P.E.Meehl: Philosophical Psychology Seminar

Lecture 11 (of 12) 05/25/89

Psychoanalysis [these notes from Psychoanalytic Inference, Theme-Tracing, rev. 6/14/1988]

"Subjectivity behind the couch"

Aim: To arouse interest, not convert

My history and orientation

"How such a person can see anything in Freud"

How Freud hit upon technique

Hypnosis: Bernheim tactic; Fundamental Rule

Scandal: Century after Anna O., 85 years after *Interpretation of Dreams*

"Theme-tracing" The red thread.

Indirect allusions. DRAW

In dreams, latent vs manifest content A Fliess (349)

Read theme-examples

B High School Student; VA Patient

C U NU (400)

D Parapraxes (385)

Why is there a philosophy-of-science problem?

NOT "conceptual"
Rats have expectancies. Computers search for proofs.

NOT "ontologically improbable"
Ball-player; cat reflex; math solutions; post-hypnotic suggestions

Problem epistemological. Too loose a fit, too many options,
"too many unknowns in relation to equations"

This problem exists even if had (a) Naive patients
(b) No indoctrination
(c) No (or randomly chosen) interventions

Not due solely to lack of algorithm for probabilifying (hypothesis/evidence)-relation. Many disciplines lack that. History, inference in law courts, much of biology. E.g., nobody can compute a probability-number, on the evidence, that Hauptmann kidnapped Lindbergh baby, that Goering arranged Reichstag fire, or that man evolved from an apelike ancestor. Not clear to me why worse here.

***Biggest problem here is selection of "good" sessions (like U NU) out of big batch that are mediocre, some uninterpretable.

Suggestions in chapter. Three here:

1. Sudden effects E Doll (355)
   F Janet (357)

2. Prediction (U NU is one)
   Abortion (Reik)
   Fire-ambition
   G Waterpipe
   H Green hat
3. Block-theme method

Told you [my aim is] not to convince or convert. My view “Something here, but how much?