repetition of an apparent action without the agent being aware of it as that action makes the hypothesis that the person concerned really intends to do this the only plausible one. This is important, as there are some philosophers who would consider the difficulty involved in the notion of an unconscious intention enough to warrant the rejection of that part of Freudian theory which presupposes the notion, or at any rate enough to warrant its reinterpretation in other terms. But if there are quite ordinary cases where the only plausible interpretation is that the person is intentionally doing something without being aware of the fact this course cannot be adopted."
(Hamlyn/p15)

In other words, Hamlyn considers that that part of Freudian theory which presupposes the notion of an unconscious intention requires support, and that he can produce quite ordinary cases which provide that support. But we have seen, repeatedly, that Freudian theory does not presuppose the notion of an unconscious intention (as distinct from an unconscious wish). It therefore cannot require support, as far as this presupposition is concerned. It is also worth noting that Hamlyn's talk of the "only plausible" hypothesis and "the only plausible interpretation" sounds curiously weak. For any phenomenon to be explained there can be an infinite number of hypotheses of varying degrees of plausibility. And plausibility, after all, is not an objective property which

a hypothesis can possess; but is rather a function of the person considering the hypothesis. This is worth bearing in mind in connexion with the dangers of stigmatization and "projected aggression" which we have looked at in 2.10, 3.9, 3.10 and 4.2.

However, let us look at the cases which Hamlyn has in mind. He says "repeated actions of which the agent claims sincerely to be unaware...may be ones of which the person is not aware at all as actions, or alternatively ones of which he is not aware as actions of a certain kind." (Hamlyn/p15) He has already outlined a case of the second sort; that is, the case of the man who is consistently brutal to another person but who does not seem to be aware of this, and who claims apparently sincerely that he is giving the other person his deserts. And we saw, in 4.2, that this case incurs serious difficulties. Hamlyn now acknowledges this. He says "For the possibilities of insensitivity introduce the further possibility that what the man does is really unintentional, and not intentional at all; and it might be difficult to rule this out." (Hamlyn/p15) As we saw, it would also be difficult to rule out the possibility that the man was not doing what he claimed he was doing at all, and the possibility that it is not that the man is insensitive but that we are (intentionally?) blind to the fact that the third person genuinely is receiving his deserts.

Hamlyn allows that another possible objection to his present case, "though not perhaps one that is very plausible", is that what is done is done out of habit.

Thus "If we were to take the case, for example, of someone who suddenly and out of character took to pouring all his available money into a beggar's hat, who did this constantly whenever he saw a beggar, and yet denied with every apparent sincerity all pretensions to generosity, it might not be immediately obvious what we should say of him. There might be considerations that would lead us to say that what he did was mere habit. This would take some explaining, but it is not beyond the bounds of intelligibility that such a man might have come to develop a habit of doing this sort of thing out of, perhaps, a desire or tendency for public display without any generous motives whatever. Then, whenever he saw a beggar he emptied his pockets without thinking, without even being fully aware of what he was doing at all. This would be a strange case, but I mention it merely to underline the point that explanations like those of insensitivity and habit are possible ones when a person constantly does something in a certain situation without apparently being aware of doing so. They have to be ruled out if we are to attribute intention with any certainty; and there may be other explanations to be excluded as well." (Hamlyn/p15-16)

We see from the above passage that Hamlyn holds that explanations in terms of insensitivity and habit would necessarily be in competition with explanations in terms of unconscious intentions. But it is difficult to see why this should be so. It might be argued that insensitivity can be intentional, in so far as it can be cultivated; a soldier, for instance, might harden himself so as not to

feel guilty about killing people. Whether insensitivity could be unconsciously cultivated is a more difficult question, but Hamlyn gives no grounds for supposing that the answer must be no.

And there are good grounds for supposing that habit and intention are not mutually exclusive. Habits can be intentionally acquired and cultivated. It would be most odd to say that whenever I do something out of habit I do not do it intentionally. Indeed, Passmore makes intentional, habitual action central to the first of his two models of intention (that is, the "coherence" model; see, for example, Passmore/p132). It may be that I can engage in a habitual activity and be completely unaware of so doing (say if my mind is "miles away"), but it would not follow that I am not doing what I am doing intentionally. For example, I might be in the habit of putting my empty milk bottles on the front door step, last thing before going to bed. And I might sometimes do this while completely unaware of what I am doing. But it would be absurd to say, in this case, that I am putting out the milk bottles unintentionally.

Hamlyn is therefore wrong to say that habit and insensitivity "have to be ruled out if we are to attribute intention with any certainty". Nevertheless, it is true that his example of the beggar is "a strange case". Indeed, all his examples seem to be strange. This is not meant flippantly; if it turns out that most proposed examples of unconscious intentions are "strange" then this, in itself, casts some doubt on the existence of

unconscious intentions. Let us now consider the strangest of all Hamlyn's examples: the case of the man who kills cats.

4.5 We saw, in the last section, that Hamlyn (mistakenly) holds that insensitivity and habit have to be ruled out as explanations of actions if intention is to be attributed with certainty. Now he suggests how habit and insensitivity might be ruled out. He says "We might exclude habit if the action in question was too complex or involved too high a degree of skill; we might exclude insensitivity if the person showed every other sign of being sensitive not only in general but also in relation to this particular man or in this particular situation. I think that there would remain cases in which the most plausible explanation was that the person in question meant to do what he did, without apparently being aware of it." (Hamlyn/p16)

The point about the relation between an action's being intentional and its complexity (or the skill required for its execution) is a good one, and we shall return to it later. But the suggestion that we might exclude insensitivity, if the man displayed great sensitivity in all other situations, is more questionable. This is because sensitivity is not an absolute characteristic but is relative to a number of variables; in particular, it is relative to the person ascribing it. And, once again, we have to question the notion of "the most plausible explanation". Hamlyn explains that he means that an explanation is "most plausible" if "other explanations seem ruled out". But

this still makes plausibility a function of the observer's mind, to an unacceptable extent. What requirements must an explanation fail to meet before it can "seem ruled out"? We are not told. However, let us look at Hamlyn's example.

He says "Let us suppose a man driving a car who, whenever a cat crosses the road in front of him, turns the wheel so as to roll over the animal. Let us suppose, furthermore, that he does this constantly and that after, say, the fifty-seventh time, his wife who is a woman of remarkable patience, says to him 'Why did you do that?' to which he replies 'Do what?' Now there are various things that he might have said - 'It was only a cat' (insensitivity) or 'I am sorry, I just seem to do that these days' (habit) and so on. Saying what he did is not absolutely incompatible with other explanations but, there are at least two ways in which it might transpire that the most plausible explanation of his behaviour is that he turned the wheel intentionally - most plausible in the sense that other explanations seem ruled out." (Hamlyn/p16)

4.6 The first way leading to "the most plausible explanation" is as follows. "First, it might transpire that he thought that he always tried to avoid the cat and that his hitting the cat was always an accident. But of course after the constant repetition of a supposed accident it becomes implausible to suppose that it was really an accident at all; it is too regular for that. Still, it might be due merely to a defect of skill, just like the accidents which result

from a failure to steer into a skid, where the natural reaction is not to. Perhaps the man's incompetence was such that his avoiding action always produced collision with the object. It might of course be so, though not if in other similar circumstances where a cat was not involved he showed no such incompetence. Perhaps he had a thing about cats - but it is not clear from this alone whether his attitude is such as to produce incompetence in avoiding cats or a kind of super-skill at hitting them. The point in all this is that his awareness of the cats makes it possible to construe his relationship to them in different ways, and even if we come in the end to the conclusion that he intended to kill the cats, much has to be ruled out on the way." (Hamlyn/p16-17)

Now this, surely, seems rather weak. For instance, what has to be ruled out on the way and how are we to do it? If the man really did try to avoid the cats then, necessarily, his hitting them was accidental. It might be argued that even if the man really did try to avoid the cats he also (unconsciously) tried to hit them. But this, in the present context, would not prove anything; and it would just complicate matters by introducing the notion of an unconscious attempt. Our conclusion here must be that the first way leading to "the most plausible explanation" is not at all convincing.

4.7 Hamlyn characterizes the second way leading to "the most plausible explanation" as follows. "This is where the words 'Do what?' have to be taken quite literally. It is for him, apparently, as if nothing happened at all, or at least as if he did nothing at all out of the ordinary; he was just driving along in a straightforward way. Such gross unawareness of what was happening might be excused on one or two occasions; but on fifty-seven occasions? Even habit presupposes the possibility that he might reflect back on his action and see that he did it. The regular carrying out of what is after all a rather skilled operation without any apparent awareness of doing so demands an explanation, and just because it is a skilled operation it may be that the only really plausible explanation is that he really meant to perform it." (Hamlyn/p17)

It must be admitted that there is some force to the remarks just quoted. The regular carrying out of a skilled operation would certainly demand an explanation, if the agent was genuinely completely unaware of what he was doing. One difficulty here, however, is that it would never be possible to know for certain that the agent was not lying. For instance, Hamlyn's cat killer might secretly hate cats but be ashamed to disclose this to his wife. Therefore, in such a strange example, we might suggest that a more "plausible explanation" is that the agent is lying and is, after all, completely aware of what he is doing. This of course would be to concede that his action was intentional, but only that it was consciously intentional.

Because of this possibility, in this kind of case, we must reject Hamlyn's notion that it could ever be that "the only really plausible explanation" is that he is doing what he is doing intentionally but unconsciously.

4.8 Another difficulty with the case of the cat killer is that it is not clear that people ever actually carry out such skilled operations while seeming to be completely unaware of what they are doing. This point might hinge on just how skilled an operation must be. It seems likely that some operations are so skilled that they can never be relegated completely to habit; for instance, taking an aeroplane off the ground. And it also seems likely that the killing of cats in Hamlyn's example would be an operation demanding comparable skill. Cats, after all, have "nine lives". They are, in general, extremely cautious and averse to being run over. It could well be, as a matter of empirical fact, that the only cats that ever get run over are either very old or very young, or crippled or ill. It might also be, as a matter of empirical fact, that the average driver would never encounter fifty-seven such cats in the course of his driving career.

What we are getting at here is that Hamlyn's example is indeed extremely odd; so much so that it might prove to be impossible to cull any comparable examples from the real world in which we live. This is important because Hamlyn is arguing from the possibility of an example to the existence of a certain class of phenomena (unconscious

intentions). But all that his argument could show is that if there were such examples in the world then there might be such things as unconscious intentions in the world. So, if (as seems quite likely) there are no such examples in the world, there is no need to postulate the existence of such things as unconscious intentions. The case of the cat killer is certainly logically possible; but logical possibilities cannot, of themselves, demonstrate the actual existence of anything.

4.9 A further difficulty with Hamlyn's "only really plausible explanation" is that, not only is it not the only plausible explanation, but there are grounds for thinking that it is not much of an explanation either. Hamlyn says, of this part of his discussion, "My point in all this is the simple one that surprising regularities, wherever and however they occur, require explanation, and explanation in terms appropriate to what has to be explained." (Hamlyn/p17) This point is surely correct, but it is difficult to see how an explanation in terms of unconscious intentions could explain the cat killer's behaviour in appropriate terms.

If somebody does something, and we want to know why he did it, our desire for an explanation will not be satisfied if he says "I intended to do it"; indeed we should probably be more satisfied if he said "I didn't mean to do it". That is, normally when somebody does something (especially if it requires considerable skill) it is taken for granted that he intends to do it. So, to

say that he intended to do it does not help to explain why he did it. What we should want to be told about would be his reasons for doing it. Alternatively, we might accept explanations such as 'He did it because he has developed a brain tumour...'. This explanation would still be compatible with his having intended to do it; but it would be much more satisfactory than simply saying he intended to do it. This is because the brain tumour explanation would furnish us with some degree of predictive power (for instance, we might successfully predict that if the tumour is excised then he will not do it again); whereas the statement-of-intention explanation could provide us with no predictive power. That is, if we know that a person did X intentionally but we do not know why he did it, we cannot hope to predict if and when he will do it again. It follows that simply to state that he did it intentionally is not to explain at all helpfully why he did it.

Now it might be argued that the citation of an unconscious intention constitutes more of an explanation than the citation of a conscious one; on the ground that unconscious intentions are less overt and therefore more revealing when revealed. But it is difficult to see why this should be so. A conscious intention could be cleverly concealed, making it just as covert as an unconscious intention could be. In such a case, the citation of the conscious intention would have some slight explanatory force; but only in so far as it would tell us that what was done was not a complete accident. Moreover, it is difficult

to see how the postulation of an unconscious intention (even if it could be done correctly) could carry any predictive power. Thus 'He did X because he had an unconscious intention to X' does not look like being very informative. We should want to know why he had an unconscious intention to X. It might be explained that he had an unconscious intention to X because, once again, of a brain tumour. But if, in such a case, we could show that, given the brain tumour, he would have done X anyway, what would be the point in the further postulation of the unconscious intention?

Hamlyn might object at this point that he has been concerned with cases where the only plausible explanation is that the person had an unconscious intention to do the thing in question. If so, we should simply have to reiterate the points we have already made. Thus it is never apposite to talk of the only plausible explanation, if this is thought to be the only possible explanation. What now seems to be the only plausible explanation is a function of context, and may derive simply from our inability to think of better explanations. For instance, a more plausible explanation of the behaviour of the cat killer might be that at some point he had been hypnotized and instructed to run over cats at every opportunity. Also, we have seen that an "explanation" which involves only the postulation of an intention (conscious or unconscious) is not much of an explanation, since it gives us no powers of prediction and control. We have suggested that, in the

case of the postulation of an unconscious intention, a more powerful explanation may well bypass the putative unconscious intention, thereby making its postulation redundant. We have also seen that Hamlyn has to invent some incredible examples in order to give his argument cogency. But, as we said in 3.9, unconscious intentions, if they did exist, could only be theoretical entities of some sort. Why then should Hamlyn wish to postulate the existence of such entities in order to explain his incredible examples? In view of the above considerations we must conclude that he has not shown that we ever actually encounter cases where "unconscious intention is a plausible explanation and perhaps the only plausible explanation!" (Hamlyn/p17) It may be possible to invent cases where the postulation of an unconscious intention seems more plausible, but this would be a pointless exercise since an explanation in such terms could never be satisfactory. All that the citation of an unconscious intention can do, by itself, is equip us with an excuse for indignation and moral outrage. But this has little to do with explanation.

4.10 After reiterating that what he has been concerned with is "the underpinning of psychoanalytic theory, something that can stand in independence from that theory itself and therefore something that does not presuppose it." (Hamlyn/p18), Hamlyn remarks that "it might also be said that what is essential to psychoanalytic phenomena is something like self-deception and that this applies also to the cases which I have been discussing." (Hamlyn/p18)

He suspects that the latter suggestion is true, saying "What is essential to what I have been trying to argue for is that the people concerned must both know and yet somehow not know what they are doing; if a person is to do something intentionally, and thus in some sense do it knowing what he is doing, without apparently knowing what he is doing, this must not amount to a straightforward contradiction. To say that what happens is that the person in these cases deceives himself is to remove the apparent contradiction, since in self-deception there is not simple ignorance. Self-deception is itself an intentional activity." (Hamlyn/p18)

So, it appears, Hamlyn thinks that self-deception sets the pattern for both psychoanalytic cases of unconscious intention and what we may call cat-killer cases of unconscious intention. He devotes the remainder of his paper to the analysis of the notion of self-deception, and it is to this topic that we must now turn.

4.11 Hamlyn seems to be reluctant to go all the way and claim that in all cases "where one can intend something without knowing it, the explanation is self-deception." (p18) But his reasons for being reluctant are questionable. Thus he says "it seems to me that just as it is possible for us to know things without knowing that we know, so it may be possible for us to do things knowingly without our knowing this. A man might, for example, be got to do things unintentionally in a way that he could hardly prevent (such as screaming by way of reaction to intense pain) and he might be told to do the same thing in the same

circumstances intentionally. In this situation there might come a time when he was not really sure, and might not know, whether he did it intentionally or not." (p18-19)

Once again, Hamlyn seems to have offered us a most odd illustration. If the man was unable to refrain from screaming, it would be absurd to suppose that he screamed intentionally. If he were under orders to scream (for instance if he were a "volunteer" in a military experiment) and if he could not help screaming, then we could properly say that he screamed voluntarily. But to do something voluntarily is not necessarily to do it intentionally; but only to do it in a spirit suggesting that one would do it intentionally if one had any choice in the matter. In this sense, 'voluntary' and 'involuntary' are not formally contradictory; for instance, one's breathing is both voluntary (because one might commit suicide) and involuntary (because, so long as one does not commit suicide, one cannot refrain from breathing).

If the man knows he is going to be made to scream, whether or not he wants to scream, it is absurd to suppose that he could intend to scream. This is because there is no way he can try to scream; and if he cannot try to do it then he cannot intend to do it. This relates to some points which we made in 3.3: to say that he intends to scream, when he knows that he will scream anyway, is like saying that he intends to kill someone, when he knows that the person is already dead; for slightly different reasons. In the latter case it is because he knows that the probability of his killing the other person is zero. In

the former case it is because he knows the probability of his not screaming (if, say, he finds that he does not want to scream) is zero. Perhaps we can see this more clearly in an illustration drawn more obviously from real life. Thus, because I know that the probability of my never dying (in my present form) is zero, it would be absurd for me to say "I intend to die" (though it would not be absurd for me to say "I intend to die by my own hand tomorrow at noon"). In general, one cannot intend to do something if the probability of that thing's not happening is zero.

Because of this, Hamlyn has not shown that "there may conceivably be cases in which one can be said to do something intentionally without knowing it, and yet these are cases in which self-deception seems ruled out." (p19) But even if he had shown this, we should have to reject the next stage in his argument. He says "Thus people can intend things without knowing it simpliciter. It might be held as a corollary of this that, if it follows from the fact that a man does not know something that he cannot be conscious of it (and this does seem to follow), then I have shown that there is unconscious intention. Hence, my paper might come to an end." (p19)

The reasoning in the passage just quoted seems to be as follows:

- (1) There may conceivably be cases of a certain type.
- (2) Therefore people can intend things without knowing it simpliciter.

(3) Therefore, as a corollary, Hamlyn has shown that there is unconscious intention.

But the transition from (1) to (3) seems to trade on an ambiguity in (2). All that (1) entails is that it is not impossible that cases of a certain description exist. Hence, all that (2) is entitled to claim is that it is not impossible that people do intend things without knowing it simpliciter. But it could not follow from that that Hamlyn has shown that there is unconscious intention, but only that he has shown that it is not impossible that there might be. The illicit step turns on two possible senses of 'can'. In the weak sense (where 'can' only implies that something is not impossible), (2) follows from (1). In the strong sense (where 'can' suggests that something actually takes place), (2) does not follow from (1). But only if 'can' were used in the strong sense could we move validly from (2) to (3).

However, even if Hamlyn's argument had been compelling, all that he would have shown would be that cases such as that of the man who screams in response to intense pain are instances of unconscious intention. This, surely, would be a very odd result. The man knows he is going to scream. He has been instructed to scream intentionally. He screams. He does not know whether he screamed intentionally. Therefore his screaming derives from an unconscious intention. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that this line of thought is most peculiar. Moreover, any element of responsibility which might be thought to attach

to unconscious intentions would have to be jettisoned in such cases; because, if the probability of the man's not screaming is zero, he can hardly be held responsible for it.

4.12 We saw in the last section that Hamlyn does not succeed in showing that there are cases of unconscious intention which do not conform to the pattern of self-deception. So, at this point, it is possible that all unconscious intentions (if there are any) do conform to that pattern. Hamlyn says, concerning cases where self-deception does occur, that "we might want to say that the person does after all know that he knows what he is doing; only he does not know it consciously. This is a consequence of my claim that self-deception is itself an intentional activity; it is, if you like, something that involves a strategy, and for this to be possible the agent must have at least some knowledge of what he is up to. How this can be so is our problem." (p19)

This problem is at least as old as Plato, who discusses it in the Theaitetos. But before we consider it, it is worth looking more closely at the manner in which Hamlyn generates it. He says that the problem is a consequence of his claim that "self-deception is itself an intentional activity". But he does not appear to argue for this claim; the truth of which is surely far from self-evident. Indeed it might be argued that the claim itself is evidence of a moralistic stance. That is, if it is true that people are generally held more responsible for what they do

intentionally than for what they do unintentionally, then, if self-deception is an intentional activity, those who indulge in it can be held responsible for it. That Hamlyn's claim is not self-evident can also be seen in the difference between, say, 'He's guilty of self-deception' and 'He has fallen prey to self-deception'.

Another reason why Hamlyn's claim is not obviously true is that it is by no means clear that the notion of self-deception is not self-contradictory. Thus, 'deceive' and its cognates appear to be capable of a strong interpretation and a weak one. The strong interpretation carries the implication that some conscious being is being wilfully misled by another conscious being; as in 'He has been deceiving his wife for some years'. The weak interpretation only requires that some conscious being is mistaken about some phenomenon which is open to misinterpretation; as in 'I didn't realize it was you, my eyes have been deceiving me' or 'This light is very deceptive'.

But if the deception in self-deception is deception in the strong sense, it looks as if the notion of self-deception is self-contradictory. Either that or the "self" is capable of being two conscious beings. Now it might be upheld that the "self" is capable of being two conscious beings (for instance, at different points in time). But this would presuppose a complete theory of personal identity; because, for one reason, it implies that the self cannot be simple (as it is, for example, in the Cartesian theory of personal identity). From this it follows that it is not

obvious that there is any such thing as self-deception, if 'deception' is given its strong interpretation.

If, on the other hand, the deception in self-deception is deception in the weak sense, it looks as if self-deception could not be an intentional activity. This is because deception in the weak sense only requires that some conscious being is mistaken about some phenomenon. But if his mistake were the result of some intentional activity on the part of some conscious being (no matter who), then he would be deceived in the strong sense. It looks as if the only way of avoiding this conclusion is to suggest that his mistake could be the result of intentional activity on the part of an unconscious being; but to claim this would be to beg the question of whether unconscious intentions exist, which is the question Hamlyn is concerned to answer.

4.13 In the last section we saw that it is not self-evident that self-deception is an intentional activity. But let us now suppose that arguments can be mustered which suggest that self-deception is an intentional activity, and return to the problem which, Hamlyn suggests, follows from that view. The problem is to explain how a person can know that he knows what he is doing, but not know it consciously.

Whatever the correct explanation, Hamlyn holds that it cannot be in terms of "a simple ignorance of, or any kind of failure to know, the fact that one knows what one is doing." (Hamlyn/p19) This is really only to reiterate the claim that self-deception is an intentional activity. Hamlyn suggests that the range of cases in which simple ignorance is

possible is probably limited. On the other hand, "the range of cases in which unconscious intention seems possible is very much wider, and if they have to be explained they receive their explanation not from the special features of the situation but by reference to further intentions of the person concerned." (p19) He amplifies this by suggesting that "in appealing to simple ignorance of the fact that one knows what one is doing in doing something, we invoke by negation, in speaking of that ignorance, a concept of knowledge different from that involved in speaking of knowing what one is doing in the full sense." (p19)

In other words, Hamlyn is trying to explain how self-deception is possible, in terms of a distinction between different types (or "fullnesses") of knowledge. He says "The knowledge which one lacks in being ignorant in this way is not the kind of knowledge which one has when one does something knowing what one is doing in the full sense. This latter kind of knowledge might better be termed a consciousness of what one is doing. When one lacks that consciousness of what one is doing it is still possible in some sense to know what one is doing. This is possible either when one does not know (or is ignorant of) the fact that one knows what one is doing or when one is unconscious of what one is doing. I wish to suggest that when one is unconscious of what one is doing one may still know what one is doing and indeed know this in turn." (p.19-20)

But is it possible to not know (or be ignorant of) the fact that one knows what one is doing? If I know what

I am doing, I know that it is true that I am doing it (say it is X). But if I know that it is true that I am doing X, it would normally be held that I also know that I know this. This is because knowledge entails absolute certainty; if I know, then I know that I know, because there is no possibility of doubt. There seems to be only a trivial sense in which I can be ignorant of the fact that I know that something is true. This derives from the impossibility of consciously considering all the truths which one knows, at one and the same time. For instance, if I am concentrating hard on driving through heavy traffic, it might be said that I am ignorant of the fact that I know the chemical composition of water; but this can only be accepted if 'ignorant' is used metaphorically. Strictly speaking, to know something is to know that one knows it. This is not contradicted by the obvious fact that one is not at every moment considering all the truths one knows.

The last paragraph may, at first sight, seem to support Hamlyn's second claim in this context; that "when one is unconscious of what one is doing one may still know what one is doing and indeed know this in turn." Now it follows from what we have just said that if one knows anything one knows that one knows it; but it doesn't follow that one must always be thinking about it. However, it seems to be the case that, if one knows something, one must have thought about it, consciously, at some time in the past (unless knowledge is to be defined in terms of behaviour). If so, Hamlyn's second claim could only truly apply to cases where

one had, at some point, realised consciously that one knew the thing in question. But this does not appear to be possible in the present case, because what is known (or not known) is what one is doing now. But, strictly, this could not have been known in the past; all that one could have known in the past is that, when this moment arrived, one would be doing what one is now doing. But if one had known this in the past, it does not follow that one must still know it now (in any sense). This is because it is possible to cease to know what one once knew (the life-blood of forgetting). Consequently, Hamlyn's claim, that when one is unconscious of what one is doing one may still know what one is doing, is much weaker than it appeared at first. It could only be shown to be true if it could be proved that a person currently knew, but was not thinking about, a fact which he had known and thought about previously.

Here we meet another difficulty. That is, it is not possible for a person to know at a given time what he will be doing at a later time. If it were possible then 'I intend to X tomorrow at noon' would have the same force as 'I am going to X tomorrow at noon': but it does not. We can see why this is so by considering that whatever certainty I could have at a given time that I would be doing X at a later time would have to be less than the certainty I could have that I was doing X at the time when I was doing it. More simply, I can be more certain now of what I am doing now than I can now of what I will be doing later.

Hence I am always less than completely certain of what I shall be doing later. But something is only known if it is completely certain. Hence I can never know what I will be doing later.

It follows from this, and from the other arguments adduced in this section, that Hamlyn's claim that "when one is unconscious of what one is doing one may still know what one is doing" is incorrect. That is, it could only be correct if one could know earlier what one would be doing later. Since one cannot know this, it is incorrect.

4.14 It follows from the last section that Hamlyn's attempt to make sense of the notion of an unconscious intention in terms of the notion of self-deception is unsuccessful. This is because his attempt to make sense of the notion of self-deception is also unsuccessful. This, in turn, is because Hamlyn considers that "if he is self-deceived he has brought about the situation that he is unconscious of the fact that he knows what he is doing as a result of a strategy which is itself intentional." (Hamlyn/p21) But we saw in the last section that it is not possible for him to be unconscious of the fact that he knows what he is doing. Therefore Hamlyn has not succeeded in showing that self-deception is possible.

It is also worth asking about the status of the putative "strategy which is itself intentional". Is this strategy supposed to be consciously or unconsciously intentional? It surely cannot be consciously intentional;

because, if it were, it would involve people saying to themselves things like "I shall now deliberately make myself unconscious of what I am about to do". But people just do not say such things to themselves. And even if they did, it is difficult to see how one could deliberately set about becoming unconscious of something, without incapacitating oneself in the process.

But it is also difficult to see how the strategy could be unconsciously intentional, without initiating an embarrassing regress. If the strategy stems from an unconscious intention, and unconscious intentions are to be explained in terms of self-deception, then the strategy itself involves a self-deception. But this, according to Hamlyn, would require a further intentional strategy. Consequently, a regress would be inescapable.

4.15 We have now seen that, despite the fact that some of them are ingenious and inventive, all Hamlyn's attempts to make sense of the notion of an unconscious intention, and to show that such things as unconscious intentions exist, are unsuccessful. We also suggested, again, that the view that there are unconscious intentions may be evidence of a moral or emotive bias on the part of the ascriber. This evidence is supported in Hamlyn's case by the fact that he holds that "self-deception is itself an intentional activity". It is also supported by what Hamlyn says at the end of his paper about "further intentions". He says "In sum, in order to perform an action intentionally the agent must know what he is doing in some sense; the

general course of his actions must make it intelligible for us to say that he does what he does knowingly. This is most plausible, of course, if there is some point to what is done, if his doing this would satisfy some further intention which there is reason to believe that he has. But what has to be made sure of first of all is that he is doing anything at all; and once again only the general pattern of his other actions in the same context can make a decision on this possible." (Hamlyn/p21-22)

All of this seems curiously loaded against the person to whom the unconscious intention is to be imputed. Once more, we encounter the notion of the "most plausible". An imputation of unconscious intention is held to be "most plausible" if there is "reason to believe" that the doing of the thing in question would satisfy some further intention which the person in question is believed to have. How do we find out about the person's further intentions? Can his further intentions be conscious? Hamlyn says "it makes little sense to suppose that someone might do something for some further end without being conscious of that further end." (p22)

This last claim is surely rather surprising. Why should it make any less sense to suppose that someone might do something for a further end and yet not be conscious of that end, than it does to suppose that someone does something intentionally and yet is not conscious of this? In other words, if some intentions are unconscious, why cannot further intentions be unconscious? Again, if Hamlyn thinks that agents must be conscious of their further

intentions, why does he not suggest that we might find out about their further intentions simply by asking? It seems that further intentions are also to be imputed on the basis of context and appearance. But this opens the door, once more, to the dangers of stigmatization and exploitation which we have lamented repeatedly.

4.16 At this stage, then, there is no reason to believe either that there are such things as unconscious intentions or that there are not. Siegler tried both to show that there are not and that there might be, but he failed in both attempts. Hamlyn was much less confused, being quite convinced that there are unconscious intentions. However, he did not succeed in demonstrating this. Before making a speculative attempt to settle the matter, we must, in the next chapter, consider Gustafson's views on it.

5.2 After reviewing the case of the cat killer, Gustafson concludes that "If there is a simpler pattern of analysis of non-psychanalytic cases of unconscious intentions, it will be unnecessary to introduce something like self-deception with its peculiarities." (Gustafson/p179) He suggests that a simpler pattern of analysis can be formulated in terms of intentions in actions (as opposed to intentions with which people act). "For example, a person's action may exhibit the intention, say, to avoid controversy, but he is not acting with the intention to avoid controversy nor with the further intention to avoid controversy. He would not feature his action as avoiding controversy. He does not

Chapter 5: Gustafson On Unconscious Intentions

5.1 Gustafson undertakes to examine Hamlyn's account of the non-psychoanalytic notion of acting with an unconscious intention (featuring the case of the cat killer); argues that Hamlyn's account fails to distinguish between intentions with which a person acts and intentions in a person's action (so that "his notion of unconscious intentions retains some conceptually odd features" (Gustafson/1973/p178); and suggests another account of cases of unconscious intention which he regards as at least less problematic. Since we have already examined Hamlyn's account at some length, let us pass straight to Gustafson's characterization of the distinction between intentions with which a person acts and intentions in his actions.

5.2 After reviewing the case of the cat killer, Gustafson concludes that "If there is a simpler pattern of analysis of non-psychoanalytic cases of unconscious intentions, it will be unnecessary to introduce something like self-deception with its peculiarities." (Gustafson/p179) He suggests that a simpler pattern of analysis can be formulated in terms of intentions in actions (as opposed to intentions with which people act). "For example, a person's action may exhibit the intention, say, to avoid controversy, but he is not acting with the intention to avoid controversy nor with the further intention to avoid controversy. He would not feature his action as avoiding controversy. He does not

unintentionally avoid controversy but neither does he act with the intention of doing so." (p179-180)

Further, "The concept of an intention in an action does not carry the implication that the agent can say or is aware of the intention in his action. If intention-in-action, rather than intention-with-which, is the notion of intention in 'unconscious intention', then the present source of difficulty for the notion of an unconscious intention is avoided. (Siegler seems to recognize this point, but as far as I can tell he has not exploited it. See p.267, Note 9.)" (Gustafson/p180)

Now it may be true that Siegler does not make the most of his distinction between intentions-with-which and intentions-in. But one cannot help feeling that Gustafson has borrowed from Siegler more heavily than he cares to admit. This suspicion may be reinforced by a re-reading of Siegler's footnote, which we quoted in full in 3.6.

But let us consider Gustafson's present claim on its own merits. He tries to demonstrate the force of this claim by showing how it might be applied to the case of the cat killer. Thus he says:

"The man who runs over cats, repeatedly performing actions in which the intention to kill cats can be seen, can say what he is doing, i.e., driving, etc., but does not recognize the intention to kill cats. If this is unconscious intention and unconscious intentions are a species of

intentions-with-which, Hamlyn's problem arises. If, however, intentions in actions are in the offing, and if they are not always the sorts of intentions that are recognized by the agent and are not intentions, therefore, which he can, in acting, avow as agent, then Hamlyn's problem does not arise. A person repeatedly running over cats or insulting his associates or belittling his wife unconsciously is

- (1) performing intentional actions in driving or speaking,
- (2) knows (can say) what he is doing under some true description of it, e.g., 'driving his car', 'discussing with others', etc.,
- (3) does not know that in his action the intention to kill feline animals is exhibited, etc. and
- (4) the intention to kill felines, put off associates or belittle his wife is discernible in his action.

If he does come to recognize such an intention in his own action (exhibited in his action), then he can say that that was the intention with which he acted. What looks as if it has to be a 'bringing to consciousness' of intentions is, in fact, the shift in roles of intentional accounts of action, based on what the agent has come to see in his actions. The shift is from intentions-in-actions from the

... spectator's point of view to intentions-with-which
learn from the agent's point of view. It is just
this shift that psychoanalysts (and ordinary
people) try to help some agents accomplish. I
should put it this way: one thing we try to get
others to do is to share our point of view of
some of their actions and to see what we see in
their actions. To accomplish this is to attain
objectivity concerning one's own behaviour."
(Gustafson/p180)

5.3 An obvious objection to Gustafson's claim is that the shift in roles of intentions, which he suggests can take place, is impossible since the intentions were either there in the first place or they were not. And, if they were not, they cannot be insinuated in retrospect. But, if they were there, then there is no "shift", but only discovery.

Gustafson recognizes that the objection may be made, but does not allow that it has any force. He says, "The only basis I can see for this objection is the view that intentions, especially intentions-with-which, further intentions, and momentary intentions, are events. If they are particular events, then nothing subsequent to them can change things; they can only be discovered or go undiscovered." (p180-181)

However, Gustafson is unable to see why intentions should be thought to be events. But his argument against this view seems rather weak. He says, "I cannot settle

this matter here, except to add the following. Children learn to do things, control things and to change things; they also learn the vocabulary of intentions, including the responses 'I meant to...', 'I didn't mean to...', 'In doing that I only meant to...', and 'I intend to...'. They do not also learn that these responses indicate events over and above what they did, the circumstances in which they did it and the developments of those circumstances. The thoughts, images and the like that accompany what we do might illustrate our intentions, just as our images might illustrate what we are thinking or have thought. But intending and thinking are not such inner events or phenomena." (p181)

Now it cannot be denied that Gustafson has not settled the matter, since what children learn to do and say, of itself, proves nothing about what does or does not exist. Some children are taught to say prayers to God before they go to sleep. This, of course, does not prove that God exists. But neither does it prove that "He" does not. Similarly, the fact that children learn sentence forms such as 'I intended to...' does not prove that intentions are events, or that they are not.

But if Gustafson believes that such considerations suggest that intentions are not events, it is difficult to see what classification he could wish them to receive. If intentions are not events then they cannot figure as causes in causal explanations. But, as we have already seen in 3.9, unconscious intentions cannot figure as reasons in

teleological explanations. Consequently, it is not easy to see what Gustafson thinks can be accomplished by the notion that unconscious intentions exist. Further, if he thinks that "intending and thinking are not such inner events or phenomena", why should he postulate the existence of any intentions at all? What purpose could such a postulation serve? We shall try to answer these questions in the next chapter.

5.4 In the last section we considered and rejected Gustafson's reply to an objection to his claims about the relation between intentions-in and intentions-with-which. Another objection which he considers is "that intentions in actions, in my sense, do not connect up with the agent's behaviour sufficiently closely to account for the explanatory force of citations or avowals of unconscious intentions. The objection seems to be that intentions in actions could never be the agent's own intentions; hence, they could not explain his actions in the intimate way one's intentions explain one's own doings. If the cat-killer did not have the intention, it could not explain what he was doing. Behind this objection, I believe, is a fishy notion of owning or having an intention." (p181)

However, Gustafson's critique of this "fishy notion" is also suspect. He says "Consider a case of an explanatory thought which explains an action. I am building a picture frame. In doing so I select a nail to join some pieces of board; but the nail splits the boards and ruins my job. I explain what I did by saying 'I thought this

nail was the right size for these boards'. Now I should argue that it is the fact that this is an explanation, i.e. that I give it as an explanation of ruining the job and others accept it as an explanation, that determines the sense of my having the thought expressed by 'This nail is the right size for these boards'. Having this thought need not have involved my actually saying to myself or my having been engaged in thinking to myself that this nail is right, though I might have done this too. I had the purpose of building a frame; my thought (which appears in language only later) explains why I did just what I did do." (p181)

At this point we might object that Gustafson fails to make an essential distinction between explanations and correct explanations. That is, the fact that I give, as an explanation of my ruining the job, a certain thought (which I may or may not have had), does not prove that this is the correct explanation of my bungling it. It could be that I am lying; that I never had such a thought, and the real explanation is that I hate my employer. Or it might be that I really did have that thought but that the real explanation is that I was prey to self-deception (perhaps, again, because I hate my employer). Moreover, if I did really have the thought then I can remember having it, even though it may not have been linguistically enunciated at the time. Many thoughts are experienced consciously, even if only at the level of pre-linguistic impulse (which explains, among other things, how it is possible to have difficulty expressing oneself). Consequently, if one

really did have the thought (that this nail was the right size) then one could have articulated this thought without hesitation if one's activities had been interrupted before the boards were split.

This is why Gustafson is wrong to say (concerning the board-splitting case) that "While cases of unconscious intention are typically more complicated and often concern cases of some moral importance, this case does provide the model I wish to defend here. . . . Accepting an intention in one's own action, which intention explains what one was doing, is to have had that intention, in spite of the fact that one would not have said, in acting, that that was the intention with which one was acting." (p181)

He is wrong just because the unconscious intention is unconscious; whereas the thought that a certain nail is the right size is at least dimly conscious. One could be made aware of having the thought about the nail at the time of having it. But if one could be made aware of a certain intention at the time of having it, then this intention would not be unconscious but only "dimly" or "semi" conscious. This relates to the interesting question whether it is possible to remember something of which one was not at all conscious at the time. It is clear that one can remember things of which one was only "vaguely" conscious at the time. But whether one can remember something of which one was completely unconscious at the time is very debatable.

5.5 In the last two sections we have seen that Gustafson considers and replies to two objections to his claim about the relation between intentions-in and intentions-with-which; but we found that his replies are not convincing. This leaves Gustafson's claim wide open to the further and more fundamental objection that it is not clear that "intentions-in" could be intentions at all, in any meaningful sense.

At no point in his paper does Gustafson argue for the view that "intentions-in" are intentions. All he says is "One notion of intention is the notion of the intention in an agent's action. For example, a person's action may exhibit the intention, say, to avoid controversy, but he is not acting with the intention to avoid controversy nor with the further intention to avoid controversy." (p179) But if he is not acting with the intention (or further intention) to avoid controversy, what ground is there for claiming that the intention to avoid controversy is "in" his action? It looks as if the answer to this must be that his action is much the same as it would be if he were acting with the intention (or further intention) to avoid controversy. That is, it looks as if Gustafson is claiming that there is a certain intention in his action on the basis of that action's conforming to a certain pattern.

But what justification is there for arguing from pattern to intention? It might be held that 'intention' simply is equivalent to 'pattern' in this context. But this would render Gustafson's claim absurd, since the

transition from intention-in to intention-with-which would become the transition from pattern-in to pattern-with-which, which would not make sense.

Consequently, any argument from pattern to intention would have to claim, somehow, that pattern implies intention. But this is, surely, simply false. For one thing, pattern is a function of the observing mind. Where there is no observer, there is no pattern. On the other hand, a given observer may discern a pattern which no other observer claims to discern. Again, interested groups of observers may "discern" patterns which disinterested observers would not discern. Hence the stage is set once more for stigmatization and exploitation of the person whose action is claimed to exhibit the pattern; if, that is, pattern implies intention.

The notion that pattern implies intention has no more justification in the philosophy of action than it has in metaphysics, where it has been used as a premise in the Design Argument for God's existence. So, just as all the traditional arguments for God's existence are fallacious and tell us more about their proponents than they do about God, it looks as if all arguments for the existence of unconscious intentions are fallacious and may tell us more about their proponents than they tell us about the people to whom unconscious intentions are imputed.

5.6 Yet another objection to Gustafson's claim about the relation between "intentions-in" and "intentions-with-which" is very similar to a point which we made in 3.8. There, in

discussing Siegler's second retractive footnote, we saw that he says "Thus we could in principle develop the case so that there were many intentions in acting of which he is unaware or at least not entirely aware." Our objection to this was that it is difficult to see how to ensure that the world does not become overpopulated with "intentions-in".

But, as regards Gustafson's claim, the new difficulty emerges of how to limit the number of "intentions-in" which could qualify for promotion (through "shifting") to intentions-with-which. Suppose we have a very gullible subject (or victim) who is also eager to please. Suppose also that we have a number of interested observers who "discern" a large number of "intentions-in" the subject's actions. Suppose further that the subject accedes to all the imputations of "intentions-in", made by the observers. It is absurd to suppose that it follows that the subject had all those intentions; that they were all intentions-with-which he acted. But that is exactly what follows from Gustafson's claim.

In this context, Gustafson remarks that "it remains important to notice that the agent's acceptance of descriptions others give of his actions is crucial. Unconscious intention descriptions are suggested by the analyst, on the basis of observation, etc., and techniques are used to bring the patient to accept or reject his past as featured by what the analyst suggests. The crucial thing is apparently his acceptance (or final rejection) of the description. This fact should at least weaken our

temptation to postulate unconscious inner events in our account of the procedures of analysis." (Gustafson/p182)

The points made in the paragraph just quoted are surely either rather vacuous or quite repugnant. They are vacuous if Gustafson considers that, whatever intentions-with-which may be, they are of little importance and no moral significance. It seems unlikely that Gustafson thinks this, since, in his concluding remark, he says "we do sometimes accept explanations in terms of intentions in a person's actions which he only later recognizes or accepts as explanations of his previous behaviour". (p182) In other words, it is improbable that Gustafson thinks that "intentions-in" are of little importance, if he believes that we sometimes accept explanations in terms of them as correct explanations of human behaviour.

The points in question are repugnant if Gustafson does believe that intentions play an important role in the explanation of human behaviour, and especially if he wishes to retain the burden of responsibility which intentions are normally thought to carry. This is because, in his account, an agent would be held responsible for doing intentionally anything under descriptions which he might be brought (by psychiatric "techniques") to accept as true descriptions of what he did intentionally.

5.7 In this chapter we have seen that Gustafson does not succeed in showing that there are such things as unconscious intentions, if these are supposed to be anything more than

"discernible" patterns in a person's behaviour. He fails for two main reasons. First, because he does not make intelligible how an "intention-in" could, through a shift in role, become an intention-with-which. And, second, because he gives no reasons for believing that "intentions-in" are intentions at all.

We have now examined attempts by three contemporary philosophers to make coherent the notion of an unconscious intention and to characterize possible instances of unconscious intentions. We have also given reasons for believing that all three attempts fail. If these reasons are substantial, we still have to answer, one way or the other, the question whether there are (or could be) such things as unconscious intentions. We shall try to settle this matter in the next chapter, where we will argue not only that there are no unconscious intentions but also that there could not be such things since, strictly speaking, there are no intentions at all.

at least if we believe in Quine's razor and share Quine's taste for desert landscapes. By 'theoretical entity' we mean any candidate existent which is not immediately given in experience, or which is not a middle-sized object available to experience. Thus, neutrinos, sets and ghosts are theoretical entities; while pains and apples are not.

Now, unless we wish to live in a drastically overpopulated universe, we shall not admit the existence of more theoretical entities than are strictly necessary. Also, theoretical entities obtain their necessity in explanations. For example, the postulation of some such entity as the

Chapter 6: Are There Such Things As Unconscious Intentions?

6.1 It is notoriously difficult to prove that "something" does not exist, if "it" does not involve a logical contradiction. That is, it may be possible to show, for a given portion of space-time, that a certain concept is not instantiated within it; but it is not possible to show this for all of space-time. On the other hand, if a concept is self-contradictory, we can know that it could not be instantiated anywhere. Hence we can claim to know, for example, that there are no square circles in the universe; but we cannot claim to know that the universe contains no winged horses.

But even if we cannot prove that "something" does not exist, we can, if it is a theoretical entity, show that there are good reasons for supposing that it does not exist (or, perhaps more precisely, for not supposing that it does); at least if we believe in Occam's razor and share Quine's taste for desert landscapes. By 'theoretical entity' we mean any candidate existent which is not immediately given in experience, or which is not a middle-sized object available to experience. Thus, neutrinos, sets and ghosts are theoretical entities; while pains and apples are not.

Now, unless we wish to live in a drastically overpopulated universe, we shall not admit the existence of more theoretical entities than are strictly necessary. Also, theoretical entities obtain their necessity in explanations. For example, the postulation of some such entity as the

neutrino was made necessary by a slight imbalance in the equations of quantum mechanics. But such postulations are not made lightly, at least in physics. Thus "In the hands of Fermi and his followers the idea of the neutrino was developed into a full-fledged mathematical theory. Everything hinged on the consistency of the evidence when subjected to the rigours of a searching cross-examination of a profundity and intensity such as only a powerful mathematician could conceive. Despite some difficulties still not fully resolved, the available evidence was found to present a reasonably consistent picture of the invisible thief, and the marauding neutrino was accordingly admitted to the scared halls of science." (Hoffmann/p186)

We suggested, in 3.9, that, if there are such things as unconscious intentions, then they too must be theoretical entities. But it can hardly be claimed that, in the three discussions which we have considered, the idea of an unconscious intention has been developed into anything like a "full-fledged mathematical theory". Indeed, we have already considered a number of reasons why the postulation of such entities may be deemed unwarranted. Let us now review some of these reasons.

6.2 The most realistic and potentially serious candidate case of an unconscious intention which we have considered so far is that presented by Siegler in his ninth footnote, which we quoted in 3.6; that is, the case of the struggling insurance salesman who criticizes his wife. We said, in 3.7, that, if this case is genuinely an instance of unconscious

intention, then it may have consequences in legal contexts; for instance, unconscious intentions might be cited in divorce suits. But we also said, in 3.9, that it is not at all obvious that, in this case, there is anything requiring explanation. The insurance salesman seems to be quite at liberty to deny any "further intention" imputed to him, and to stick to his claim that he is intentionally criticizing his wife for the simple reason that she embarrasses him. It is open to him to object that the view that there is anything more to be explained is best construed as evidence of a prejudice against himself. But, if it is true that there is grave doubt here as to whether anything needs explaining, this case can hardly be adduced as good evidence that there are such things as unconscious intentions.

6.3 Of all the candidate instances of unconscious intention which we have so far considered, the one where there is most clearly something in need of explanation is Hamlyn's case of the cat killer, which we presented in 4.5. However, we saw in 4.8 that a major difficulty with such a case is that it is extremely unlikely that people ever actually carry out such skilled operations while being genuinely unaware of what they are doing. Also, as we said in 4.7, if we did find someone engaged in such a skilled operation, who seemed to be completely unaware of what he was doing, we could always find a more "plausible" explanation than one in terms of unconscious intentions. For instance, we might hypothesize that the cat killer was

simply lying. Again, we pointed out in 4.9 that, even if explanations in terms of unconscious intentions could be made "plausible", there is very little that they could actually explain. If a piece of behaviour needs to be explained, we want to know why it took place. But citations of intentions cannot explain why actions take place, but only (if anything) that the actions are actions and that hence the agents can be held responsible for what they have done. All the above factors, taken together, lead us to the conclusion that, even if we did ever encounter such an incredible case as that of the cat killer, this would not constitute acceptable evidence that there are such things as unconscious intentions.

6.4 In the last two sections we have seen that neither the most nor the least credible of the candidate cases presented, in the three discussions which we have considered, could be admitted as evidence that there are such things as unconscious intentions. This, of course, does not prove that there are no such things; but it should help to undermine the belief that there are. Let us now consider another argument which may further the undermining of that belief.

6.5 It is worthy of note that, while Siegler, Hamlyn and Gustafson all consider that the view that there are such things as unconscious intentions is badly in need of defence, they all take it for granted that there are such things as conscious intentions. And this is an accurate reflection of a general tendency in this area of philosophy.

But are there such things as conscious intentions? Or, more pointedly, are there such things as conscious intentions? If we can produce reasons for believing that there are no such things, this will greatly strengthen the view that there are no unconscious intentions either.

Those who believe that there are such things as intentions also tend to believe that there is an essential link between intentions and introspection. Hampshire, for example, says "I still think that in reporting what our intentions were on a particular occasion...we can in the last resort confirm our statements only by our own introspection and reflection; and only statements made in the first person singular can be said to be as certain as any statements on this topic can be." (Hampshire/1956/p6)

But does this essential link require that we must be able to introspect our intentions themselves? Or are there other introspectible phenomena which entitle us to say what our intentions were on a specific occasion? If the latter is the case then we shall be entitled to claim that there are no such things as intentions, and that 'intention' does not refer to anything specific, but rather is used in a metaphorical, shorthand way to individuate a complex of phenomena. Let us now try to show that this is indeed the case.

We saw, in 3.3, that Thalberg tried and failed to delimit the proper objects of intention. That is, he was concerned with the problem of what can be intended. But no-one seems to have made a comparable attempt to

delimit the proper subjects of intention. That is, no-one appears to have tried to elaborate the conditions governing just who or what can intend.

Now, a number of interesting questions could be asked about whether animals and machines can intend, or have intentions. But, for the sake of this argument, we shall ignore these questions and simply assume that only persons can intend, or have intentions. The main question that remains is: can groups of persons (or institutions) intend, or have intentions; or is this the privilege and prerogative of individual persons? However, this question seems to divide immediately into two. Because, while it is quite obvious that groups of persons can intend, it is very doubtful whether they can have intentions, if intentions are held to be introspectible inner phenomena. We can see why this is so in the following illustration.

Suppose the prime minister says "The government intends to raise pensions early in the new financial year". Now it is undeniable that such sentences (or utterances) are both meaningful and capable of truth and falsity; for example, under certain circumstances, the opposition may claim that the prime minister's statement was false. It follows that it is true that institutions, such as governments, can intend. But it does not follow that such institutions can "have" intentions. What we must try to do is discover necessary and sufficient conditions for it to be true that institutions intend. Can such conditions be derived from the view that institutions can "have" intentions?

A major difficulty is that, if intentions can be "had", supposing that they are inner phenomena, then they can be introspected. But such introspection is only available to a unitary consciousness, and it can hardly be claimed (even by the most naïve political optimist) that the government is possessed of a unitary consciousness.

An attempt might be made to dispose of this difficulty, by arguing that the government's intention is a resultant of individual intentions had by individual members of the government. In this way, it might be claimed, the element of introspection could still be accounted for, since each individual member of the government is (hopefully) possessed of a unitary consciousness.

But it is difficult to see how such an attempt could succeed. Because the individual intentions going into the resultant intention could not be the same as the resultant intention. Thus, the resultant intention is to raise pensions. But the individual intentions cannot be to raise pensions, since none of the individual government members has the power to raise pensions. (This, admittedly, assumes that our criticisms of Thalberg in 3.3 were correct; but, in any case, it is surely intuitively quite obvious that a man cannot intend to do something which he has no power to do. For example, unless I am the Queen, I cannot intend to grant a royal pardon to a convicted murderer.)

If, however, it is true that such individual intentions as are supposed to go into the resultant intention could not be to do the same thing as the resultant intention, then it is extremely difficult to see

how the resultant intention might be thought to be a resultant of them.

A possible reply to this last objection might suggest that it rests on the supposition that the individual intentions had by government members must be intentions to do the thing in question; whereas, it might be claimed, the individual intentions might only be that the thing in question be done.

But this could not be accepted, for much the same reasons. That is, it is only possible to intend that something be done if one has the power to bring about the doing of that thing. But none of the government members, by himself, has the power to raise pensions, or to make the government raise pensions.

In any case, even if it were allowed that the components of a resultant intention could somehow be different from the resultant itself (for example, if it were allowed that individual intentions that could give rise to a resultant intention to), it looks as if this would do away with the hard-won element of introspection which the above discussion has been doing its best to retain. Because, if it is true that each consciously avowed utterance of the form 'I (or we) intend to...' must rest, for its final confirmation or disconfirmation, on some element of introspection, then, if the government's intention were not the same as the individual intentions which were supposed to be its components, we should still require an additional element of introspection to go with the government's intention. But, since the government

could not have a unitary consciousness, we could never acquire such an additional element of introspection.

6.6 The argument in the last section entitles us to the conclusion that, if it is true that consciously avowed utterances of the form 'I (or we) intend to...' depend for their final confirmation or disconfirmation on some element of introspection, then, at least in the case of utterances of the form 'We intend to...' (where 'we' refers to an institution), the confirmation or disconfirmation cannot depend on the introspection of an intention which is somehow "had". What we now have to do is produce an alternative account of how such confirmation or disconfirmation may be obtained, without discarding the seemingly indispensable element of introspection. That is, we must explain how the prime minister's saying "The government intends to raise pensions" can be true or false, and we must do this without gainsaying the ultimate sovereignty of introspection.

6.7 We may suggest that the following conditions are sufficient for the prime minister's statement to be true:

- (1) the government wants to raise pensions;
- (2) the government believes that it will raise pensions;
- (3) there is a skilled activity by which the government can set in motion the raising of pensions.

These conditions demand some further comment. Let us take (1) first. 'The government wants to raise pensions'

is not nearly so troublesome as 'The government intends to raise pensions', if the latter statement is supposed to point to an intention which is somehow inwardly "had". There is no objection to saying 'The government wants to raise pensions' is true if all the individual members of the government (or perhaps a majority of them) want pensions to be raised by the government.

Similarly, with condition (2), there seems to be no objection to saying 'The government believes it will raise pensions' is true if all the individual members of the government believe that pensions will be raised by the government.

Condition (3) derives its justification from our arguments against Thalberg in 3.3. It guarantees, for example, that the government is not indulging in idle fantasy. In the present example, the requisite skilled activity would take the form of enactment of new legislation, followed by the issuing of appropriate instructions to the civil service.

What we are claiming, then, is that the prime minister's statement is true if and only if conditions (1), (2) and (3) are satisfied. If any one or more of these conditions is not satisfied, the prime minister's statement is false. This claim might be objected to as regards (2), on the ground that it is possible for the government to do something and yet not want to do it; for example, the government might indeed intend to raise pensions and still be very reluctant to do so. This objection would be valid if all interpretations of 'want' implied unqualified

eagerness, but they do not. All that (2) requires is that the government should want (according to some strength of interpretation of 'want') to raise pensions. Our claim is only that it is false that the government intends to raise pensions, if it does not want to raise pensions in any sense of 'want'.

6.8 We can now generalize and suggest that necessary and sufficient conditions for the truth of any claim having the form 'We intend to...' can be formulated in terms of desire, belief and the availability of some skilled activity.

Moreover, there seems to be no good reason why this analysis cannot be extended to cover first person singular and third person claims. For example, we may say that 'I intend to go swimming tomorrow at noon' is true if and only if I want to do so, I believe that I will do so, and there is a skilled activity (such as walking to the swimming pool) which will enable me to do so.

We developed this analysis of what we can now call intending reports in the context of group or institutional intending reports. Our motivation for doing so was that it seemed to be impossible for institutions to "have" intentions which could somehow be introspected. Now it appears that the same analysis is quite adequate to first person singular intending reports. This claim is easily testable since anyone objecting to it has only to produce one sound counterexample.

But if our claim is correct, then, just as there could not be institutional intentions, we can now argue that there is no need to suppose that there are any first person singular intentions. That is, there are two requirements which an analysis of intending reports must satisfy. First, it must explain how such reports can be meaningful and capable of truth and falsity. Second, it must show how confirmation or disconfirmation of such reports has an essential link with introspection. Our analysis satisfies the first requirement in terms of desire, belief and the availability of skilled activity. And it satisfies the second requirement through the essential connexion which desiring and believing reports have with introspection.

6.9 What our argument has been leading up to is that there is just no point in supposing that, even in first person singular cases, there are such things as intentions if these are supposed to be quantifiable over, inner phenomena which are somehow available to introspection. Such phenomena could only be theoretical entities, and their postulation could only be warranted by the need for an explanation of something. But we have seen that that which the existence of intentions might be thought to explain is much more simply and convincingly explained in other terms. That is, it is quite obviously true that people intend, desire and believe; but it is not at all obvious that people "have" intentions. Since the fact that people intend can be explained in terms of the fact that they desire and

believe, it is quite gratuitous to suppose that people "have" intentions. Once again, we cannot claim to have proved that there are no such things as intentions, but only that there are no good reasons for supposing that there are.

6.10 Our argument, in the last five sections, has been designed to show that it is both unnecessary and implausible to postulate the existence of such inner phenomena as intentions have been supposed to be. If the argument succeeds it will have shown that "intentions" should now be ascribed the same status as "ghosts", "witches", "werewolves" and "phlogiston". That is, all these "entities" have, at one time or another, been thought to be of considerable explanatory value; but now we can see that they are entirely dispensable since all the phenomena which they were previously thought to explain can now be explained more simply and more convincingly in other terms. However, even if we can now omit "witches", say, from all our explanations, it does not follow (nor can we prove) that "witches" do not exist. The same must be allowed to be true of "intentions". But, if anyone still wants us to believe that "witches" and "intentions" do exist, it is up to him to provide us with new and compelling evidence to that effect.

Moreover, in so far as our argument in the last five sections has told against the view that there are such things as conscious intentions, it has told equally

against the view that there are unconscious intentions. This is because, if there were any such things as unconscious intentions they would be parasitic (for their structure) on conscious intentions. Consequently, if there is reason to believe that there are no conscious intentions, there is at least as much reason to believe that there are no unconscious ones. Hence, we suggest, "unconscious intentions" also should be grouped along with "witches", "ghosts", "werewolves" and "phlogiston".

6.11 A possible objection to the line of argument which we have been pursuing is that it has been pushing, very largely, at an open door. That is, it might be claimed that to argue that there are no such discrete, quantifiable inner phenomena as intentions (conscious or unconscious) is not to do anything useful, since no-one does actually suppose that there are such things. And, so the objection might continue, just as 'intention' is not taken to refer directly to some discrete inner phenomenon but rather to some complex state of affairs in which it is true that someone intends, so 'unconscious intention' is only supposed to refer loosely to some complex state of affairs in which it is true that someone intends unconsciously. Since, at first sight, this objection may seem to have some force, we must now reply to it.

6.12 First, it may be true that no-one explicitly acknowledges the view that intentions are discrete, inner phenomena. But it also seems to be true that some people

are implicitly committed to this view. We can see this by referring to 5.3. There we considered a reply by Gustafson to a possible objection to his case. This objection, he observed, depended on the view that intentions are inner events. We saw that his criticism of this view was not acceptable, but we are now in a position to see that his intuition was correct.

Second, it looks as though the view that intentions are discrete, inner entities of some sort receives tacit support from the structure of our language. This point follows an insight gained by Whorf from his work in comparative linguistics. Thus he says "The English technique of talking depends on the contrast of two artificial classes, substantives and verbs ... Our normal sentence, unless imperative, must have some substantive before its verb, a requirement that corresponds to the philosophical and also naïve notion of an actor who produces an action." (Whorf/p242) Our point here is that the structure of the English language, involving the use of 'intention' as a substantive, may have led to the deep-rooted, implicit and false assumption that "intentions" are things.

Thirdly, the assumption that "intentions" are things seems also to be involved in the view that people are responsible for their intentions. That is, if it is agreed that 'intention' can only indicate loosely a complex state of affairs in which it is true that someone intends, then it is difficult to see how someone could be held responsible for his intention, at least if the analysis of intending

suggested in 6.7 and 6.8 is correct. This is because, in our analysis, intending reduces to desiring, believing and the availability of a skilled activity. But people are not commonly thought to be responsible for their desires and beliefs, in the same way as they are supposed to be responsible for their "intentions". Consequently, if our analysis of intending is correct, it looks as though it is a mistake to hold people any more responsible for what they intend than for what they desire and believe. Just as what people desire and believe is not thought to be the product of any metaphysical freedom, but rather is causally determined, so we can now say that what people intend is causally determined to exactly the same degree.

The putative connexion between "intentions" and responsibility seems to depend, though perhaps not explicitly, on the view that our intentions constitute a kind of world of inner windows through which the weird and wonderful angels of Kantian moral philosophy can be efficacious in the phenomenal world without being conditioned by it. We do not claim that this view is ever openly espoused, but only that anyone is committed to it (or something like it) who believes that we are responsible for our intentions since these are products of our metaphysical freedom. Since this latter belief is quite widespread, we can claim to have been doing much more than pushing at an open door if we have argued convincingly that there are no such things as intentions. Also, they

always pertain to actions which either have taken place or which are about to take place. That is, they never pertain to

6.13 In the last section we replied to the first part of the possible objection to our case which we outlined in 6.11. The second part of this objection suggests that, just as we can intend (consciously) though there are no such things as intentions, so we can intend unconsciously though there are no such things as unconscious intentions. Consequently, the objection continues, we have not really achieved anything even if we have argued convincingly that there are no such things as unconscious intentions.

There are several ways in which we can reply to this. First, if we have argued convincingly that there are no such things as unconscious intentions, then we have undermined a possible motive (if a bad reason) for believing that people intend unconsciously. That is, people could no longer be held responsible for what they intended unconsciously, if unconscious intending could be analysed out in terms of desiring and believing.

Second, even if the notion of unconscious intending could be shown to be coherent (and this is unlikely due to difficulties inherent in the idea of unconscious believing), the view that this notion is ever instantiated would encounter all the objections which we posed against Siegler, Hamlyn and Gustafson. How, for example, could cases of unconscious intending be identified? What we may call unconscious intending reports are always (at least initially) in the second or third person. Also, they always pertain to actions which either have taken place or which are taking place; that is, they never pertain to

future actions which have not yet been begun. Consequently, they must take the form of the reporter's giving a description of what the agent does which is different from the description which the agent would give. Hence it is always open to the agent simply to deny that the alternative description is a true description of what he is doing. Even in cases of psychiatric "interventions" where the agent does admit to having intended something unconsciously, there seems to be no real safeguard against his being browbeaten into making false admissions. Again, it is difficult to see how the belief that someone unconsciously intended to do something could help in any way to explain his having done it (or help to explain anything else, for that matter).

Thirdly, it is up to anyone who thinks that there are cases of unconscious intending to produce some convincing examples. And it is not easy to imagine what these might be. If the candidate cases of unconscious intentions (qua things) which we considered were re-introduced more modestly as candidate cases of unconscious intending, they would still face much the same difficulties as before. For example, in Siegler's case of the struggling insurance salesman, it is always open to the agent to deny that he is doing anything at all. And, with cases as bizarre as that of Hamlyn's cat killer, we can always argue that such cases do not occur in the real world, and that, even if they did, we should always look for a more convincing explanation than that the cat killer killed cats intentionally but unconsciously; for instance, that he was killing cats intentionally but

consciously and then lying about it. However, there are two cases in which it might still be claimed that we have instances of unconscious intending, and these we must now consider.

6.14 We said in 3.9 that, in contrast to Siegler's case of the insurance salesman, in the case of Freudian slips there is quite clearly something in need of explanation. Now, it might be argued, even if Freudian slips are not counted as instances of unconscious intentions (qua things) they must be allowed to be instances of unconscious intending.

This suggestion has to be rejected if it is allowed that our analysis of intending in general (in 6.7 and 6.8) is correct. This is because it is not possible to show that the "agent" in a Freudian slip believes that he is going to make that slip. In the case of the President's mistake, it could not be shown that the President believed he was going to say "I hereby declare this session closed". The only way round this would be to say that we believe we are going to do everything which we do in fact do. But this would be absurd. Hence, we suggest, it is a mistake to claim that Freudian slips are instances of unconscious intending. On the other hand, they may well be instances of unconscious desiring.

6.15 We suggested in 4.9 that, if such a fantastic case as that of Hamlyn's cat killer were ever actually encountered, we should seek a more convincing explanation than one in

terms of unconscious intentions. And, we suggested, one such alternative explanation would be that the cat killer had been hypnotized and instructed to run over cats at every opportunity without being aware of what he was doing. Now, it might be argued, it is open to Hamlyn to reply that even if the man had been hypnotized in this way this would not affect his claim since the man would still be killing cats intentionally but unconsciously.

This is quite an interesting possibility (for some experimental instances of bizarre behaviour induced by hypnosis, see Erickson's paper), but it is not clear that there is any good reason for saying that the man would still be killing cats intentionally. It is true that his behaviour is organized, directed and complex. It certainly looks as if it is intentional. But there seems to be no difference between this case and that, say, in which a robot kills cats. It could be said that the robot's behaviour is also intentional. But this would either be true by definition, and hence trivial; or the robot's behaviour could only be intentional with respect to the robot's designer, in which case the robot's behaviour would not be an instance of unconscious intending. Similarly, we can argue, if the behaviour of the hypnotized cat killer is said to be intentional, it is with respect to the hypnotist. Hence the cat killer's behaviour is not an instance of unconscious intending. This view is supported by the fact that, in such a case, it could not be shown either that the cat killer wanted to kill cats or that he believed he was going to

kill cats. Consequently, if our general analysis of intending is correct, it could not be shown that the man intended to kill cats. This, of itself, would not prove that he did not intend to kill cats; but, if it could never be shown that he intended to kill cats, there would be no point in claiming that he did intend this.

6.16 In the last two sections we have considered and rejected two candidate types of case of unconscious intending. Our reasons for rejecting these cases depend on the assumption that our general analysis of intending (given in 6.7 and 6.8) is correct. If it is incorrect (for example if there is some irreducible inner surd which is the essence of an intention) we have been unable to see why this is so. If our analysis is thought to be merely inadequate, it is up to anyone thinking this to produce a more adequate account.

Our main concern, in this thesis, has been to show that three recent discussions on the subject of "unconscious intentions" all fail to give good reasons for thinking that there are such things. In this chapter we have tried, more briefly, to give some more general reasons for thinking that there are no such things. In the course of this attempt, we argued that there are no such things as intentions at all. This result, if correct, was seen to undermine the traditional connexion between "intentions" and responsibility (in so far as this is supposed to derive from some sort of metaphysical freedom). The undermining

of this connexion, in turn, was seen to vitiate what may sometimes be a powerful motive (though a poor reason) for supposing that there are unconscious intentions. That is, people can hardly be held responsible (and blamed for) their unconscious intentions if there are no such things as intentions at all. Also, we argued latterly, it is not even true that people intend unconsciously. This result is not so important, however, since even if people do intend unconsciously they cannot be held accountable for such intendings.

The thesis we have advanced, if correct, may have some quite important applications. In law, for example, consideration of "intentions" goes into the meting out of sentences; thus, "loitering with intent" is thought to be more heinous than "loitering with want". This practice might have to be revised if it were admitted there are really no such things as "intentions". Alternatively, a different rationale might have to be provided for the practice, perhaps in terms of social control and prevention at the expense of "desert" and "responsibility". Unfortunately, requirements of time and space force us to postpone a further discussion of these interesting possibilities.

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