

## Introduction

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Psychotherapy has come to occupy a major place in western culture. While in earlier times people turned to the clergy for help when troubled in mind, they now turn to psychotherapists. As depicted wonderfully by Cushman (1995), it has become a part of modern society to an extent where it contributes to the construction of that same society. It is applied to individuals, couples, families and groups. Whatever its focus, its intent is to reduce suffering and promote more effective living. This intent is founded on the assumption that suffering and unsatisfactory living in many ways are matters of the subjective world of the individual. In this regard, broad subscription is given to the psychoanalytic assumption that subjectivity involves conflicts between any of a number of dualities of existence - between biology and culture, reason and emotion, practicalities and idealities, one's own needs and those of others, and so on. It is further assumed that any of a number of hindrances may impede the resolution of conflicts, and hence of suffering. These may be hindrances such as denial, suppression, and repression of awareness of what is involved in conflict, guilt about past actions, dread of future actions, and security from stability however unsatisfying. Within this framework, psychotherapy sees as its task to help people articulate the complex fabric of thoughts and feelings involved in what is troubling them and, through the articulation, to resolve their difficulties. It is assumed that, through the agency of the therapist in collaboration with the agency of clients, the clients' negative feelings, mystification about their experience and ineffective behavior come to change to positive feelings, insight into their experience, and effective action.

Significantly, the theory and practice of psychotherapy do not involve only the subjectivity of those receiving it. They also entail the subjectivity of those conceptualizing its nature and providing it. It is thus open to endless modifications responsive to whatever interests theorists and practitioners bring to it. Accordingly, an interest in behavior leads to behavior therapy, in cognition to cognitive therapy, in existence to existential therapy, and so on. The joint subjectivity involved in psychotherapy make it especially challenging as a *researchable* activity. How is it possible to approach rigorously, meaningfully and thus compellingly an activity that is inherently so unstable?

Historically, two main avenues of approach to psychotherapy research have been engaged, the one tacitly, the other explicitly. The tacit engagement has been hermeneutic, while the explicit engagement has been natural scientific. Hermeneutics traditionally has entailed the interpretation of textual material of various sorts that is difficult to understand (Ricoeur, 1978). In a broad sense, the discourse between the person receiving therapy and the one giving it may be thought of as such a text. It is the interpretation of a number of such texts leading to an awareness of patterns of relationships among forms of discourse that leads to an understanding of what is involved in therapy and of its effectiveness. In being a

matter of interpretation, hermeneutics takes it for granted that different people engaged with the same text often derive different interpretations. Thus, hermeneutics acknowledges the role of subjectivity in interpretation. Psychoanalysis and its variants are good examples of this approach to inquiry in that the discourse and behavior of the analysand in effect is taken to be a complex text requiring interpretation. Meanwhile, the concept of counter-transference takes into account the role of the analyst's subjectivity.

Alternatively, the natural scientific approach to psychotherapy research draws on research practices in the biological and natural sciences. Thus, the application of psychotherapy is likened to an experiment. Measures of 'variables' (see Danziger & Dzinis, 1997) of interest are taken. Some of these variables have to do with what is assumed to be operative during the therapy – variables such as the working alliance between the therapist and the client (see Bordin, 1979). These 'process' variables are hypothesized to impact positively on other variables such as the client's self-esteem or maladaptive symptoms of various sorts ('outcome' variables). In the natural scientific approach, rather than deliberately making the researcher's subjectivity integral to the research proceedings, attempts are made to nullify this subjectivity through the utilization of various procedural controls. In support of this objectivism, quantitative returns are analyzed statistically as a protection against the possibility that apparent positive effects of the therapy may have occurred by chance.

In the history of psychotherapy research, the hermeneutic approach has had an uneasy relationship with the natural scientific one. In its quest for respectability in the larger scientific community, the therapy research guild has ruled that the term 'research' should be reserved for the application of the natural scientific method. It is within the context of this historical development that a third approach to inquiry – qualitative research – is both interesting and promising. Having arrived on the psychotherapy research scene during the last two decades, this approach has its origins in phenomenology (Husserl, 1913/1962), hermeneutics (Dilthey, 1961; Gadamer 1960/1992), ethnography (e.g., Geertz, 1973), symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969), and discourse analysis (e.g., Garfinkel, 1967). It is an attempt to understand the meaning and impact of human discourse and actions. It is a resurrection of the *human* science that was argued for by Dilthey and Wundt but repudiated by the positivism expressed in the natural science approach (Fischer, 1977; Giorgi, 1970; Rennie, 1995; on the repudiation of Wundt's folk psychology - as opposed to his physiological psychology - see Danziger, 1979). Thus, it takes into account such matters as history, language and context that make the production of knowledge relative to the perspectives of the individuals studied and of those doing the inquiry. Yet, as claimed by Elliott, Fischer and Rennie (1999), "...this relativism is not solipsistic in that pains are taken to ground understandings of the subject matter empirically, and to specify the researchers' conceptual frameworks" (p. 217). Thus, the common ground of these approaches, viewed epistemologically, is marked by the attempt to reconcile the opposing perils of objectivism and relativism (Kvale, 1996, this volume; Rennie, this volume).

Although not accepted on equal terms with the natural scientific approach, the psychotherapy research community increasingly is making room for qualitative therapy research. This uptake has been reflected in the programs of annual meetings of professional bodies such the International Society for Psychotherapy Research, the British Psychological Society, the Canadian Psychological Association, and the American Psychological Association. Also, it has been featured in special sections of major journals such the *Journal of Counsel-*

*ing Psychology* (1994), the *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling* (1996) and *Psychotherapy Research* (1999), and books are being devoted to it either whole or in part (e.g., Faller & Frommer, 1994; Langenberg, Aigen & Frommer, 1996; McLeod, 2000; Toukmanian & Rennie, 1992).

The present work is constituted in the main of revisions and expansions of the papers given at the first international conference on qualitative psychotherapy research, held in Düsseldorf in 1996. A feature of this conference, and hence of this book, is that qualitative therapy research in both the German-speaking countries of Europe and the Anglo-American countries is addressed. The volume is organized around two questions. Firstly, what methodological justification does qualitative research claim within a scientific discourse dominated by the nomological epistemology of positivistic, natural scientific method? Secondly, what empirical methods constitute good qualitative psychotherapy research? The first question thus addresses the methodology of qualitative research, while the second pertains to its methods as they have been developed for and applied to the study of psychotherapy.

The methodological question is attended to in Part I. Steinar Kvale opens this section with a chapter on the psychoanalytic interview as qualitative research. In a lucid analysis, he explores the paradigmatic meaning that the psychoanalytic interview holds for psychological research in general. He elucidates how broad areas of psychological knowledge implicitly recur to psychoanalytic knowledge and, in so doing, he challenges the ubiquitous discredit of psychoanalysis in contemporary academic psychology. Turning to qualitative research, he draws attention to extensive parallels between it and the psychoanalytic interview, such as knowledge production through interpersonal relations, generalization from case studies, and validation through communication and action. In the course of these considerations, he develops a strong postmodern argument that making more visible the relational and constructive aspects of therapeutic knowledge gained through the psychoanalytic interview both integrates this knowledge into and enriches social science knowledge.

Some expression of the Anglo-American approach to qualitative research is given in the next chapter in this section, on the methodology of the grounded theory approach to qualitative research developed by Glaser and Strauss. In this contribution, David Rennie offers a new methodology of this method by drawing on several lines of traditional and contemporary philosophical thought and integrating them into Dilthey's methodical hermeneutics, or the application of induction to the interpretation of historical documents. A feature of this methodology is the gains it makes toward explicating the reconciliation of realism and relativism implicit in the grounded theory method. In turn, this explication provides guidance on the many procedural choices facing users of this method.

The first section closes with a complement to Kvale's consideration of the applicability of the psychoanalytic method to qualitative therapy research. Similar to Rennie's quest regarding grounded theory, Jörg Frommer and Michael Langenbach attempt to work out a coherent logic of justification for the psychoanalytic case study as a source of epistemic knowledge. Following Kvale, these authors argue that the psychoanalytic understanding of case stories and research methodologies in the social sciences converge in interesting ways. The case story is conceived as a holistic structure which is different from but not incompatible with the kinds of structures yielded by 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973) of the process of therapy. The authors take Weber's concept of the *ideal type* to connect more abstract

levels of description of the structure of psychotherapeutic processes with empirical data. In addition, they hold that Glaser and Strauss's concept of *trajectory* may help to explain just how it is that therapy processes seem to assume to structural form despite their entailing non-linear, multi-level, dialectical and dramatic aspects.

The second part of the book concretizes the methodological considerations by portraying particular methods of qualitative psychotherapy research and providing helpful specification of ways in which they may be conducted. The extensive contribution by Robert Elliott, Emil Slatick and Michelle Urman on qualitative change process research distinguishes between *data collection* and *data analysis*, and describes in rich detail supported by illustrations several approaches to each aspect of this application of qualitative research. The data collection approaches range from the use of questionnaires to tape-replay assisted recall of experience, while the data analytic approaches include grounded theory analysis, task analysis, discourse analysis and conversation analysis, as well as Elliott's own Comprehensive Process Analysis.

In the next chapter, Bill Stiles and Lynne Angus present a portrayal of how micro-analysis of therapeutic discourse is used in reference to the *Assimilation Model* of therapy process developed by Stiles and colleagues over the last decade. This model of therapy seeks to deal with the scope and duration of the process and outcome of therapy by identifying particular problematic experiences and tracking them throughout the course of a therapy. The chapter is thus a fine example of how qualitative research can be used to develop and then to elucidate a particular model of therapy.

Similar to Robert Elliott and Bill Stiles and their associates, John McLeod and his group are influenced by the clinical tradition of the experiential psychotherapies. Key features of these approaches to therapy are a conception of people as imbued with reflexivity, and a perspective on therapeutic practice that eschews labelling and emphasizes the resolution of personal difficulties through a process of meaning-making based in the expression and unfolding of these feelings and emotions. The contribution of John McLeod and Sophia Balamoutsou connects this tradition with an interest in narrative theory which was grown within psychotherapy and social sciences in recent years. Following a description of the epistemological principles of their approach, they present strategies and techniques of the method of Qualitative Narrative Analysis which they have developed.

Next is a chapter by Ulrich Stuhr and Sylvia Wacholz, committed to the psychoanalytic tradition. Echoing the views of Kvale as well as Frommer and Langenbach, they start from the assumption that there is a similarity between the structure of the psychoanalytic interview and the qualitative research paradigm. In keeping with the sentiment of Frommer (1996), Stuhr and Wacholz make use of the qualitative taxonomic method, *Verstehende Typenbildung* (forming types by comprehension) which, they hold, corresponds with the psychoanalytic mode of comprehension.

The section on method ends with a contribution by Constance Fischer and colleagues on the empirical phenomenological approach, developed at Duquesne University, to the study of psychotherapy. Few of the many doctoral dissertations coming out of this graduate program in psychology have been published and thus the elucidation and illustration of this approach to the study of psychotherapy are overdue.

The final chapter of the volume by David Rennie and Jörg Frommer offers some reflections on the contents of the volume. Three main concerns arising from the chapters are given

attention: the first is how to deal with the qualitative researcher's subjectivity once it is actively taken into account. The second is that most qualitative research does not seem to build on itself but instead seems headed in the direction of creating a polyglot of unrelated studies. Last but not least is the matter of the practicality of conducting qualitative therapy research given its demands on time and resources and given the sociology of knowledge production in contemporary psychotherapy research.

The contribution by Steinar Kvale first appeared in *Qualitative Inquiry*, Volume 5, pp. 87-113, while the chapter by David Rennie is reprinted from *Theory & Psychology*, Volume 10, pp. 481-502. Appearing here in their published forms except for minor changes, both of these chapters derived from papers given at the Düsseldorf conference. Thanks are extended to Sage Publishing for granting permission to reprint them. The editors are also indebted to Andreas Strattkötter and Martina Knüfermann for their large-scale assistance in the preparation of this volume. Thanks are also due to Wolfgang Pabst of Pabst Science Publishers for his prompt and ready willingness to assume the responsibility of publishing it.

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## **The Psychoanalytic Interview as Qualitative Research**

STEINAR KVALE

### **Introduction**

In what follows I will discuss the potentials of the psychoanalytic interview in providing knowledge of the human situation. I will, on the basis of philosophical analyses of knowledge and qualitative social science research, point to possibilities of a conceptual and methodological refinement of the therapeutic interview as a method of research. I shall further argue that the psychoanalytic interview is relevant for enriching and deepening the use of qualitative interviews in the social sciences today.

I have not myself worked with therapeutic research; I have recently written a book about qualitative interview research, where I draw upon therapeutic interviews as well as postmodern reconceptualisations of knowledge (Kvale, 1996).

### **Therapeutic Research between Scylla and Charybdis**

A therapeutic research project may be a dangerous voyage, cruising between anecdotal case stories with little method and quantified physiological and behavioral measures with little psychological content. Clinical research has produced a long history of rejected articles and shipwrecked dissertations. A therapeutic research voyage may be compared to Odysseus sailing the narrow strait between Charybdis and Scylla on his return from Troy, a passage which he declared to be the most dangerous part of his long research voyage.

On one side of the perilous strait waits the monster Charybdis, swallowing whole ships with their crew. The therapeutic researcher here gets carried away by entertaining and exciting case histories, often with the therapist as the hero. There is seldom any methodical reflection on how the evidence for the story is obtained, nor analyses of the narrative structures involved, nor of the validity of the knowledge presented. After a century of psychoanalytic therapy and knowledge production, the main evidence of the psychoanalytic theory still rests upon knowledge accumulated through psychoanalytic interviews, a research method which has hardly been given systematic thought in the social sciences.

Odysseus attempted so hard to avoid Charybdis that he came too close to the other side of the narrow strait, where the six-headed monster Scylla devoured six of his crew. Contemporary therapeutic researchers may try so hard to avoid therapeutic anecdotes that they get caught on the other side in a positivist straight jacket, losing the lived therapeutic relations in a web of statistical correlations and significances which rarely yield knowledge relevant to the therapeutic situation. In this form of imitative scientism, the clinical researcher may become more Catholic than the pope or, in psychoanalytic terminology, may identify with the aggressor.

The classical psychoanalysts and the statistical experimentalists may remain secure and comfortable behind fortifications on each of their coasts, hardly taking notice of each other. It is the therapists who venture into research who are in trouble, caught in the dangerous waters between the opposing sides.

Vessels sailing the current qualitative research wave in the social sciences may also be caught in the narrow strait, interview researchers blowing back and forth between a *no-method* Charybdis and an *all-method* Scylla, and often fall prey to both monsters. On the one hand, there is hardly any methodical account of or reflection on the production of knowledge in the original conversations. The same applies to the transformations from living conversations to written texts and to the validity of the interpretations of meanings of the text. On the other hand, there is a qualitative hyperempiricism of quantified categorizations and endless quotes from interview transcripts. Such interview reports lose the lived reality of the conversation as well as the human situation portrayed in the subjects' stories.

One way out of this dilemma is to turn to Freud's (1963) writings on the psychoanalytic interview, for which he claimed: "It is indeed one of the distinctions of psychoanalysis that research and treatment proceed hand in hand" (p. 120).

### **Postulates about Psychoanalytic Knowledge Production**

In what follows I will investigate possibilities of developing conceptual maps for researchers today navigating in the dangerous waters between a no-method Charybdis and an all-method Scylla. I will then go back to Freud's writings on therapy in the light of later philosophical analysis of knowledge. First I shall put forward some general postulates about psychoanalytic knowledge and research and point out some paradoxes in the field (see Table 1). Thereafter I provide documentation for the postulates and suggest some ways out of the paradoxes.

### **Psychoanalytic Knowledge and Research**

If the postulates put forth about psychoanalytic knowledge and research should not hold, the paradoxes evaporate and the following analysis would collapse like a house of cards. So, before looking closer at the construction of knowledge in the psychoanalytic interview, I shall provide some documentation for the first two postulates concerning the significance of psychoanalytically produced knowledge and the neglect of the psychoanalytic research method.

Table 1: Four Postulates about Psychoanalytic Knowledge Production

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**Postulate 1. *The significance of psychoanalytic knowledge production:***

Major parts of the knowledge presented in current textbooks of scientific psychology stem from psychoanalytic therapeutic interviews.

**Postulate 2. *The neglect of the psychoanalytic research method:***

The psychoanalytic interview does not exist as a method in textbooks on scientific psychological methods.

***The therapeutic research paradox:***

Major parts of current psychological knowledge are derived from a psychoanalytic interview which does not exist either as a research method either in scientific psychology or in current therapeutic research.

**Postulate 3. *The noncompatibility of psychoanalytic research and positivist science:***

The psychoanalytic interview breaks systematically with positivist demands for a scientific psychological method.

**Postulate 4. *The compatibility of psychoanalytic research and alternative conceptions of science:***

The psychoanalytic interview comes in important aspects close to the conceptions of knowledge production within existential, hermeneutic, dialectical and postmodern philosophical positions.

***The therapeutic philosophy paradox:***

Therapeutic researchers still adhere to philosophically outdated positivist conceptions of scientific research and do not recognize the coherence of knowledge production arising out of therapeutic conversation with current developments in philosophy.

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***Postulate 1. The Importance of Psychoanalytically Produced Knowledge***

Psychoanalysis is the one branch of psychology which, a century after its inception, still has a strong professional impact on psychotherapy. Moreover, it continues to be of interest to the general public, other sciences, and philosophers. Psychoanalytic theory has been a major generator of research in psychology. Psychoanalytic concepts have been assimilated into the mainstream of contemporary psychology in that central areas of current textbooks of psychology are based on knowledge originally obtained through the psychoanalytic interview. Examples of such knowledge are dreams and neurosis, childhood development and personality, anxiety and motivation, defense mechanisms and unconscious forces, and the general importance of sexuality. To give one indication of the pervasive influence of psychoanalytically produced knowledge, in the *Encyclopedia of Psychology* (Corsini, 1994) there are more than twice as many references to Freud than to any other pioneer in psychology such as Wundt, Pavlov, Watson, Piaget or Skinner.

It should be noted that significant knowledge construction in the psychoanalytic interview is not confined to Freud's contributions. Other psychoanalysts, such as Jung and Adler, also produced important knowledge of the human situation through their therapeutic interviews. Neither should it be overlooked that a significant social psychological study of racial prejudice and personality - *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno et al., 1950) - was based on insights originally developed through psychoanalytic interviews by Erich Fromm and others in connection with the *Frankfurt Institute of Social Research* in the 1930s. Also, the current focus on *narcissistic personality disorders*, a term developed theoretically by Freud, originated with clinical descriptions from the therapeutic interviews of analysts such as Kohut, Kernberg and Mitscherlich in the 1960s.

Not all knowledge produced from the therapeutic situation generates significant understandings of human relationships. Much current knowledge produced from therapy tends to be of a popularized technical kind, designed for the bookstores' "self help" sections. On the other hand, the fact that the therapeutic conversation has been the production site for penetrating insights into the human situation by therapists such as Freud, Jung and May should remain a challenge for current therapeutic researchers.

### ***Postulate 2. The Neglect of the Psychoanalytic Interview as a Method of Knowledge Production***

One looks in vain in textbooks of psychological methods for the major source of psychoanalytic knowledge - the therapeutic interview. This neglect pertains not only to the traditional natural science oriented textbooks featuring experimental and quantitative methods. Also in recent, more open approaches, which also draw in methods from the humanities such as discourse and narrative analysis, Freud's psychoanalytic interview does not appear as a research method, as is true, for example, of *Research Methods in Psychology* (Breakwell, Hammond & Fife-Shaw, 1995) with separate chapters on about 20 research methods, and *Rethinking Methods in Psychology* (Smith, Harré & Langenhove, 1995). The sociological *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods* by Taylor and Bogdan (1998), which contains a sensitive chapter on the interpersonal relations of in-depth interviewing, has no references to the contributions hereto by psychoanalytic research interviews.

More paradoxical than the external academic disregard of the innovative psychoanalytic research method, is that the neglect is also mirrored internally in the psychoanalytic tradition. In a systematic analysis of the status of psychoanalytic theory, Rapaport stated that "the major body of positive evidence for the theory lies in in the field of accumulated clinical observations" and went on to state "...the lack of clarification as to what constitutes a valid clinical research method leaves undetermined the positive evidential weight of the confirming clinical material" (Rapaport 1959, p. 140f), concluding "the techniques of psychoanalysis have been studied, but its methods have hardly been given systematic thought" (Rapaport 1959, p. 151). Rapaport's challenge made over 40 years ago does not appear to have been taken up by later therapeutic researchers.

It remained for philosophers such as Apel (1965) and Habermas (1971), inspired by the work of the psychoanalyst Alfred Lorenzer, to reconsider the research potentials of the therapeutic interview and to follow up Freud's assertion that in psychoanalysis research and

treatment follow hand in hand. Through an analysis of Freud's (1963) writings on therapy and technique Habermas found a model for an emancipatory social science of self reflection, resting on an oscillation between naturalist quasi-causal explanations and hermeneutical interpretations of meaning. Habermas' analysis of the methodological blind spot of psychoanalysis and his arguments for psychoanalysis as a model for a critical social science has, to my knowledge, hardly been taken up by current therapeutic researchers.

Recent books on therapeutic research in the Anglo-American tradition scarcely contain references to Freud and the psychoanalytic research interview (see, e.g., *Psychotherapy Process Research: Paradigmatic and Narrative Approaches* by Toukmanian & Rennie [1992]); and *Clinical Reasoning: Forms of Inquiry in a Therapeutic Practice* by Mattingly & Fleming [1994]). Within the German tradition the potentials of the psychoanalytic interview for therapy research have been more seriously considered, as in *Qualitative Psychotherapieforschung: Grundlagen und Methoden* by Faller and Frommer (1994), where a chapter by Wilke addresses parallels between the psychoanalytic interview and current methods of the social sciences. An innovative approach by Stern (1985) should also be mentioned. Working both as a psychoanalyst and a developmental psychologist, he has investigated the infant's subjective experiences by relating the findings about the *clinical child*, as reconstructed through psychoanalytic interviews with adult patients, and the *observed child* of empirical developmental psychological studies. Such examples provide exceptions to the general neglect in psychology of the the psychoanalytic interview as a research method.

*The therapeutic research paradox.* Major parts of psychological knowledge are produced by a method which does not exist in a scientific psychology. General textbooks of scientific psychology draw on knowledge produced by a therapeutic method that is denied scientific status. Two solutions to this paradox appear. One solution would be to censor psychoanalytically produced knowledge, insist that it lies outside the premises of a scientific psychology, and ban it from textbooks of psychological science. An alternative solution would be to regard the psychoanalytic interview as one among many psychological research methods, reflect upon its nature and critically develop its research potential. This second alternative is pursued in what follows.

*Perspective on psychoanalytic research.* Some qualifications about the present perspective need to be pointed out before turning to nature of the psychoanalytic interview and its place in a philosophical context. In what follows, first, I address the concrete descriptive and interpretative knowledge of human relations produced in the psychoanalytic interview, while not putting forth a global endorsement of psychoanalytic theory. Rather the focus is on what Klein (1973) terms Freud's clinical theory, in contrast to Freud's speculative metapsychology of the human mind as a mechanical system of energy transformations (the latter aspect being what Habermas has termed the scientific self-misunderstanding of psychoanalysis). Second, I confine the discussion to the classical psychoanalytic view as developed by Freud, and neither draw on further developments by Lacan and others nor address the many critical discussions of psychoanalysis by French poststructuralist and by feminists.

Third, the present focus is on the contributions of psychoanalytic interviews to the production of psychological knowledge; it does not address the common therapy efficiency studies. Fourth, it is recognized that there are many problems with the use of the psychoanalytic interview as a research method, in particular overinterpretation and overgeneralisa-

tion from selected clinical cases. The flagrant misuse of therapeutic situations, not necessarily psychoanalytic, has come to the attention of the public and the courts regarding the current therapeutic productions of false memories of seduction and the multiple personality disorders (e.g., Acocella 1998). The empirical validity of the psychoanalytic observations and the coherence of the theoretical interpretations of them have been critically discussed for several decades, (see e.g., Fisher & Greenberg 1977). A critical review of research on the psychoanalytic process by Wallerstein and Sampson (1971) stated that we need to develop the clinical case study, with its compelling power and obvious scientific limitations, into a disciplined research instrument. Although recognizing the serious problems of overinterpretation and overgeneralization from therapeutic sessions, I do not address them here, but focus on the neglected research potentials of psychoanalytic therapy in bringing forth new phenomena and new interconnections.

Finally, fifth, I here focus on the psychoanalytic interview rather than other forms of therapy interviews, due to its historical priority and theoretical significance. I am aware that today most psychotherapy is carried out within other traditions, such as Rogers's client-centered therapy, Gestalt therapy, and family therapy. The therapeutic research paradox for psychoanalysis presented above may also pertain to these traditions. Thus, for family therapy Chenail (1992) makes a case for clinical qualitative research conducted from the therapist's way of acting and knowing, and points to the paradoxical status of this research: "On the one hand, this style of research has produced a number of significant and clinically relevant studies for practitioners, but on the other hand, this work of researching clinicians has not been widely recognized and accepted by many clinical researchers as 'true research'." (p. 5; see also Atkinson, Heath & Chenail, 1991; Wertz, 1993)

## **The Psychoanalytic Research Interview**

A brief depiction of the psychoanalytic situation shall be given here and taken up in the following discussion of philosophical interpretations of psychoanalytic research. Seven aspects of the psychoanalytic interview relevant to understanding its potential as a research situation are presented in Table 2. They are based on Freud's writings on therapy and technique (1963), and have been further treated in an earlier context (Kvale, 1986).

The seven aspects of the psychoanalytic interview outlined here have commonly been regarded as merely practical aspects of the therapeutic technique, or as sources of error for a scientific research method. From the present perspective it is these very aspects of the psychoanalytic interview that have led to its rejection as a scientific method, which contribute to the significant psychoanalytic knowledge production about the human situation.

Other explanations may be suggested for the significant knowledge production of psychoanalysis. These include the innovative psychoanalytic theory, the inclusion of the knowledge provided by culture, art and literature for understanding human action and pathology, and the emphasis on the therapist's self-analysis as a precondition for undertaking therapy. Important as these factors may be, the present discussion will focus on the knowledge potentials of the psychoanalytic interview situation.

Table 2: Seven Aspects of the Psychoanalytic Research Interview

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*The individual case study.* Psychoanalytic therapy is an intensive case study of individual patients over several years. The extensive knowledge of patients' life world and of their past provides the therapist with a uniquely rich context for interpreting their dreams and neurotic symptoms.

*The open mode of interviewing.* The psychoanalytic interview takes place in the structured setting of the therapeutic hour. It is based on psychoanalytic theory, yet the content is free and nondirective and it proceeds in an open manner. The patient's free associations correspond to the therapist's "evenly-hovering attention". Freud warned against formulating a case scientifically during treatment because it would interfere with the open therapeutic attitude in which one proceeds "aimlessly, and allows oneself to be overtaken by any surprises, always presenting to them an open mind, free from any expectations" (Freud, 1963, p. 120).

*The interpretation of meaning.* An essential aspect of psychoanalytic technique is the interpretation of the meaning of the patient's statements and actions. The psychoanalytic interpretations are open to ambiguity and contradictions, to the multiple layers of meaning of a dream or a symptom. They require an extensive temporal context, with the possibility of continual reinterpretations: "The full interpretation of such a dream will coincide with the completion of the whole analysis: if a note is made of it at the beginning, it may be possible to understand it at the end, after many months" (Freud 1963, p. 100).

*The temporal dimension.* Psychoanalytic therapy unfolds over several years in a historical dimension, with a unique intertwining of the past, present and future. Freud's innovation here was to see human phenomena in a meaningful historical perspective - to see the remembrance of the past as an active force of therapeutic change, and the therapy as a means for overcoming the repressions of the past and present resistance towards making the unconscious conscious.

*The human interaction.* Psychoanalytic therapy takes place through an emotional human interaction, with a reciprocal personal involvement. Freud noticed that if the analyst allowed patients time, devoted serious interest to them, and acted with tact, a deep personal attachment of the patient to the therapist developed. The strong emotions, ranging from love to rage, were interpreted theoretically as a "transference" of childhood feelings for the parents to the therapist. This transference is deliberately employed by the therapist as a means to overcome the patient's emotional resistance towards a deeper self-knowledge and change. Different depths of layers of the patient's personality are disclosed in relation to the intensity of the emotional ties to the therapist. Therapists do not seek to eliminate their own feelings towards their patients, termed *countertransference*, but employ them in the therapeutic process as a reflected subjectivity.

*Pathology as topic of investigation.* The subject matter of psychoanalytic therapy is the abnormal and irrational behavior of patients in crisis, their apparently meaningless and bizarre symptoms and dreams. The pathological behavior provides a magnifying glass for the less visible conflicts of average individuals; the neuroses and psychoses are extreme versions of normal behavior, they are the characteristic expressions of what has gone wrong in a given culture.

*The instigation of change.* The mutual interest of patients and therapists is to overcome the patients' suffering from their neurotic symptoms. Despite the patients having sought treatment voluntarily, they exhibit a deeply seated resistance to a change of self-understanding and action. "The whole theory of psychoanalysis is ... in fact built up on the perception of the resistance offered to us by the patient when we attempt to make his unconscious conscious to him" (Freud, 1963, p. 68). Although understanding may lead to change, the implicit theory of knowledge in psychoanalysis is that a fundamental understanding of a phenomenon can first be obtained by attempting to change the phenomenon.

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## **Psychoanalytic Research in Differing Philosophical Contexts**

Now that the seven main aspects of the psychoanalytic interview have been outlined, we may return to the postulates about the incompatibility of the psychoanalytic interview with positivist conceptions of knowledge and its compatibility with alternative Continental European philosophies.

### ***Postulate 3. Positivist Dismissal of Psychoanalytic Knowledge***

The third postulate put forth earlier stated that the psychoanalytic interview breaks systematically with conventional positivist demands for a scientific psychology. A positivist conception of psychology as a natural science was long paradigmatic for most of psychological research, fostering a technological approach to method with a selective disattention to the human relationships involved in producing psychological knowledge (Kvale, 1976a).

In Table 3 the seven aspects of the psychoanalytic interview outlined earlier are compared with criteria of scientific method developed from a positivist philosophy. It shows rather markedly how, point for point, the important aspects of the psychoanalytic interview as a research method violate key criteria of scientific research in a positivist-oriented psychology. The incompatibility of psychoanalytic research practice and positivist criteria of method makes logical the relegation of the psychoanalytic interview from the scientific discourse of academic psychology. For a psychological science based on eliminating the human factor from methods of investigating human inter-relations, the psychoanalytic interview, based on this very human interaction, must be dismissed as unscientific. Today the influence of a positivist philosophy in the social sciences has been declining. Much therapeutic research, however, remains confined to a strict quantifying statistical approach, par-

tially in response to the demands of insurance companies and health management for exact quantitative documentation of therapeutic effects.

The present argument does not take issue with the serious critiques of therapeutic over-interpretations and overgeneralizations mentioned earlier. In a later section I shall address some issues of generalization of therapeutic findings and validation of therapeutic interpretations. The present argument concerns the principal rejection of the personal human relation in scientific research on human relations. This conception is not confined to the older positivist philosophy of science. The aspects of the psychoanalytic interview outlined above also fall outside conceptions of method by more recent analytical philosophers. For example, Elster (1980) states that "a method is a set of rules which can be used in a mechanical way to realize a given aim. The mechanical element is important: a method shall not presuppose judgment, artistic or other creative abilities" (p. 295).

By going beyond the modern cult of rules and facts, and recognizing the social construction of psychological knowledge, therapeutic research could be freed from an obligation to either remain silent about its methods, or to imitate the technical data-reifying methods of the experimental and psychometric traditions.

Table 3: Psychoanalytic Research in a Positivist Context

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The intensive studies of selected *cases* differ from the requirement of large samples of representative subjects.

The flexible *open mode of interviewing* contrasts with the demand for formalized observation and systematic design.

The primacy of *interpretation of meaning* does not lead to exact quantifiable facts.

The meaning of observations may change through the *temporal dimension* of a psychoanalysis, in contrast with a demand for immutable facts.

The *human emotional interaction* of the therapeutic interview, with its transference and countertransference relations, violate requirements for neutral observation.

The focus on *pathological behavior* of neurotic patients contrasts with the study of the normal behavior of average persons.

The *changes* produced throughout therapy makes control through repeated independent observations difficult.

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#### *Postulate 4. Philosophical Rehabilitation of Psychoanalytic Knowledge*

In the century that has passed since Freud's original discoveries there have been significant philosophical reconceptualisations of the forms of knowledge pertaining to the human situation. Although rejected by a positivist philosophy of science, the knowledge production of psychoanalysis has been a challenge for thinkers in Continental European philosophy. Although critical of the speculative and reductionist trends of Freud's naturalistic meta-theory, they have seen value in the unique nature of the personal interaction of the psychoanalytic situation, its potentials for personal change, and its contributions towards knowledge of the human situation.

The psychoanalytic interview comes in important respects close to conceptions of knowledge developed with existential, hermeneutical, dialectical and postmodern philosophy, as stated in the fourth postulate above. Although differing in fundamental positions, these alternative philosophies point to the importances of aspects of psychoanalytic knowledge production dismissed by a positivist methodology. With their complex and differing conceptions of knowledge, it is not feasible to make any simple point to point comparisons of these philosophies with the psychoanalytic interview, such as was done above with respect to positivist philosophy. I shall instead here briefly depict some meeting points and then in a later section discuss more specific implications for understanding the knowledge production in therapeutic and in research interviews.

The openness of the psychoanalytic observations has been emphasized from phenomenological positions and the richness and the complexities of meaning interpretation has been addressed from hermeneutical positions. The decisive influence of the therapeutic relationship for promoting knowledge and change has been pivotal to existential approaches to psychoanalysis. Moreover, the implications of psychoanalysis for the overcoming of oppressive forces have been emphasized from dialectical positions. Attention to the relational, constructive and conversational aspects of psychoanalytic knowledge production follows from a postmodern position and will be more specifically treated in the following section. Rather than being treated as sources of error in the quest for objective facts, the human aspects of the psychoanalytic interview appear from these alternative philosophies as pivotal for the rich knowledge of the human situation provided by psychoanalysis.

Some key works extensively addressing the above relations shall be briefly mentioned. From psychotherapists an early introduction was given by May, Angel and Ellenberger (1958) in *Existence: A New Dimension to Psychology and Psychiatry*. The existential psychoanalyst Boss's (1963) *Daseinsanalysis and Psychoanalysis* is based on Heidegger's phenomenological existential and hermeneutical philosophy, and Laing's (1961) *Self and Others* was inspired by Sartre's (1963) existentialism. Among the philosophers addressing psychoanalysis there are Sartre's (1963) existential mediation of psychoanalysis and marxism in *The Problem of Method*, Ricoeur's (1970) phenomenological and hermeneutical *Freud and Philosophy: Essays on Interpretation*, and Habermas' (1971) critical hermeneutical analysis of psychoanalysis as a model for an emancipatory social science in *Knowledge and Human Interests*.

The philosophical reinterpretations of forms of knowledge in the the psychoanalytic interview have to some extent been taken up by practising therapists writing on therapy, but only to a little extent by therapists doing research. In recent German social science, however,

the research potentials of psychoanalysis have been addressed by drawing upon hermeneutical and critical philosophy, such as in several chapters of a German handbook of qualitative research -*Handbuch Qualitative Sozialforschung* (Flick, von Kardorff, Keupp, von Rosenstiel, & Wolf, 1991). In this book, Treppenhauer, following Habermas, argues for a psychoanalytic-qualitative social research of societal forms of oppression; Wierling addresses the relevance of the historical dimension of psychoanalytic therapy for the new interest in oral history: Haubl treats models of psychoanalytic text interpretations; Auckenthaler recommends a renewed attention to therapeutic case study research; Scheele focuses on the dialogical hermeneutics of psychoanalytic interpretations and constructions; and Leithäuser argues for the general application of psychoanalytic methods in social research.

In the Anglo-American social sciences the new interest in qualitative research has largely bypassed the research potentials of the psychoanalytic interview and its philosophical reinterpretations. Thus in the comprehensive *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), with a multitude of methods and philosophical perspectives represented, therapy is not included as a research method, and the qualitative researcher having largest impact on human culture in this century, Freud, does not exist in the index.

*The philosophical paradox of therapeutic research.* The neglect of the psychoanalytic research interview remains most remarkable within psychology. I have here attempted to document the earlier postulates of the incompatibility of psychoanalytic research with positivism and its compatibility with alternative philosophical schools. The paradox remains: therapeutic researchers may still adhere to philosophically outdated positivist conceptions of scientific research and not recognize the research potentials of the therapeutic conversation which follows from alternative conceptions of knowledge in current philosophy.

Although the dismissal of the therapeutic interview is rational from the viewpoint of a positivist psychology, it seems irrational for current therapists doing research to forego the research potentials of their own therapeutic practice. It is tempting to suggest a superficial psychoanalyzing of the causes of this paradox. Here may appear an anxiety-driven identification with the aggressor - the academic experimentalist - leading to a repression of the historical contributions of Freud to the development of culturally innovative and provocative knowledge through therapeutic interviews. It is also reflected in a resistance to facing newer developments in philosophy even as they are compatible with a psychoanalytic approach. The present discussion may be seen as an attempt to give self-assertion therapy for therapeutic researchers' low self esteem concerning the scientific value of their practice by repeatedly pointing out the historical significance of the knowledge contributions from the psychoanalytic interview, as well as the important position of psychoanalysis in current philosophical discussions of knowledge.

## **Knowledge Potentialities of Therapeutic and Research Interviews**

Therapeutic researchers may today learn from the methods and conceptual approaches being developed in the qualitative research approach to the social sciences, just as qualitative researchers in the social sciences may learn from the use of the therapeutic interview as a research method originating a century ago. In this final section I shall address some specific research potentials of interviews by relating therapeutic and research interviews within

the context of current philosophical discussions of knowledge (for more extensive discussion see Kvale, 1996). The analysis shall focus on these aspects of interview research: the inter-relational nature of knowledge, the conversation as a site of knowledge production, the importance of personal knowledge, ethical issues of interview research, generalization from cases, validation as communication and action, and finally an epistemology of practice.

There are other aspects of psychoanalytic research relevant for current qualitative inquiries; a few shall be mentioned here, but not pursued further in the present context. They include the extensive theoretical and personal training of psychoanalytic interviewers, who work under close supervision for several years before becoming qualified to conduct psychoanalytic observations and interpretations. The psychoanalytic emphasis on a comprehensive theoretical background for making interview interpretations contrasts with some empiricistic atheoretical trends in current qualitative research (see, for example, the critiques by Giorgi, 1995, and Strauss, 1995). The openness of classical psychoanalysis to the insights of the cultural tradition deserves serious attention; the therapeutic interview interpretations also draw upon the knowledge of the human situation brought forth in myths, literature and art.

### *The inter-relational nature of knowledge*

In postmodern philosophy, in interview research, and in therapy, we find an emphasis on the inter-relational nature of knowledge, with the creation of knowledge through human relationships.

*Postmodern knowledge.* The inter-relational and constructive nature of knowledge is prominent in postmodern conceptions of knowledge. Philosophy of the last half century has been characterized by a series of linguistic, conversational, narrative, and pragmatic "turns". The conception of knowledge as a mirror of reality has been replaced by a conception of the social construction of reality, where the focus is on the interpretation and negotiation of the meaning of the social world. With the breakdown of universal metanarratives of legitimation (Lyotard, 1984), there is an emphasis on the local context, upon the social and linguistic construction of a perspectival reality where knowledge is validated through practice. There is an openness to qualitative diversity, to a multiplicity of meanings in local contexts; knowledge is perspectival, dependent on the viewpoint and values of the investigator. Human reality is understood as conversation and action, where knowledge becomes the ability to perform effective actions. The question of whether a study can legitimately claim to be scientific tends to be replaced by the pragmatic question of whether it provides useful knowledge: justification is replaced by application (Kvale, 1992).

In postmodern and phenomenological philosophy there is an emphasis on knowledge as inter-relational and structural, interwoven in networks. Knowledge is neither inside a person nor outside in the world, but exists in the relationship between person and world. In an introduction to phenomenological philosophy Lyotard depicts the intentional relation of subject and the situation: "We arrive at a new locus of the 'psychological', which is no longer interiority, but intentionality - that is, the relation between the subject and the situation, is being understood that this relation does not unite two separable poles, but on the contrary that the ego, like the situation, is definable only in and by this relationship" (Lyotard, 1991, p. 80).

Merleau-Ponty has emphasized the inter-relational nature of man in *Phenomenology of Perception*. His critique of the prejudice of an objective world in psychology concludes with a quote from Saint Exupery - "Man is but a network of relationships, and these alone matter to him"(Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 456). Within a social constructionist approach to psychology today there is a move from the individual mind to relations between persons: "Constructionism replaces the individual with the relationship as the locus of knowledge" (Gergen, 1994, p. x).

*The inter-relational-nature of the interview.* The qualitative research interview is a site of knowledge construction. An interview is literally an *inter-view*, an inter-change of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest.

The ambiguous drawing in Figure 1 was introduced by the Danish psychologist Rubin as an example of the figure-ground phenomenon in visual Gestalt perception. I shall here use the figure to picture the interview conversation as *inter views*. We may focus on the two faces of the ambiguous figure, see them as the interviewer and the interviewee, and conceive of the interview as the interaction between the two persons. Or we may focus on the vase in between the two faces, and see it as containing the knowledge constructed *inter* the *views* of the interviewer and the interviewee. The knowledge constructed between the two subjects in this intersubjective field is an *inter-subjective* knowledge.

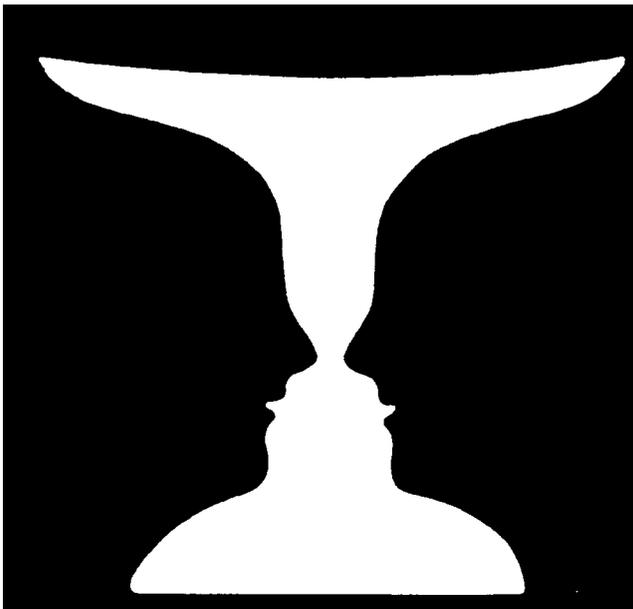


Figure 1:  
The Interview seen as Inter-Views

*The therapeutic inter-relation.* The interpersonal nature of therapeutic knowledge has long been recognized by therapists. To Sullivan (1954) knowledge was created through interpretation in the interpersonal relation of the psychiatric interview: "The processes and the changes in processes that make up data, which can be subjected to scientific study occur, not in the subject person nor in the observer, but in the situation which is created between the observer and the subject. ...There are no purely objective data in psychiatry, and there are no valid subjective data, because the data becomes scientifically usable only in the shape of a complex resultant - inference" (p. 3).

In an interview about the therapeutic interview the Jungian therapist Hillman (1984) replied to the interviewer: "The main thing is that we both get out of the way. What can block the interview is 'us', your thinking about what you have to get done here, and my thinking about my own thoughts, opinions, biography, myself. The 'you' and the 'me' can prevent the 'inter'. It's not our views that matter, it's the 'inter'" (1984, p. 8).

The inter-relational and conversational nature of the therapeutic interview, as recognized by therapists, remains for a modern empiricist and individualist psychology a source of error. From an alternative perspective the very inter-relational and constructive nature of the therapeutic interview is in line with key aspects of knowledge in a postmodern condition, which leads to a focus on the nature of the knowledge producing relationships. Social science interviewers may learn from therapeutic interviews to pay close attention to the complex interpersonal relations of the interview when constructing knowledge from the interview situation.

Academic psychology is today essentially a psychology of strangers, constructing a knowledge of human experience and behavior on the basis of brief chance encounters. In psychological experiments and tests, and also in many qualitative interviews, the subjects will be strangers meeting for a brief period, rarely for longer than an hour. Academic psychology has until now remained a tourist psychology, constructing its knowledge of the human situation on the basis of instamatic snapshots.

In contrast, therapists and anthropologists (see e.g., Lave & Kvale, 1995) construct their knowledge of the human situation through personal inter-relationships over long periods of time. Together with observation, the human conversation is here the main base for knowledge construction.

A classical psychoanalysis would imply 5 hours of therapy a week over several years. The psychoanalytic relationship is construed to provoke emotional reactions. Over the hundreds of hours of therapeutic interviews, an emotional attachment between therapist and patient will arise, theoretically conceived as transference and countertransference. This intensive personal therapeutic relationship may open painful, hidden memories and deeper levels of personality, which may be inaccessible through a brief research interview. The unique nature of the therapeutic conversation with the trust of the personal inter-relation opens layers of self-disclosure not available in a brief research interview. The extended and close personal inter-relation of the therapeutic interview allows for more penetrating critical forms of investigation and validation than will be ethically feasible in a brief research interview.