EPISTEMOLOGICAL MISUNDERSTANDINGS IN THE REPRESSED MEMORY CONTROVERSY

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Masters of Psychology

Graduate Programme in Psychology
York University
North York, Ontario

September 1997

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Abstract

The Repressed Memory Controversy (RMC) is a debate over the truth of recovered memories of childhood sexual abuse that are recalled in therapy settings after being absent from conscious memory for many years. The two sides of the controversy are sceptics and defenders. Sceptics are memory researchers and theorists who believe that some reports of recovered memories are suspect because they imply that human memory works differently than memory research has shown it to work in other contexts. They therefore believe that some reports may be the result of suggestions made by those unaware of research demonstrating that memory storage and recall can be a constructive process. Defenders, by contrast, are therapists, feminists, and theorists who seek to defend the truth of recovered memories of abuse. Defenders main argument is that sceptics fail to acknowledge that severe trauma can change the way memory functions. Both sceptics' and defenders' different positions are critically examined. I argue, however, that neither side is completely wrong or right nor is an answer to be found in any simple combination of their arguments. This is because epistemological misunderstandings exist on both sides of the controversy which help to perpetuate it. These include the misuse of epistemological words like belief and truth as well as misunderstanding that different legitimate uses of these terms exist. The most significant epistemological misunderstandings, though, stem from the lack of recognition from both sides that they are operating under different epistemological theories. This is primarily

due to the different kinds of data and evidence the two groups practically deal with. This lack of recognition becomes especially problematic when coupled with the failure to recognize that different theories can be more appropriate in different settings because it then produces misattribution of the differences between the two groups. That is, both groups assume that all of their differences are due to differences commonly acknowledged by both sides as existing, namely, political ones. In this way, the controversy becomes over-politicized and the possibility of either side acknowledging a beneficial contribution from the other is diminished.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Repressed Memory Controversy (RMC) is a debate over the truth of recovered memories of childhood sexual abuse that are recalled in therapy settings after being absent from conscious memory for many years. The first step to understanding the RMC is an awareness of all of its different competing voices. Primarily, there are the "survivors"[1] with their recovered memories of childhood sexual abuse (Smith, 1980) and there are their accused, usually their relatives, who claim that they are innocent and that the recovered memories are somehow false (Loftus & Ketcham, 1994). Academically, though, the debate is primarily between researchers and therapists. Memory researchers, and other scientists, argue that the way these recovered memories are claimed to be operating by some therapists conflicts with accepted findings of how human memory works (Loftus & Ketcham, 1995). Therapists, in response, argue that their patients' abuse results in trauma so severe that it causes their memories to be processed differently by the brain than normal memories and, as a result, that no recovered memory could be false (Bass & Davis, 1988). Some feminists also enter the debate by arguing that the scientists and accused are part of a political backlash aimed at preventing women (and other

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[1] These women and men are also alternatively referred to as patients or clients depending on which group in the controversy is referring to them.

victims) from claiming their right to justice and recognition (Kristiansen, 1996). Additionally, there are theorists who, along with the feminists and therapists, argue that we should be paying far more attention to false negatives than false positives (Belicki, 1995). They argue, that even if some recovered memories are false, patients whose memories of abuse are not being recognized as valid deserve far more attention. Still other theorists attempt to occupy a middle ground in this debate by incorporating the findings of researchers with the concerns of therapists. This group attempts to caution about the possibility of suggestive influences existing in therapy because they do not want to see abuse uncovered at the expense of some innocent parents and family members. They further fear that patients may be having present problems blamed too readily on possible past abuse (Person & Klar, 1994; Terr, 1994). Finally, the media contribute negatively to the controversy by seeming to ignore the existence of a middle ground and by only portraying the most extreme sides for and against the truth of recovered memories in articles and talk shows in such a black and white manner that both sides look like radical extremists (Landsberg, 1996a; Landsberg, 1996b; Landsberg, 1996c).

However, the unseen majority in the larger issue of childhood sexual abuse are people who never forgot their abuse and people who have remembered being abused before they ever entered therapy. Studies have shown that many of these individuals even encountered disbelief from their therapists that what they remembered occurring actually

happened (Kristiansen, 1995). Some, fortunately, are able to find external sources of proof for their memories. However, many never recover or completely remember what occurred because they were so young, didn't understand what was happening, were never allowed to discuss it with anyone, or because it happened so long ago that they have simply forgotten many of the finer details.

Yet even the academic controversy involves these people minimally (Belicki, 1995) preferring to focus on more interesting cases involving clear therapist bias, the use of a controversial therapeutic technique for memory recovery, or the recovery of a fantastically detailed or unbelievable memory. Therefore, it often clouds the very real issue of the existence of the problem of childhood sexual abuse in our society and the problems that individuals attempting to disclose such abuse face. This paper is not meant to add to these problems but does touch on the possible overzealousness of some therapists, theorists and feminists, who, in their intent to uncover these problems, see no dangers in either the use of any memory recovery technique for any person in therapy who they feel may benefit from it or the existence of strong therapist preconceived beliefs towards any of their patients. Ultimately, however, these issues are not this paper's primary focus.

A reading of the published academic literature on this topic reveals the existence of two main sides in the controversy. These have been described, rather biasedly, by the labels "sceptics" and "true believers" (Loftus & Ketcham, 1994). Loftus and Ketcham

(1994) define sceptics as the memory researchers and theorists who believe that some of the anecdotal reports of recovered memories in the literature of this controversy are suspect because they imply that human memory works very differently from the ways that memory research has shown it to work in other contexts. They, therefore, believe that some of these reports may be the result of the suggestions made to clients by therapists and possibly the media as well, who are unsophisticated with respect to such research. True believers (TB) are defined as the therapists, feminists and other supporting theorists who argue that recovered memories of childhood sexual abuse are always true. This pejorative name is likely used because the more radical writers in this category have made unqualified statements like, "children do not lie about sexual abuse" and "women don't make up stories of abuse" (Bass & Davis, 1988, 282 and 316) to support their claim that all recovered memories of abuse are true. These terms are used most frequently by those who identify with the sceptic label.

Pope (1996) has pointed out, however, the politics involved in the choice and use of the TB label. It is meant to demean with its implicit reference to a lack of scientific objectivity. A less biased name for the true believers is defender. This term is also a more accurate one since these therapists, feminists, and theorists are defending the truth of patients' claims against the sceptics' attacks and many of them see themselves as defenders of the rights of women, as well as victims of abuse.

Sceptics and defenders, like the other groups mentioned above, have different

views of what is going on in the RMC. A sceptic would see the RMC as caused, or at least perpetuated, by the other side not listening to, or being aware of, the scientific findings on how memory works and on how likely or unlikely it is that other theories of its functioning are true. Defenders, by contrast, see the controversy as caused by political forces designed to silence women and coverup the existence of rampant sexual abuse in our society. They also stress that sceptics misunderstand the different nature of psychotherapeutic data in one of two ways. Some defenders argue that severe trauma makes memory work differently than it is normally seen to function in laboratory experiments (c.f., Byrd, 1994; Shevrin, 1994) and therefore that sceptics' criticisms are inapplicable to their therapeutic findings. Others have argued that psychotherapeutic, or anecdotal, data are simply an entirely different kind of data than their experimental counterpart (Miller, 1996). That is, it is testimony which is unanalysable scientifically. However, I argue in this study that neither side is completely right or wrong, nor is a resolution to be found in any simple combination of their arguments. This is because neither side is aware of a series of epistemological misunderstandings that I show to be commonplace in discussions of the controversy, which, I argue, help to perpetuate it.

These misunderstandings include the misuse of epistemological words like belief and truth by sceptics and defenders, as well as misunderstanding that different legitimate uses of these terms exist. It is demonstrated below that the main problems that result from these misunderstandings, though, result mainly from the fact that neither side recognizes

that their different legitimate uses of epistemological theory are most appropriate only to their respective settings and, instead, assumes that their understandings should be employed in other settings as well. Examples of these assumptions are seen when sceptics demand of therapists that they use scientific research methodology in their clinical settings and when therapists advise patients to enter legal settings in order to sue their remembered assailants without considering how recovered memories may be differentially viewed by others. That is, both groups are assuming that their epistemological understandings are or should be universal. When they are found not to be, though, the differences in understanding are not recognized as epistemological in origin. Instead, attributions are made to differences that are commonly recognized, differences in political motives.

To argue the above, the full cases presented by the sceptics and the defenders are first presented in detail. To begin with, the theory of memory espoused by most sceptics is reviewed along with its origins. Research on eyewitness testimony accuracy as well as on children's susceptibility to suggestion has led sceptics to the belief that memory is malleable since the sources of information in memory that are used to construct memories of the past can be confused. That is, sceptics have found that historically accurate sources of memory can be confused with memory from other sources. Sceptics have also responded to the criticism that this theory is only applicable to laboratory situations by investigating real life autobiographical memories. How this theory of memory

functioning leads them to criticize some therapeutic practices and therefore the accuracy of some recovered memories is then explained. Some memory recall exercises used by some therapists are believed by sceptics to not only create multiple sources from which memories could be constructed but to additionally encourage patients to confuse these sources. Sceptics have also hypothesized that therapeutic bias alone could provide suggestions that could serve as an additional source for memory construction.

The four responses that defenders have provided to these critiques of the accuracy of recovered memories and the use of certain therapeutic techniques are outlined in turn. The first defender response disputes the claim that dangerous techniques are a problem. The second argues that sceptics' findings are inapplicable to cases of childhood sexual abuse since these cases involve traumatic memories. This second argument is the hypothesis that traumatic events are processed differently by the brain and therefore that the theory of memory used by sceptics, since formed on the basis of non-traumatic memory functioning, cannot be used to critique recovered memories of trauma or the techniques used to elicit them. All forms so far proposed of the first response and this second argument are shown to suffer from fatal flaws.

The third response of defenders to sceptics' critiques is to propose that defenders' therapeutically derived data is anecdotal evidence or testimony and therefore that the controversy is about sceptics not understanding the different nature of defenders' data. This argument is also shown to have serious flaws. The last defenders' response, that

sceptics have questionable political motives, is shown to not refute the findings of sceptics, even if it does draw a partition between different kinds of sceptics.

Sceptics' research cannot refute the existence of accurate recalled memories of past abuse, though. It can, at most, be used to caution therapists who seek to aid patients in recovering memories that memory recall can be a constructive process. Some theorists have therefore acknowledged that both sceptics and defenders have valid contributions to make. The existence of the middle ground created by these theorists has not enabled most critics from the two sides to acknowledge the points made by the opposite side, however. The two sides are shown to be, instead, becoming more dichotomous over time. That is, none of the arguments being made by the other side are being acknowledged and therefore the resolution of this controversy will not be in any simple combination of sceptics' and defenders' claims. Thus, chapter four begins to outline the thesis that unacknowledged philosophical differences are aiding in the continuation of the controversy.

The chapter begins by arguing that the different names chosen for the controversy demonstrate not only the differences between the two main groups but that the controversy is not entirely over what the sides believe it to be; solving the problems as posed by the two sides would not solve the controversy. The next section also demonstrates that Ian Hacking's (1995) writings on memory and truth about the past could not solve the controversy either because they do not address the philosophical

differences between the two sides. The chapter then proceeds to give the requisite philosophical background to recognize these differences. First, a brief introduction to the philosophical study of knowledge or epistemology is followed by an explanation of the different epistemological theories that are held by different philosophers. The theories of foundationalism, pragmatism, coherentism, and contextualism are thus outlined. Then, different epistemological terms, namely truth, knowledge, and belief, that are used in this controversy are distinguished and the different understandings of them held by the different kinds of epistemologists are explained. Finally, the unique epistemological status that "recovered" memories occupy is examined in order to explain how different theorists could have differing views on the same "recovered" memories.

The next chapter is then able to explain how the lack of epistemological sophistication of writers in this controversy causes sceptics and defenders to not recognize that they are operating under different epistemological theories. It is first argued that they both misuse and overuse the term truth in the controversy. How the different settings of researchers and therapists also cause them to use different epistemological theories in their practice is then explained. The use of different epistemological theories by researchers and therapists is primarily due to the different kinds of data and evidence that the two have to work with. It is further argued that lack of recognition of this difference as well as of the fact that different theories can be viewed as the most appropriate for different settings produces misattribution of the differences

between the two groups. This, finally, is what helps perpetuate the controversy. Since these unrecognized epistemological differences are misattributed to differences that are recognized by both sides as existing, namely, political ones, the controversy becomes over-politicized and communication links between the two sides become further weakened. The possibility of either acknowledging the existence of a middle ground or a beneficial contribution from the other side is thus further diminished.

2. THE SCEPTICS' CASE

The sceptics' model of memory functioning was formed on the basis of years of memory research, much of it preceding the present controversy, demonstrating that memory recall could be a constructive process. Further, since it was also found that the sources of different memories could not always be distinguished, proponents of this model also believe that individuals cannot always objectively distinguish "real" from "suggested" memories. As a consequence, sceptics have criticized the use of therapeutic techniques for memory recall (and attitudes about memory recovery) that do not include adequate precautions against the confusion of different sources in memory and that may even encourage their confusion. Examples of these techniques include imagistic work and hypnosis. Sceptics' foremost concern, however, is the suggestions that may be given to patients about the possibility of past abuse and that these may function as an alternate source for memory construction: therefore their foremost concern is over therapeutic bias.

2.1 History

Traditional concerns over memory, dating back to the time of the ancient Greeks, at least, have been to improve its powers. Any standard introductory psychology textbook can review the numerous mnemonic techniques that have been the result of these concerns (see for example, Gleitman, 1986). Modern interests in memory, those dating from the beginnings of psychology's birth as a scientific discipline, in contrast, have been concerned with issues of accuracy and forgetting. Schacter (1995) credits the studies of

Ebbinghaus in the nineteenth century on the retention of nonsense syllables with making possible a shift from memory improvement to memory distortion:

> The importance of exerting experimental control over the input to memory is so widely accepted in most modern research that one easily forgets what a giant step Ebbinghaus took when he invented the procedure. (Schacter, 1995, p. 5)

Research in memory distortion has proceeded for two different historical reasons. The first is based on a theory of memory functioning, specifically, the belief that memory works constructively. The second is based on practical interests in eyewitness testimony reliability and suggestibility.

First, it is a fact of normal human experience that memory is not perfect. Facts and events are forgotten or remembered differently over time. Modern theories on how such changes occur can be traced to early twentieth century theorists who first viewed human memory retrieval as a constructive process. One such theorist, Richard Semon (1923), a German biologist from whom we get the term engram for the hypothetical physical trace left in the brain by a memory, argued that memory recall necessarily incorporates information from the retrieval environment on each occasion of retrieval. Sir Frederick Bartlett in the 1930's likewise tried to explain memory distortions by arguing that memory worked constructively (cited in Schacter, 1995, p. 9). By applying the notion of the schema to memory, Bartlett tried to explain how memory distortions reflect prior knowledge and experience. Among clinical psychologists, both Freud and Janet held

theories of human memory that assumed constructive activity, with Freud's, of course, changing significantly in its details after his abandonment of the seduction theory. Both assumed, though, that human subjects played an active role in constructing at least some memories of their personal pasts (Schacter, 1995, p. 6). The behaviourists then dominated the decades in the middle of the century, with their characteristic attempts to show that talk of internal processes was unnecessary. This slowed memory research, but the rise of cognitive psychology in the sixties, and the publication of works like Neisser's Cognitive Psychology in 1967, which echoed his theoretical predecessors' ideas, rekindled interest in constructivist theories of memory.

The second historical reason that research in memory distortion developed was a growing interest in assessing the accuracy of eyewitness testimony. The French psychologist most famous for his intelligence test constructions, Alfred Binet (1969), did some of the earliest work in this area by assessing children's vulnerability to suggestion by presenting them with misleading questions about things they had previously seen. He found that misleading questions produced distortions in their recall. Similar research is still done today. The most famous is a series of studies started twenty years ago by Elizabeth Loftus and her colleagues (Loftus & Palmer, 1974; Loftus & Hofman, 1989; Weingardt, Loftus & Lindsay, 1995).

Loftus's best known study is what is referred to as the "smashed" vs. "hit" experiment which demonstrated simply and clearly that the way a question is worded can

significantly change the way subsequent questions are answered (Loftus & Palmer. 1974). In this study, subjects viewed a videotape of an automobile accident and later had the scene redescribed to them. The experimental manipulation was whether the word "smashed" or a less violent word like "hit" was used to describe one car hitting the other. Subjects who had the scene redescribed to them using the word "smashed" were more likely to say that they had seen broken glass than subjects who had heard a less violent word when. in fact. neither group had actually seen broken glass (Loftus & Palmer. 1974).

This work eventually led Loftus and her colleagues to perform experiments designed to answer how such distortions actually occur. Specifically, they investigated whether the new information had merged with or replaced the old information or whether it had simply made the old information harder to retrieve. Similar questions had been suggested but not pursued by research investigating retroactive interference or inhibition during the behaviourist era (Schacter. 1995, p. 9). Out of this work, the model of memory used by the sceptics was formed.

2.2 The Sceptics' Model of Memory

To investigate how distortion actually occurred. Loftus and others tested the hypothesis of source misattribution: that suggested and real information still exist separately in memory but that people confuse these sources of information. They found that subjects were unable to keep track of their memories' different sources. or ignore

inaccurate post-event information, even when told to expect it (Weingardt & Loftus, 1995; Loftus & Hoffman, 1989). That is, even when subjects were told that the post-event information they would be given would be inaccurate information and that they should ignore it, they still reported information from the false narrative when asked subsequent questions about the event that had initially been viewed. The authors initially believed this to support the view that the original memory itself had been altered because if the two sources had still existed separately then subjects should have been able to recognize recollections as coming from one or the other source and follow instructions to not report information from the incorrect narrative. However, more recent experiments incorporating measures of implicit memory have led them to recognize the complexities involved in the claim that the original memory of an event no longer exists in its original form (Loftus, Feldman, & Dashiell, 1995). Mainly, this is because implicit tests have revealed the continuing existence of events or items that cannot be explicitly recalled.

In fact, research into implicit memory's existence and functioning has changed memory theory in two important ways. The first, as mentioned above is that the development of tests for implicit memory, like tests of priming effects, has demonstrated that some memories may still exist even if they cannot be consciously (explicitly) recalled. The second deals with the definitions of the terms implicit and explicit. Implicit memory refers to the nonconscious effects of prior experiences on later performance and behaviour like skill learning and priming. Explicit memory, by contrast, refers to the

conscious recollection of previous experiences. Schacter (1995) has noted that the existence of these two distinct categories means that memory can no longer be seen as a monolithic entity and instead should be viewed as being composed of separate but interacting systems (p. 19). The way that defenders have used (and misused) implicit memory and the existence of separate memory systems in arguments on the operation of repressed memories, though, will be reviewed further below.

Sceptics have used implicit and explicit memory research as well as the eyewitness testimony research findings and other work that will be reviewed below, for example, work on the suggestibility of children (Leichman, Ceci & Ornstein, 1992) to develop a dynamic theory of memory functioning,

> Misinformation had knocked the props out from under one of the sturdiest platforms of much cognitive research: the notion that once memory information is in long-term memory-- it remains there forever... and forgetting is merely an inability to retrieve the information.... What Loftus and her colleagues were building in place of static theories of memory was the idea that memory is a highly constructive process, an ability to compose that which was previously experienced. (Garry & Loftus, 1994, p. 367)

Shevrin (1994) has argued that, although it often seems common sense to think of memory as stable and although we base much of our personal and communal history on it, in reality, "the past is made over each time in a kind of communal 1984" (p. 993). As

seen above, sceptics have argued that recalled memories are often the combination of different sources and different kinds of memories (Loftus & Ketcham, 1994). An example of such a view is seen in Spence's (1984) comment that, "we have come a long way from the naive illusion that recalling the past is a simple act of going back to an earlier time and place and reading off the content of the scene that emerges" (p. 93).

The most important parts of the sceptics' theory of memory are the hypotheses that entirely new memories can be made by combining new and old information and their beliefs of what can serve as a source of new information. Reminiscent of Semon (1923) sceptics believe that every time an event is recalled or we receive information about an event or change the way we think or feel about an event, a new memory is made by combining that information with the old memory. The key to the source misattribution hypothesis (Loftus & Hoffman, 1989; Weingardt, Loftus, & Lindsay, 1995) is that even if the old information still exists somewhere in the mind, there now exists a new memory with different parts that we may not be able to distinguish from the old.

2.2.1 Research on Children's Memory

Sceptics use research on children's suggestibility as further evidence for their model of memory. Research on children's memory in general has revealed that, more than adults, children tend to confuse what is known to them with what is known to others, and they have trouble distinguishing fact from fiction. They also tend to assimilate what was believed at one time with what was believed at another (Spence, 1994). Goodman, Quas,

Batterman-Faunce, Riddlesberger, and Kuhn (1994) also believe that young children merge items in memory more than older children and adults. Besides these general cognitive limitations, or perhaps as a result of them, children's memories are also more influenceable than adults' in 83% of studies on suggestibility, according to some researchers (Ceci, Crotteau Hoffman, Smith, & Loftus, 1994). However, studies of the effects of interactions with adults on children's memory may add provisos to Ceci et al.'s (1994) findings.

Congruent with Ceci et al. (1994), Tesler and Nelson (1994) found that only items of an event that were commonly discussed between a child and his or her mother were subsequently remembered by the child and that the linguistic representational style of the child reflected that of the mother. Their broader conclusions from these findings were that with the help of an adult's cues or questions a child incorporates that adult's narrative style: the child develops that adult's particular way of encoding experiences. That is, they believed their findings were evidence that adults could shape the encoding of information processes for children by giving them suggestions on how to encode what they were experiencing through cues and questions. However, other theorists have argued for a more tempered version of events, based on their findings that children play a more active role in their memory's formation.

For instance, Leichman, Ceci, and Ornstein (1994) found children incorporate details suggested by parents only when the parents and the child's memories of the event

are emotionally similar. If the parents' memories do not reflect accurately the emotions the child remembers feeling, the child is unlikely to incorporate any suggested details. "Thus social influences interacted with affective and memorial processes to determine how autobiographical events were eventually perceived" (Leichman et al., 1994, p. 197). If this is true, then provisos should be added to hypotheses concerning the malleability of children's as well as adult's memories: they are not infinitely malleable despite some interesting studies demonstrating adult memory malleability.

2.2.2 The Generalizability of Sceptics' Data

In response to criticism from defenders that eyewitness testimony research has dealt only with trivial details and has not been able to account for events occurring outside of laboratories (c.f., Kristiansen, Garneau, Mittlehoft, DeCourville, & Hovdestad, 1995; Olio, 1994), researchers designed studies to test memory for real life, and even autobiographical, events. First, they studied so-called "flashbulb" memories of key or traumatic events (e.g., where you were when you heard about the Kennedy assassination or the space-shuttle Challenger disaster), so labelled because of the vividness with which they are often recalled. They found that such memories are not as accurate as typically believed despite the feelings of vividness with which they are recalled (Garry & Loftus, 1994). They are often subject to the same distortions and reinterpretations over time that sceptics believe all memories undergo.

Second, Loftus and others have found that whole new false autobiographical

memories can be implanted in subjects. The most dramatic study involved young adults accompanied by a trusted family member who acted as a secret confederate of the experimenter (Garry & Loftus, 1994). With suggestions from the family member and repeated "recall exercises", a surprising number of subjects were able to "remember" quite well, and furnish additional details from, an event that did not actually occur to them (e.g., being lost in a mall or large building as a child and being rescued by a stranger). Note, however, that these studies have not yet tested for the limits of memory malleability. Future research on these will likely find results similar to those of Leichmann et al. (1994), as cited above, where children did not incorporate suggestions from adults when the two had incommensurate memories of the child's emotions. Thus, it cannot be concluded from these studies that any memory could be altered in any way desired.

This is not to suggest that any sceptics have made such a claim, though. Memory researchers have not, despite claims to the contrary by defenders (Kristiansen, Garneau, Mittlehoft, DeCourville, & Hovdestad, 1995). Sceptics have instead used their theory of memory functioning to argue for recognition from defenders, especially practising therapists, that memory retrieval is not only simple and perfect recall but that construction can play a significant role as well. This recognition has been called for on the basis of some therapists' stated beliefs in the permanence of memory (Loftus, Feldman, & Dashiell, 1995, p. 49) and the subsequent practices that stem from these

beliefs, especially those of self-labelled repressed memory therapists. Sceptics believe these practices run a risk of false memory creation and are employed primarily because of ignorance of the findings reviewed above.

2.3 "Dangerous" Techniques

In their book, The Myth of Repressed Memories, Loftus and Ketcham (1994) review several therapeutic techniques that they call dangerous. They believe them to be so because (1) they create multiple sources for the patient which could be confused with each other, and (2) because the statements from the therapist that often accompany the techniques enhance the possibility that the sources could be confused. The techniques they review include imagistic work, dream work, journal writing, art therapy, and hypnosis. According to Loftus and Ketcham (1994), in repressed memory therapy (i.e., therapy designed to help a patient recover memories that are believed to exist by the therapist and/or the patient) patients are encouraged to "create their own story" and "imagine what might have happened". This is called imagistic work. Dream work, another related technique, involves treating dreams like true, but repressed, memories. Journal writing involves getting the patient to write in a stream of consciousness. Art therapy involves explicit guesswork by getting patients to fill in details of a fuzzy memory via drawing. Hypnosis, which is a highly controversial technique, even outside this debate, most commonly involves "age regression" in repressed memory cases, in which the patient is encouraged to "return" to a certain period of her life.

Loftus and Ketcham argue that these techniques produce multiple sources because although the patient is encouraged to "try not to judge or censor" (Bass & Davis, 1988, p. 84) their thoughts while engaging in the exercises, the resultant "memory" that is discovered is treated as a true but repressed memory of a real event and rarely as a fantasy or a metaphor (Loftus & Ketcham, 1994; Olio, 1994, p. 442). When both multiple sources for memory and the instructions that nothing generated using these techniques could be false are present, Loftus and Ketcham (1994) argue, a dangerous risk of false memory creation exists. They believe that proof for this is found in the "lost in a mall" experiment described above (Garry & Loftus, 1994) as well as others (Ceci, Crotteau, Hoffman, Smith, & Loftus, 1994; Spanos, Burgess, & Burgess, 1994) where individuals who were repeatedly encouraged to remember events that never happened created their own false memories.

The evidence that challenges the continued use of hypnosis makes this technique, over all the others mentioned above, the clearest example of a problematic therapeutic method. Spanos, Burgess, and Burgess (1994) claim that hypnosis is well known for increasing the confidence of the hypnotized subject, without increasing the accuracy of the reports. Frankel and Perry (1994) note that, as of 1994, 25 U.S. state supreme courts had ruled that hypnotically elicited recall was inadmissible, "on the grounds of its inherent unreliability" (p. 260). Loftus and Ketcham (1994) provide a history of how long such dangers have been acknowledged by noting that one of its earliest users, Sigmund

Freud, himself developed reasons for doubting its effectiveness as a tool for eliciting the truth about an individual's past. "In fact, Freud stopped hypnotizing his patients once he realized that hypnosis can elicit wild confabulations bearing no resemblance whatsoever to reality" (p. 254). While not blatantly wrong, their explanation of Freud's motives is simplistic. Unfortunately, a full examination of these is beyond the scope of the present paper.

Experimental evidence that regression hypnosis can be suggestive is provided by a series of studies by Spanos et al. (1994). They found that memory reports elicited from "past lives" were influenced by the beliefs and expectations of the experimenter, which were varied between experimental conditions. Lest evidence from past life regression therapy seem exotic or removed from the present discussion, Stevenson (1994) notes that this technique is occasionally used when therapists are not able to elicit the necessary memories from age regression. He also goes as far as to label the use of hypnosis "willful ignorance" of the effects of suggestion on patients' memory. Evidence that some therapists continue to use this technique and, further, that they may not be informing their patients of its risks is found in Bass and Davis' (1988) statement that, "under the guidance of a trustworthy therapist, it is possible to go back to earlier times" (p. 73). They also suggest that hypnosis be used to recover, "occluded memories" (p. 459) with no accompanying statements that any possible dangers could be encountered with its use.

Other evidence of dangerous techniques being used despite clear risks of multiple

memory source generation can be found in the advocation of group therapy for patients attempting to recover memories of abuse. Bass and Davis (1988) advise, "if you're still fuzzy about what happened to you, hearing other women's stories can stimulate your memories" (p. 462). However, the dangers involved in listening to others stories of abuse when you do not yet have memories of your own is shown in the following statement of a survivor: "If I hadn't been around other survivors talking about their experiences I wouldn't have had any idea this stuff even existed" (Bass & Davis, 1988, p. 419). The statement raises the question of what she would have recalled if she had not been aware that "this stuff" existed. Loftus and Ketcham (1994) fear that for patients desperate to fill in what they perceive as gaps in their memories, group therapy may provide all to ready an alternative source for construction.

The last kind of technique that has been questioned by the sceptics is the administration of various drugs like sodium pentothal ("truth serum") and MDMA to assist in memory recall, again, without warning of the dangers involved (Bass & Davis, 1988, p. 452). These drugs are not proven recall enhancers. Instead they have been shown to have many of the same problems as hypnosis (Spanos et al., 1994). These drugs, like hypnosis, boost confidence but their effectiveness as recall enhancers is more dubious.

An obvious question raised by Loftus and Ketcham's (1994) criticisms is how common such practices actually are. The reports are unfortunately mixed, with heavy bias further complicating the results. Poole, Lindsay, Memon, and Bull (1995) report that as

many as 25% of registered American and British therapists could be classified as "recovered memory zealots" who frequently employ these techniques. Yet their choice of label, an inflammatory one, as well as the heavy criticism their study has sustained (see Pope, 1996) may make their statistics unreliable. However, given that these authors obviously found some proportion of therapists that admitted to using these techniques with their clients, statistics provided by defenders may be equally unreliable. Those of Sullins (1996), which reported virtually no use of any techniques like those discussed above, are one such example. Ruling out the possibility of local sample differences, since the Poole et al. (1995) study was relatively broad, survey construction and the creation of categories seem heavily influenced by which side of the debate one believes in more strongly. Therefore, most estimates of the prevalence of such technique use are, at present, suspect to bias. Still, even if therapists are not using these techniques, and it seems highly unlikely that none are, sceptics have equally strong concerns about therapeutic bias.

2.4 Therapeutic Bias

Sceptics have argued, on the basis of memory's potential to confuse memory sources, that if suggestion could be a memory source, then therapeutic bias alone, without any therapeutic techniques, could have an effect on the memories being recalled. That is, sceptics believe the therapeutic situation itself could be a source for memory construction if that situation is heavily biased with beliefs and preconceptions formed before the

patient has recovered any memories or finished recovering memories.

Causing their belief, in part, is their additional belief that patients are attempting to recall memories that were imperfectly formed in the first place. The findings on children's cognitive limitations (Goodman et al., 1994; Spence, 1994), lead sceptics to believe it is quite likely that most childhood memories contain inaccuracies that affect adult recall of the events. Spence (1994) elaborates:

> But greater sophistication cannot improve in the detail of the original memory and, even more, unfortunately, it can easily add irrelevant detail to these original impressions.... Even though the adult witness or patient knows the difference between fact and fantasy, he or she is in no position to partition the retrieved memory into observations-- historical truth-- and the subsequent levelling and sharpening of the remembering process that produces narrative truth. (p. 295)

Spence's notions of historical and narrative truth will be discussed further below. His main point, though, is that adults' reexaminations of their childhood memories are unlikely to make them more accurate. The following argument thus summarizes sceptics' belief about therapeutic bias. If memory works constructively and if our memories are subject to interpretation and reinterpretation, especially as children but as adults as well and, lastly, if suggestion from a therapist could act as an additional source for memory construction, then the presence of suggestion in therapy, either explicitly or in the form of bias, could affect patients' recovered memories.

This argument is not unfounded because sceptics have shown memory's ability to work constructively, have shown that it is more than theoretically possible for suggestions from a therapist to enter unknowingly into memories of past events, as per the above studies on memory malleability to suggestions and, because persuasive evidence exists that our memories are subject to reinterpretations. Loftus and Ketcham (1994) make the argument that therapy is actually dependent on memory's ability to reinterpret, and understand in different ways, past and present events. That is, therapists rely on the malleability of memory to help patients re-create or reconstruct their traumatic life histories. Loftus and Ketcham (1994) argue, though, that some therapists in the RMC are crossing the fine line between guiding a person to new understandings and potentially dangerous therapeutic bias.

Sceptics note that there are at least two main ways that suggestion or bias could enter the therapy situation. First, a therapist could have biases about memory functioning. For example, according to Garry and Loftus (1988), 80% of psychologists believe in the permanence of memory. Also, according to Loftus, Garry, Brown, and Rader (1994), many psychotherapists hold the same memory "myths" as "first year psychology students", including the belief that hypnosis can return you to the moment of your birth and that hypnosis can return you to a past life. The problem sceptics have with these beliefs is two-fold. First, they worry that such beliefs will be communicated to the client and that they will exert a self-confirming bias on what is found in therapy. That is, they

argue that if both therapist and client believe, incorrectly, in the permanence of memory, it will influence not only what techniques are used to recover memories but also the attitude, or amount of critical attention directed, toward any surfacing memory, especially if it confirms the therapist's prior beliefs. These prior beliefs alone, then, are the second form of suggestion.

Sceptics caution that bias can also enter therapy in the form of pre-judging a patient's problems. In response to the present controversy the American Psychiatric Association (1994) wrote their Statement on Memories of Sexual Abuse. The following excerpt describes the therapeutic attitude they recommend in it:

> Psychiatrists should maintain an empathetic non-judgemental, neutral stance towards all reported memories of sexual abuse. As in the treatment of all patients, care must be taken to avoid prejudging the cause of the patients' difficulties, or the veracity of the patients' reports. A strong prior belief by the psychiatrists that sexual abuse, or other factors, are or are not the cause of the patients' problems is likely to interfere with appropriate assessment and treatment. (American Psychiatric Association, 1994, p. 263)

Yet despite this recommendation, therapists can also find the following advice: if they feel that their patients may have been sexually abused, they should continue asking about it even if the patient says that they have no memories of any such events. For example, one of the most popular self-help books for childhood sexual abuse written by two well-

known clinicians in the field advises other therapists. "if your client says she wasn't abused but you suspect that she was. ask again later" (Bass & Davis, 1988. p. 350). Here. then is the potential for bias to become explicit suggestion to the patient.

Therapists can also find more subtly dangerous statements like. "the current findings, however. indicate that therapists should be open to the possibility of child sexual abuse among clients who report no memory of such abuse" (Williams. 1994. p. 1174). without any definition of what is meant by being "open". Bass and Davis (1988) further argue that therapists should be open to the possibility of childhood sexual abuse in any patient who shows "the symptoms". yet the list of possible symptoms provided is suspiciously inclusive. including affirmative answers to questions like, "do you feel unable to protect yourself in dangerous situations?" and "do you have trouble feeling motivated" (p. 35). These statements could be damaging to the patient if the biases these writers recommend that therapists adopt do not suit their individual needs. Unfortunately. while the issue of therapists' bias interfering with the best interests of the patient is an important one. further elaboration is beyond the scope of this paper.

Sceptics thus basically believe that defenders. especially therapists. are not familiar with or are ignoring important findings on memory retrieval and are engaging in dangerous practices with their patients that could result in the formation of false memories of past abuse. These criticisms have not gone unchallenged. however. Defenders argue that the actions therapists have been criticized for-- the use of memory

recall techniques and the existence of therapeutic bias-- are not the problem sceptics claim them to be.

3. THE DEFENDERS' CASE

The "defender" label actually encompasses a range of different groups with different positions and stakes in the controversy. As such, there is no unified defender response to sceptics' criticisms. Instead, the responses and counter- criticisms of different groups depend on that group's position. For instance, feminists do not attack sceptics' memory research findings as much as they question their political motives, whereas therapists, especially repressed memory therapists, do challenge the applicability of memory researchers' findings to the settings under which their clients recover their memories of abuse.

Still, a summary of the defenders' position(s) can be attempted. Although a few defenders have tried to dispute the sceptics' contention that dangerous techniques and attitudes are being employed by some therapists, most have instead challenged the applicability of sceptics' findings to the therapeutic setting. The most popular method has been to claim that memories of childhood sexual abuse are not governed by the theory of memory proposed by the sceptics because such events are traumatic and therefore operate under their own system of memory. Although this position can be shown to be, so far, unsupported, therapists are still justified in believing that they have a phenomenon that sceptics are at pains to explain with their theories, the recovery of externally verifiable repressed memories of abuse. This has led one theorist to claim that because sceptics,

especially memory researchers, are not capable of accounting for anecdotal evidence, the controversy is actually about sceptics not understanding the unique nature of therapeutic data. Finally, the last defender response has been to question the political motives of sceptics.

3.1 "Dangerous Techniques" Revisited

Defenders' attempts to dispute the sceptics' findings on the suggestibility of memory and therefore the contention that some techniques could be dangerous when used as memory enhancers take two main forms. The first basically does not engage the sceptics' criticisms and instead argues that sceptics have missed the central problem with childhood sexual abuse. For example, Belicki (1995) argues that the presence of childhood sexual abuse has been ignored for far too long and that therefore false positives are not the problem that need attention.

The term false positive is from signal detection theory (SDT). This theory was initially developed in military settings, specifically when submarines were first attempting to detect enemy mines under water via sonar. It explains the consequences of raising or lowering the tendency to accept stimuli as "signals" or as "noise" (non-signals). According to SDT, the greater the tendency of the person to label stimuli a "signal", the higher the hits (correct positives) and the lower the misses (false negatives). However, this increased tendency also raises the possibility of false positives (identifying a signal that is not there). Alternatively, decreasing the tendency to accept increases the possibility

of correct negatives (correctly noticing that something isn't there). This tradeoff is traditionally represented by a two by two table showing the four possibilities and the percentages associated with each, assuming set sensitivity levels. Decisions of where to set the tendency to accept stimuli as signals or noise usually depends on the costs associated with misses and with false positives. Doctors with an inexpensive treatment for a very deadly disease and doctors with a very expensive treatment for a disease that only kills .001% of its victims will make different decisions in their detection criteria, for example.

Belicki's (1995) argument that false positives should not be a concern is therefore an argument that the cost of false positives is insignificant in comparison to the cost of failing to detect true cases of childhood sexual abuse because the detection of these cases has been undervalued for too long. Under SDT, though, without an increase in sensitivity of the instruments or methods used for such detection, the ratio of hits to false alarms (false positives) will stay the same and false positives will increase in proportion to the increase in hits. Her argument that this should not be a concern runs counter to sceptics' claims to the contrary. As Loftus and Ketcham (1994) put it, "the promise that she can 'always apologize and set the record straight' denies the disastrous impact of the accusation on the lives of everyone involved" (p. 173).

Basically, the major flaw in Belicki's (1995) argument is that the transition from not recognizing the existence of childhood sexual abuse to "recognizing" it in nearly

every woman (as some checklists would recommend, see, for example, Bass & Davis, 1988; Loftus & Ketcham, 1994), is a strange kind of improvement. It can also be accused of reducing the complex issues in the RMC to patients recovering either completely true or completely false memories of abuse. The sceptics' case is built around the issue of memory construction, of memory's ability to combine true and false details and events to form new memories from which the true and false elements may be indistinguishable. Therefore, the SDT may not be applicable to the RMC. Some sceptics can be similarly accused of attempting to reduce the issues of the RMC, but these and other complications resulting from the misuse of the terms true and false will be discussed when epistemological misunderstandings are examined below.

Defenders' second form of disputing sceptics' criticisms is an attempt to dispute the validity of memory researchers findings on the suggestibility of memory. For instance, Shevrin (1994) has argued that for every person who can be influenced by suggestion, three can withstand it. Even if this statistic is taken at face value, since the percentage of people duped in some deception studies is not far off this mark, straight application of this statistic to clients in therapy would suggest that 25% may be susceptible to developing false memories in the presence of suggestion. It is therefore not only a poor defence but is a claim most sceptics would themselves hesitate to make because it is alarmingly large (see the discussion of the False Memory Syndrome Foundation below, however, for an exception to this).

3.2 The "Traumatic" Memory System

The majority of defenders' arguments against the application of memory researchers findings to cases of recovered memories rest on the belief that no research has been performed on memories as traumatic as those existing in the minds of survivors of childhood sexual abuse. The severity of the trauma is argued by these defenders to make these memories of abuse behave so differently from other memories that researchers' findings on "normal" memory are simply inapplicable to their functioning. Key to this belief is the argument that a separate system of memory exists for traumatic memories that is not susceptible to source confusion or construction. It works differently because of the clinical phenomenon of repression, or more recently, it has been argued, dissociation. However, these arguments are flawed for two main reasons. First, there are problems with how this separate memory system is supposed to work. Second, there are problems with the powers attributed to repression/dissociation by defenders.

Regarding the first, all hypotheses on how this separate system of memory is supposed to work suffer from at least one of the following problems. First, they cannot explain how or why memory would be repressed. They are ad hoc in the sense of being introduced, "for the sole purpose of saving a hypothesis seriously threatened by adverse evidence: it would not be called for by other findings and, roughly speaking, it leads to no additional test implications" (Hempel, 1966, p. 29). Second, they cannot explain how detail is remembered as perfectly as some patients claim (Terr, 1994). Lastly, they are not

consistent with other known facts about memory or with themselves.

There are also four main theories of how traumatic memory is different from other kinds of memories. All, of course, have overlapping ideas and concepts but for the sake of simplicity will be dealt with separately. The first is that trauma causes arousal in the brain or otherwise causes brain structures to deal with traumatic information differently. The second is that there is a dissociation between implicit and explicit thoughts caused by trauma. The third is the related hypothesis that highly emotional events may be mediated by subcortical structures. The last theory is that trauma affects memory differently because it can cause repression or dissociation. The second main problem with the separate memory system hypothesis, that of the powers attributed to repression or dissociation will be discussed with this last theory. As well, whenever the words repressed or dissociated are used by a theorist without an explanation, they will appear in scare quotes because many writers on the first three theories either have different definitions of these concepts or provide little or no explanation of the concepts themselves.

3.2.1 The Brain's Physical Response to Trauma

The first hypothesis is actually a conglomeration of slightly different theories of how the brain physically handles traumatic events differently than non-traumatic ones. These hypotheses are not ad hoc because they were inspired by findings on the effects of arousal on memory processes, a line of enquiry started before this controversy began.

Studies have shown that high levels of arousal facilitate detection and long term retention (Revelle & Loftus. 1992). Garry and Loftus (1994) also found that trauma affected whether central or peripheral details of images were remembered better. The theories are therefore based on evidence but they run into problems when they try to describe how this different system of memory for trauma is actually supposed to work. For example, one therapist has argued that trauma releases epinephrine, a naturally occurring neurotransmitter in the brain. which then "fixes" the memories of these traumatic events (Ewin. 1994. p. 175). This theory seems to be contradicted. however. by what was noted earlier about so-called flashbulb memories; although memory for a traumatic event can seem to be very clear and vivid. it can still contain many false details (Garry & Loftus. 1994). Further. flashbulb memories have usually served as the prototypical example of "fixed" memories. This theory is therefore inconsistent with other facts known about memory.

Another theory about the effects of epinephrine on memory states that adrenal epinephrine activates the amygdala. and sites activated by the amygdala. which serve to regulate the storage of long-term memories (McGaugh, 1992). This activation also seems dose dependent. Therefore the strength of memories may depend on the degree of activation (i.e., of trauma). These effects are then hypothesized to underlie the long-lasting consequences of traumatic experiences as seen in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). for example. where patients repeatedly "relive" the traumatic experiences. Yet

this theory is a complete contradiction of the repressive hypothesis that many defenders argue for, that severe trauma causes "repression" of memory for the events. According to this hypothesis and others like it, the more traumatic an episode is, the more likely it is that the individual will never forget it. Since this theory is used as proof for a separate system of memory for traumatic events, a system in which repression plays a key part, it is self-contradictory.

Other contradictory theories about the effects that arousal has on repressed memory exist as well. For example, according to Heuer and Reisenberg (1992), strong emotion slows but does not eliminate forgetting because there are three factors that all operate in memory preservation: physiological arousal, distinctiveness of the emotional event, and extra attention and rehearsal devoted to emotional events. Yet to theorize that the third factor is needed to explain why "repressed" memories are not forgotten is to shoot oneself in the foot because "repressed" memories are by nature subject to no rehearsal or extra attention. They are said to be "repressed" because they are too traumatic for the mind to deal with. Heuer and Reisenberg's (1992) theory contains still other contradictions as well. First, they state that, "our most detailed, seemingly most complete, memories [emotional memories] are the memories most likely to contain fallacies and most likely to stray from historical accuracy" (p. 152) and, "emotion provides no guarantee of permanent or perfectly accurate recall- emotional memories will contain errors and will eventually be lost" (p. 176). Then they state that, "nonetheless, we believe

it likely that we can largely trust our vivid memories of emotional events" (p. 176) but do not state why.

Byrd's (1994) theory provides an exception to the above statement on theorists who do not provide a definition of repression. His theory is an attempt to explain how trauma causes repression biologically. Byrd (1994) claims that the hippocampus, hypothesized to be responsible for the temporal and spatial aspects of memory, may be inhibited by cortisol secretions, which are released during stress, thereby causing repression for the memory of that event. Byrd (1994) then argues, though, that the amygdala, which controls somatic and affective behaviours, somehow retains a "memory" of the traumatic event. Therefore, behavioral manifestations of the underlying memory can be seen even when no conscious memory of the event remains. Further, since the hippocampus does not fully develop until 3-4 years after birth, this also explains why early trauma is more subject to distortion. Unfortunately, there is no reason for believing that repression, as conceptualized by Byrd (1994) does or should, in fact, occur here over normal forgetting. Byrd (1994) additionally tries to argue that trauma makes memories sharper. If, however, cortisol secretions are said to inhibit the hippocampus, Byrd fails to explain why this does not damage the formation of the memory itself thereby not only not making traumatic memory sharper but actually weakening it.

Thus, even if arousal or trauma may cause memories for some events to be more memorable, there is insufficient proof from studies of the brain and its physical processes

to support the hypothesis that traumatic memories are processed under a different system of memory mediated by "repression". There is therefore necessarily insufficient proof to support the contention that this system is not susceptible to the dynamic constructive influences theorized by Loftus and others.

3.2.2 Implicit/Explicit Dissociation

Some defenders have attempted to use research on the existence of implicit memory as a system of memory distinct from explicit memory to argue that traumatic memory may exist as a system of its own. Their argument for how detail is preserved during "repression", however, is that traumatic memories are processed and stored as implicit memories but then, when recalled, are reconnected with their explicit counterparts, a position they are unable to defend. Therefore, although this position comes closest to explaining how or why memory would be repressed, it cannot explain the preservation of detail.

This theory too starts with experimental findings. For example, from findings that emotional responses to faces can be preserved by individuals without explicit memory for the faces themselves (Tobia, Kihlstrom, & Schacter, 1992), it is argued that there may be a dissociation between implicit and explicit memory for emotional events. It is then claimed, on the basis of research showing that highly emotional memories can be processed differently in memory (van der Kolk & van der Hart, 1991), that extreme trauma causes information to bypass the normal explicit system and be processed

exclusively in implicit form. That is, "during trauma only disjointed sensory and emotional information is encoded into memory" (Kristiansen, 1996, p. 9). Finally, such theorists argue that, "when traumatic memories return, they bypass the explicit processing that underlies the memory phenomena studied by pseudo-memory researchers. As a result, they are likely to be accurate, albeit fragmented, representations of past experience" (Kristiansen, 1996, p. 14). By "pseudo-memory researcher" I believe Kristiansen means researchers who study memory distortion.

Yet a number of problems exist with this argument. It is meant to explain how it is that recalled traumatic memories seem to have withstood the reinterpretations and distortions that normal (explicit) memories are subject to over time and meant to explain how memory can be stored and recalled with such vividness and detail years later (see, e.g., Loftus & Ketcham, 1994; Terr, 1994) but it leaves out one crucial factor in its explanation. It fails to explain how the explicit memories that are recovered, that correspond to the event that spawned the implicit memories, are themselves stored and recovered. Further, how are the implicit and explicit memories, formed during the event, recognized by the brain as corresponding to the same event? Even if it were accepted that implicit memory might hold the emotional and sensory component of the original traumatic memory, and even if it were accepted that some priming effects or unconscious emotional associations to people, objects, or events could be explained by implicit memories formed at the time of the trauma, there is no reason to accept the implied

additional assumption that the explicit memories for the original event sat somewhere in memory neatly waiting reunion with their implicit counterparts.

Even more importantly, this theory employs a poor understanding of the term "implicit memory". As previously stated, the term "implicit memory" is defined by memory researchers as the nonconscious effects of prior experiences on later performance and behaviour. The prime examples are skill learning and priming (Schacter, 1995, p. 19). Priming, for example, can be demonstrated experimentally when a previously learned word that an individual displays no conscious explicit memory of is shown to be chosen more readily than other control words which should be chosen with equal or greater frequency. However, implicit memory is not a series of memories that can be recalled, like explicit memories, at a later time. What is occurring under this theory of traumatic memory, then, is that implicit is being considered a modern substitute for what Freud (1916/1982) meant by unconscious. However, in that materials from the unconscious, as hypothesized by Freud, were necessarily retrievable, and implicit memories are not necessarily retrievable, implicit is not the same thing as the (Freudian) unconscious.

Attempted applications of the theory of implicit/explicit dissociation demonstrate other misunderstandings and misuses of the terms implicit and explicit. For example, Shevrin (1994) stated the following,

> In cognitive theory an unconscious episodic memory cannot act as a prime for an implicit memory. And here psychoanalysis has to take exception on the basis of

> much clinical evidence. For example, screen memories qualify as implicit, but are prompted by unconscious episodic memories. Screen memories are also semantic insofar as they retain content related to the underlying unconscious episodic memory without explicitly identifying [time, person, place].... In short, cognitive psychology fails to take into account the existence of a dynamic as opposed to purely cognitive unconscious. (p. 994)

However, it is Shevrin who fails to take into account the correct definitions of the terms implicit and explicit. Of the many problematic assertions in this passage the most glaring is that screen memories are actually conscious recollections of things or events that did not actually happen but that are easier, for defensive purposes, to believe in. They could therefore not be implicit because implicit necessarily means not consciously recalled.

Defenders of this theory of the traumatic memory system seem to be relying on two facts related to knowledge about implicit memory to project an aura of possibility for the theory. They rely, first, on the fact that the full capabilities of the implicit memory system have not been discovered to suggest some additional capabilities that would conveniently explain their data. Second, they rely on the fact that the existence of implicit memory as a system distinct from explicit memory opens the door, theoretically, to the possibility of other memory systems existing, namely, one for traumatic memories. Yet possibility does not equal actuality and until its proponents can adequately demonstrate the actual existence of such a system, it remains only a theoretical possibility.

One last problem with this theory overlaps considerably with problems with the use of the term "dissociation", which will be discussed further below, by defenders. The problem is that what is recalled or remembered by patients in this controversy is material that could not theoretically be stored in implicit memory. That is, more than "implicit" feelings and associations are recovered. When the memory recovered is a who, when and how variety of memory, it is explicit material that is being recovered, yet the theory only even attempts to explain the encoding and storage of implicit memories.

The parallel with dissociation is as follows: dissociation is said to occur automatically in response to trauma, "the survivor's consciousness is automatically rather than intentionally removed from the ongoing traumatic event" (Kristiansen, 1996, p. 3) Under most theorists' definitions of dissociation, however, which will be explained further below, no one is there when an individual dissociates, to remember what is actually occurring. Likewise, in the theory of implicit/explicit dissociation, individuals undergoing extremely traumatic events are said to process them using implicit memory because the events are too traumatic to be dealt with by the patient's conscious mind, or explicit processing (Kristiansen, 1996). Yet how any conscious explicit details are retained when the individual is not consciously paying attention to them is not explained just as it is not explained how an individual who has dissociated and is no longer consciously there is able to later remember explicit details. Therefore, both theories fail to explain how the kinds of memories being recovered in therapy and reported by defenders,

that is, explicit conscious memories, are processed and stored.

3.2.3 Subcortical Processing

Although the section above on the brain's physical response to trauma contained hypotheses concerning subcortical areas, this section exists separately because the hypotheses below actually have more to do with implicit memory hypotheses than those concerning physiology per ce. In fact, this third theory of how traumatic memory works is almost a repetition of the last one, but with different vocabulary. It relies on the notion of subcortical structures rather than on implicit memory (Kristiansen, 1996), but is very similar to the last because discussions of where implicit memory processing occurs in the brain are centred around the identification of subcortical centres (Squire, 1996). In fact, in some theories, the two are inseparable. For example, Kristiansen (1996) explains how trauma could cause information to be processed subcortically (implicitly) independent of cortical processing which, "is necessary for explicit memories where emotional and sensory experiences are contextualized within a conscious and meaningful narrative" and that subcortical processing causes, "fragmented, emotional and sensory memories without the person being aware of the events originally responsible for the memories" (p.8). As with the implicit theory, though, even if information could be stored separately and perfectly contained "subcortically" until it was recalled, which itself is problematic, no explanation of how subcortically processed information is reunited with information processed in the cortex is provided.

Like the theories of implicit memory, as well, the basis for this theory lies in research findings. Christianson (1992) found that emotional memories may be mediated by subcortical structures and that this mediation may precede both perception and awareness that anything was retained. That is, emotional information may attract preattentive processes while other aspects of memory like the processing of central or peripheral details are dealt with consciously. It is further hypothesized that this differential processing may rely on which structures are most recently evolved in the brain, with the most recent (and most complex) being the most conscious. Other authors have likewise hypothesized that implicit memory may predate explicit memory in human evolution (Schacter, 1992).

Proponents of the theory that traumatic information is processed and stored subcortically believe that the existence of processing of different information by different brain areas allows for the possible existence of dissociations between different kinds of memory. For example, since memory of the affective component of an event and memory of the event itself can be shown to be processed differently, they hypothesize that the two kinds of memory could become dissociated from each other. They see evidence for this from clinical observations that dissociations are sometimes seen between memory for the emotional component of an event and memory for the event itself (Bass & Davis, 1988; Christianson, 1992).

Problems with this theory, though, echo those of the last. Research has not shown

subcortical structures to have any superior abilities over cortical structures in holding or storing information without distortion for long periods of time and even if it had. again. there is no explanation provided of how the corresponding cortically held (explicit) information is stored without distortion and reunited with the subcortical when it surfaces.

3.2.4 Repression/Dissociation

The last theory of how a separate system of memory for traumatic information could work proposes that traumatic information is handled differently by the brain because of the phenomena of repression or dissociation. Critical discussion of this theory can occur without addressing the issue of whether such phenomena exist or not, despite what some sceptics have attempted to argue (Loftus & Ketcham, 1994). This is because the theory faces fatal problems regarding the powers that are attributed to these phenomena and not regarding their existence per ce. Theories involving the two phenomena will be addressed separately.

3.2.4.1 Repression.

Different definitions of repression have been offered by different theorists. For instance. three different definitions of what repression is and how it occurs can be identified. The first. "repression as an involuntary process that occurs unconsciously without a person's awareness" (Kristiansen, 1996, p. 2), is used less frequently than the others because few view repression as an entirely unconscious process. A more

commonly accepted second definition of repression is an active and deliberate ejection from consciousness of information perceived as threatening or traumatic (Terr, 1994). It is also commonly believed by both sides of the controversy that this was Freud's original meaning of the term (Bowers & Farvolden, 1996; Kristiansen, 1996; Terr, 1994) although an exploration of whether this was or was not the case is not only beyond the scope of this paper, but has been explored well by others (e.g. Erdelyi, 1985). A third definition of repression reviewed by Bowers and Farvolden (1996) is a "paradigm shift" model where the repression involves a "total cognitive restructuring of evidence" (p. 360). They suggest that this understanding of repression may be especially useful in cases where more severe or dramatic repressions have occurred. Regardless of which definition of repression they endorse, however, theorists and clinicians who attempt to use the phenomenon of repression to explain how a separate system of memory for traumatic memories works face two main sets of challenges.

The first set of challenges come from researchers who question the existence of the phemonenon itself. Loftus and Ketcham (1994) have one of the more extreme positions in this regard. They argue that repression is an untestable and unnecessary concept, and that the cases in the present controversy of individuals "losing" and then "recovering" memories are fully explainable with the already existing and less controversial theories of forgetting. Others have offered the less extreme position that repression may be overattributed to cases of forgetting, "it is physiologically impossible

to retain a conscious record of our complete past. We do not need to posit a special repression... to account for this type of forgetting" (Ceci, Crotteau Hoffman, Smith, & Loftus, 1994, p. 404). However, both arguments may be cases of throwing the baby out with the bathwater because it is not repression per ce with which these researchers have a problem. The real problem is the powers attributed to repression, or how repression is said to work, by true believers in this controversy. A closer examination of Loftus and Ketcham's (1994) argument demonstrates this,

> what Freud intended as a free-ranging metaphor... has been captured and literalised. Freud used repression as an allegory, a fanciful story used to illustrate the unknowable and unfathomable reaches of the human mind. We moderns, confused perhaps by the metaphorical comparison and inclined to take things literally, imagined we could hold the unconscious and its contents in our hands. Whole memories, some argued, could be buried for years and then exhumed without any aging or decay of the original material. (p. 52)

Their real argument, contained in the last sentence, deals with what repression is supposed to be able to do to memory, according to defenders. It is the powers that defenders are attributing to repression that Loftus and Ketcham (1994) actually have a problem with yet their problem is stated in terms of repression's existence itself. They basically argue that repression cannot be experimentally demonstrated and therefore that defenders who use the term in their theorizing must be wrong (Loftus & Ketcham, 1994).

They do not need to make this more extreme claim, and, worse, they cannot support the argument that repression does not exist.

An unfortunate consequence of these kinds of attacks, by researchers, on the concept of repression, is that most defenders' counter-arguments tend to focus less on the real object of sceptics' criticisms and instead focus on proving that repression really does exist.

The second set of challenges against the use of repression to explain the separate memory system hypothesis come from sceptics who question how repression is supposed to work, with respect to memory, in this controversy. These challenges are also independent of which definition of repression is considered since the different definitions of repression differ in how information is ejected from consciousness and why, and not with respect to how information is stored or retrieved.

Along with Bass and Davis (1988), well-known childhood trauma researcher Lenore Terr (1994) makes some of the most extreme claims regarding repression's powers. I will explain her theory in some detail because she has the most comprehensive theory of repression's effects on memory and because her theory is widely cited as proof of the same by defenders. Terr's (1994) additional theories on dissociation will be explored further below.

She begins her theory by making a distinction between "Type I" and "Type II" traumas which are caused by single or repeated traumatic episodes, respectively (Terr,

1994, p. 11). She claims that repression can occur in both cases but that it is especially common in Type I because Type II is more commonly characterized by dissociation. Her theory on repression is ultimately unclear, though, because, in attempting to explain Type I traumas, she states that they are remembered with "clear, precise detail" (Terr, 1994, p. 87) and that "the event will be etched in, like the frieze on an art deco window" (p. 8) while simultaneously stating her belief that mistakes in the detail of childhood memories are common (p. 25). Her theory also equates memories for Type I traumas with flashbulb memories, though she does not identify them as such, instead calling them, "burned-in visual memories" (Terr, 1994, p. 199), while not disputing the criticisms, discussed earlier (e.g. Garry & Loftus, 1994), levelled at the concept of flashbulb memories.

Terr (1994) believes that Type I traumas are fully perceived and cognitively processed by the brain before they are repressed; that is how they can be recalled in such vivid detail. Yet her explanation of repression's powers is circular. A popularly quoted phrase from her book is that, "trauma sets up new rules for memory" (Terr, 1994, p. 52). Trauma causes things to be repressed, trauma causes conflict for the individual which is so severe that only repression can enable the individual to continue to function. But no explanation is given for why the memory of the original traumatic event would be remembered in such vivid detail other than that it was repressed, and no explanation is given for why repressed memory is so well remembered other than that it was traumatic in the first place. Traumatic memory and repression are thus defined via circular

dependent definitions in Terr's theory. How repression specifically works to preserve memory in perfect detail is not explained without resorting back to trauma, flashbulbs, or some other variant of the first hypothesis criticized above, that the brain has a different physical response to trauma. Terr's (1994) theory, thus, does nothing to defeat the sceptic's argument that, "a memory, by virtue of having been repressed, does not somehow escape the distortions and constructive features of memory in general" (Bowers & Farvolden, 1996, p. 361). Even if repression existed, and contrary to Loftus and Ketcham's (1994) claims, there is no reason to believe it does not exist, there is no reason to believe it could or should be responsible for the memory phenomena said to exist in this controversy.

The hypothesis that incidents of repression can be so severe in some individuals that Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD) is seen will not be explored here since MPD no longer exists as a diagnostic entity (Hacking, 1995). The new "related" diagnostic category of Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) and how it is used by defenders, however, will be explored in the section on dissociation below.

3.2.4.2 Dissociation.

Different definitions of dissociation exist as well. The main contrast between repression and dissociation is that, generally, repressed episodes are first perceived and then repressed, whereas dissociated episodes are characterized by a "removal" of consciousness. Not even this is universally correct, however, since other theorists dispute

this characterization of dissociation and, instead, hold dissociated states as analogous to hypnotic ones (c.f., Spiegel, 1995). These definitions all face new problems, though.

Under the theory of repression, it could at least be claimed that individuals had processed an event before it was repressed or it could be hypothesized, under the theory of personality proposed by advocates of MPD that another "personality" could recall different, usually traumatic, events. Since advocates of dissociation claim that dissociation is a different cognitive process than repression and that MPD was an incorrect classification of people with DID (Hacking, 1995; Spiegel, 1995), who do not have distinct "personalities", though, they face new problems that advocates of repression did not have to explain. The two most serious are explaining the initial memory storage of traumatic events and the problem of who is actually "there" when an individual dissociates if other "personalities" can no longer by theorized to exist. The dissociation theories of Bass and Davis (1988) and of Kristiansen (1996), who both argue that an individual's consciousness is "removed" during dissociative states, demonstrate these problems as well as other inconsistencies. Other theories, like those of Spiegel (1995) or Terr (1994), who believes that dissociation generally harms memory, are more sophisticated but still contain inconsistencies. Lastly, all theories of dissociation share the problem of ultimately being post hoc, or after the fact, explanations that have no predictive power for treatment purposes.

Advocates of repression as an explanation for how a separate system of memory

for trauma could operate, as explored above, do not face the problems that advocates of dissociation do in explaining initial memory storage of traumatic events. The severity of this problem is dependent on how dissociation is defined. Bass and Davis (1988) believe that children naturally "leave" their bodies, or dissociate, during extreme trauma. They claim that, "survivors have an uncanny ability to space out and not be present" (Bass & Davis, 1988, p. 45). However, if, as they state, an individual is dissociating, or "spacing out", and not being present while the trauma is happening, it is unclear who is actually there to remember the trauma. They therefore have quite a severe problem explaining the superior memory abilities said to characterize the hypothesized traumatic memory system. Kristiansen's (1996) theory faces much the same problem since it defines dissociation as involving an automatic removal of consciousness from an ongoing traumatic event, "survivors... leaving their bodies and disappearing, psychologically, altogether" (p. 3).

The main reason why the theories of Bass and Davis (1988) and Kristiansen (1996) do not work is because they misuse the concept of dissociation. Bass and Davis (1988) make little distinction between repression and dissociation, and Kristiansen (1996) simply misunderstands the difference. Kristiansen's (1996) attempt to argue that a separate system of memory for dissociated traumatic memories exists consists of her completely conflating dissociated memories and implicit ones, thereby also completely misunderstanding the terms "implicit" and "explicit". Ultimately, both Kristiansen (1996)

and Bass and Davis (1988) want to retain the power repression is said to have but avoid its criticisms. They want to claim that the individual first fully processed the traumatic memories and then dissociated them, but this is how repression is hypothesized to work, not dissociation. Their use of dissociation thus offers no new explanatory power over repression. Spiegel (1995) and Terr (1994), however, are examples of theorists whose use of dissociation does offer new explanatory power since they include in their theories hypotheses on how dissociated material is stored that are different than those proposed for repression.

Spiegel (1995) is well known as an advocate of DID and was one of the key proponents of the official change of the diagnostic category of MPD to DID in the fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-IV) published in 1994 (Hacking, 1995). With this change came an important shift in the way that the brain was claimed to deal with traumatic information. It was no longer the case that the most severe reaction to trauma was the creation, by the mind, of different personalities to handle the traumatic information and episodes, but that it was the mind giving this appearance to the individual.

> There is a widespread misunderstanding of the essential psychopathology of this dissociative disorder, which is the failure of integration of various aspects of identity, memory, and consciousness. The problem is not having more than one personality; it is having less than one personality. (Spiegel, cited in Hacking,

1995, p. 18)

It was this change that brought about the problem discussed earlier of who could now be said to be present during traumatic episodes when individuals were dissociating if no other "personalities" were said to exist. The above mentioned theorists, Bass and Davis (1988) and Kristiansen (1996) could not answer this question because their definitions of dissociation were too limited, but Spiegel's is more sophisticated. Unfortunately, though, his theory has other fatal flaws.

According to Spiegel (1995) a dissociating individual does not need other personalities to be present in order for traumatic information to be remembered because the individual's personality or consciousness never actually "leaves". The above mentioned "failure of integration" is Spiegel's definition of dissociation, a state he sees as analogous to a hypnotic state. Severe enough trauma causes the individual to dissociate and store the traumatic event in a different network of association (Spiegel, 1995, p. 132), but at no time are they ever actually "not there". Calling the memory storage "state-dependent", Spiegel (1995) further claims that because hypnosis is a similar state to dissociation, hypnosis often aids in the recovery of this dissociated material. His explanation of how all this is possible as well as his explanation of the link between trauma and dissociation are problematic, however.

His explanation of how hypnosis can aid the retrieval of memories is that hypnosis, "selectively taps the implicit memory domain" (Spiegel, 1995, p. 141). It taps

implicit memory since during hypnotic recall there is a disjunction between accuracy and evaluation, as seen in the above studies showing hypnotized individuals feel they are recalling accurately even when they are not (Spiegel, 1995, p. 141). This involuntariness or automaticity is reminiscent of implicit memory. Like others (c.f., Kristiansen, 1996; Shevrin, 1994), however, he seems to misuse the term "implicit". First, implicit memory refers more to a kind of memory store than to a kind of retrieval. This is not a settled issue in cognitive research, though, but a more important problem for Spiegel (1995) also exists. That is, even if such a thing as "implicit retrieval" existed, it is unclear why explicit memories, which are the kind that the controversy, and Spiegel, is referring to, would be retrievable using it. His statement that, "hypnosis may couch 'explicit' information in an implicit context" (Spiegel, 1995, p. 142) is not sufficient to escape the problems mentioned in the sections above where memories involving explicit information were theorized to behave as implicit memories because they were traumatic.

Spiegel's (1995) explanation of the link between trauma and dissociation is also problematic. Under his theory, traumatic material that is dissociated is retrievable by the individual; it is simply stored differently than non-dissociated material and different retrieval mechanisms may be necessary for remembering. He also theorizes, though, that DID is related to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), a disorder in which individuals suffer from not being able to stop thinking about traumatic episodes. Spiegel (1995) believes that DID can be conceptualized as chronic PTSD, since both are a kind of a

compartmentalization of experience (p. 136). However, why a disorder characterized by not being able to forget about an experience and one characterized by difficulty remembering an experience should be related is not altogether clear. If Spiegel (1995) is trying to argue that dissociation is the mechanism by which traumatic information is processed that allows it to be later recalled in excellent detail or, even if he is only arguing that dissociation is the brain's normal response to extreme trauma, why PTSD would ever occur becomes a question his theory can not answer.

Problems with the hypothesized link between trauma and dissociation are even worse in the dissociation theories of Terr (1994). It is her theory, as well, which demonstrates the ultimate ad hoc quality of all dissociation and repression based theories. Her theory of dissociation is quite different from Spiegel's (1995) in that she believes dissociation to cause poor memory storage and therefore poor retrieval as well, regardless of which techniques are used to aid recall. What she classifies as Type II trauma, trauma resulting from repeated episodes of abuse, is characterized by poor memory for detail, at best, and complete loss of memory of the events, at worst (Terr, 1994, p. 148). She acknowledges other theorists' dissenting opinions but herself believes that the individual is "not present" when they dissociate. Thus, for Terr, the link between trauma and dissociation, with respect to memory, is not one of enhancement but of damage, though again, this is supposedly restricted to Type II trauma. It is in the re-examination of her overall theories of the "new rules" that trauma is supposed to set up for memory, though,

that her theories become problematic and the ad hoc nature of these theories becomes apparent.

Terr's (1994) theory of what trauma does to memory is inconsistent in the sense that one time trauma and repeated traumas are said to affect the brain differently, even though, so far, only one separate memory system for traumatic information has been proposed by others. Terr's (1994) theorizing seems to suggest that individuals exposed to repeated traumas somehow gain, or have released, an ability to dissociate because individuals exposed to only one trauma most commonly display repression. The reason why either reaction should be a characteristic reaction to single or repeated episodes of trauma is not explained, though. She does not even try to incorporate PTSD into her theory, probably because it could not be accommodated. More important than the lack of incorporation of PTSD, though, is the fact that her theory is inconsistent with itself. In using one case study to demonstrate her theory, Terr blatantly bends her own theories to fit the case.

The ad hoc qualities of Terr's (1994) theories of traumatic memory functioning are demonstrated in her attempts to fit discrepant facts into them. One of her case studies involves a woman who was repeatedly traumatized, yet who was also argued to have recovered a repressed traumatic childhood memory. Terr (1994) claims that this case is not a contradiction to her theory that repeatedly traumatized individuals dissociate and therefore have great difficulty "recovering" memories, by arguing that the traumas were

of a significantly different kind (p. 28). She argues that the repressed and then recovered trauma was of a murder she had witnessed while the other traumas were of her being sexually abused. Terr (1994) thus now seems to propose that the brain is physically affected differently depending on what the traumatic episode was about. Since this was the woman's "only murder experience" (Terr, 1994, p. 28), does a distinct separate system of memory exist for sexually abusive traumatic episodes that is separate still from the one that exists for murderous traumatic episodes, and if so, where does such fragmentation stop?

Terr's (1995) theory, as well as all other theories attempting to explain the functioning of the hypothesized separate system of memory for traumatic episodes, suffers from the fundamental problem of never being able to act predictively. They can not explain why one individual experiences PTSD while another seems to have repressed their memories. If different individuals respond to trauma differently then there can not be a separate system of memory that deals with all traumatic information, as has been proposed, in different ways, by all of the above theorists.

3.2.5 Summary

Defenders have failed to put forward an acceptable theory of how a separate memory system for traumatic memories could work. Until such an attempt is successful, there is no reason to believe that such a system, in fact, exists. Thus, there is no reason to believe that memory researchers' data is inapplicable to the "recovered" memories under

debate in this controversy or to the techniques used to recover them.

Trauma does have some effects on memory, though. Sceptics have even done some of the work confirming this (Garry & Loftus, 1994; Loftus & Ketcham, 1994; Revelle & Loftus, 1992). However, such effects seem limited to findings like Garry and Loftus' (1994) that trauma can narrow attention by sharpening central details and degrading more peripheral ones, in some cases. It seems unwarranted to move from such findings to the claim that trauma affects memory so severely that a separate system of memory needs to be proposed that functions completely differently from that proposed for non-traumatic memories, though. It seems more reasonable to propose that more research be done to determine the extent of trauma's effects on perception, memory storage, and retrieval.

Defenders are right, however, to argue that confirmed legitimate cases of recovered memory do seem to exist (Terr, 1994) but that sceptics are unwilling to accept them because of their beliefs (Loftus & Ketcham, 1994). Terr (1994) documents some of these, albeit sensationally, in her book Unchained Memories. The existence of these cases and of sceptics' reluctance to mention them in their writings has caused one theorist to posit that sceptics are unwilling to accept such reports because they are testimony and, therefore, unanalyzable by scientific methods (Miller, 1996).

3.3 Testimony

Ronald Miller (1996) has presented the thesis that the anecdotal data that

therapists deal with in their therapy sessions is best classified as testimony, that this data is unanalysable by scientific methods, and that researchers fail to recognize the different nature of therapists' data. He therefore argues, indirectly, that researchers' criticisms of therapists' data, i.e., patients' recovered memories, are problematic. His reference for these claims is the philosophical work by Coady (1992) entitled, Testimony: A Philosophical Study.

Coady (1992) first argues that philosophical analysis of testimony has been unpopular historically because of the largely individualist heritage of Europe and North America. He argues that the four traditionally accepted sources of knowledge: memory, external perception, self-awareness (introspection), and reason (p. 122) are products of this heritage and that testimony is usually not included among them because it involves the inclusion of other people. In other words, individual "man's" acquisition of knowledge would no longer be of primary consideration. Counter to this, though, he argues that testimony should be considered as valid a path to knowledge as perception has traditionally been since testimony is relied on so heavily in our day-to-day lives (Coady, 1992, p. 175). He argues that testimony is an indispensable, and therefore possibly the most important, source of our knowledge.

In addition to the individualist heritage, though, Coady (1992) believes that various social groups have affected testimony's status with respect to knowledge. Eyewitness testimony researchers are specifically singled out as having given testimony.

especially in the legal setting, an air of unreliability. He disputes the overall tone of their work which, he argues, is based on the premise that testimony is a largely unreliable source of knowledge. He also argues that many of eyewitness testimony researchers' earliest claims were stronger than what their evidence supported and had a great impact on public opinion about testimony despite the fact that their later work was more cautious in its conclusions. His main contention with their work, though, is that it contains an underlying hypocrisy because scientists themselves are heavily reliant on testimony in their own work. They rely on the testimony of other researchers as well as relying on their readers to believe their testimony in turn (Coady, 1992, p. 265). He therefore takes great exception to scientists' conceit in the reliability of their own methodologies and their "underlying attitude in which only the laboratory in a fit setting for truth" (Coady, 1992, p. 263). The strength of this lack attack is weakened, however, by the fact that the kind of testimony that researchers rely on and the kind of testimony that they study are two quite different kinds. Peer reviewed written statements about what happened in a laboratory are quite different from memory dependent time-delayed recall of events that may not have been perceived under ideal conditions.

Even from this preliminary sketch of Coady's (1992) theory, it should be apparent that Coady's work is not a defence of Miller's (1996) claims. To begin with, Coady certainly never claims that scientists could not evaluate testimony claims, as Miller states. In fact, Coady (1992) gives prescriptions on how he believes scientists could better

investigate testimony and actually praises some of the work they have done investigating the confidence of given testimony (p. 275). More importantly, though, Coady (1992) says nothing about scientists versus therapists and certainly says nothing to support the proposition that therapists' data are incompatible with researchers' methodologies. At most, he argues that scientists operate in their own unique setting, that of the laboratory.

Miller's (1996) thesis can therefore be seen as another, albeit disguised, version of the separate memory system hypothesis. He is simply arguing, from a different angle, that memory researchers' methodology is inapplicable to the kind of data produced by therapists in this controversy. While the previously examined arguments held that it was inapplicable because the memories were traumatic, Miller (1996) argues that scientists' methodology is inapplicable because the data are testimony. He is right to note the differences in methodology being used by therapists and researchers, and even right to further infer that theoretical differences, for example, what was acceptable as data, might accompany them. However, as will become apparent further below, he fails to note that the key problem in this controversy is not the existence of such differences but the failure to recognize them as philosophical differences and to recognize how they determine what is acceptable in different settings.

Coady (1992), incidently, also makes a statement that comes very close to foreshadowing the discussion on epistemological differences below; namely, that different groups require different standards of evidence for their different purposes, as in,

for example, his distinction between formal and natural testimony (p. 27). Formal and natural are the two names he gives for the testimony that would be acceptable in legal versus everyday conversational situations. However, he does not elaborate on the fact that different groups may legitimately use testimony differently but that this may cause communication difficulties between the groups despite the fact that it seems like his contention with psychologists may be caused by just this problem. In other words, not recognizing that testimony can be differentially used by different groups can cause misinterpretations. Coady (1992) himself falls prey to this by not recognizing that scientists use testimony differently than do courtrooms.

Thus, his work also does not foreshadow the discussion on epistemological differences below because it does not take the additional step of recognizing that different settings can employ whole different philosophical or epistemological understandings of what is deemed acceptable and why. To be fair, proving this point is superfluous to Coady's (1992) thesis, but this point is mentioned here for purposes of distinction between Coady's work and my own.

3.4 Political Motives

The last response used by some defenders against sceptics' criticisms of their work is that politics loom so large in this controversy that sceptics' criticisms are indistinguishable from sceptics' political motives. Thus, in this section, the beliefs of some writers that the controversy is nothing other than political differences will be

explored. What will also be introduced. however. is the notion of a distinction between "legitimate" political differences and misattributions of such differences based on unrecognized philosophical (epistemological) differences.

It is the contention of some defenders that the repressed memory controversy is a backlash against women and children's equality (Kristiansen, Garneau, Mittlehoft, DeCourville, & Hovdestad, 1995). Such writers argue that memory researchers and a group called the False Memory Syndrome Foundation (FMSF), who will be discussed below, are part of a political attack designed to silence women (and men) with recovered memories, frighten future patients who recover such memories and threaten access to therapy services for such memories (Landsberg, 1996a, Pope, 1996). Such arguments, thus, do not directly address memory researchers' findings per ce, but attack their political motives for doing such work. An examination of these arguments reveals that while the attacks on the work of the FMSF are justified, no distinction is made between this work and that of memory researchers publishing in academic journals. Though reasons for why such a lack of distinction has existed can be understood, it is argued that the distinction does, none the less, exist and that it is an important one.

The FMSF is a, "support group for families involved in accusations of abuse based on 'repressed' memories" (Loftus & Ketcham, 1994, p. 208). Loftus and Ketcham's (1994) definition of the group is used over their own because, as Pope (1996) has noted, their own tends to focus on defining and describing False Memory Syndrome (FMS).

Loftus and Ketcham's (1994) definition, in contrast, gives a clearer picture of who the group are and why they exist. The group has invented the term FMS to describe patients who have recovered memories that, they claim, become the centre of the person's identity and relationships but which are "objectively false" (Pope, 1996, p. 959). They are also involved in the investigation, education and prevention of this so-called "syndrome", which has yet to be recognized as such by any other psychological body. The validity of the claims of this group, as published in their newsletter, have been examined in a devastating critique by Kenneth Pope (1996) who quotes heavily from the research of other psychologists, especially Olio (1994).

His attack of the FMSF involves criticisms of (a) the claims that are made by the organization given the evidence they provide and (b) the tactics they utilize in stating and defending their claims. His attack on the claims made begins with their statement that patients suffering from FMS have memories that are objectively false (Pope, 1996, p. 959). He argues that no methodology and raw data have been provided that demonstrate how the memories were judged to be false have ever been provided. In this regard, he correctly notes that, so far, no one has ever been ale to come up with a method for distinguishing "true" from "false" memories. He also criticizes the statements by one of the founders of the FMSF that she could identify false memories based on the dress and appearance of the person who was accused (Pope, 1996, p. 960). He also argues that they have not provided the methodology for how the false memories of patients suffering from

FMS were determined to have become the centre of the person's identity and relationships (p. 960). Further criticisms are levelled at the number of cases of FMS that the FMSF has claimed currently exist when, not only has the "syndrome" not been adequately validated as such, but the data for the determination of these numbers has not been released (Pope 1996, p. 961). He additionally criticizes the apparent ability of FMSF researchers to diagnose FMS without actually meeting the person so diagnosed (p. 962). Therefore, Pope (1996) argues, the FMSF are a group who make unsubstantiated claims about the falsity of patients' recovered memories. Since they exist primarily to support alleged assailants, additionally, Pope argues that their claims are more accurately viewed as political attacks.

Despite these criticisms, which are not radically new or novel (Terr, 1992; Hovdestad et al., 1995), the FMSF has managed to garner enormous press coverage and attention (Landsberg, 1996b). As his second major criticism, then, Pope (1996) argues they have accomplished this by employing political tactics. First, he notes, those who speak out against the FMSF are either labelled paranoid, described as belonging to a cult or sect, classified by the term true believer, or described with the use of holocaust imagery (Pope, 1996, p. 969). Second, he notes, as have others (Kristiansen, 1996), that the existence of the FMSF's much touted Scientific and Professional Advisory Board, with many well-known and respected members, adds credibility to the work of the group. While the FMSF is the first to admit this fact, Pope (1996) argues that it is a deliberate

political tactic on the part of the FMSF because they know that their "findings" will be more readily accepted when backed by such prestigious names. Pope therefore demonstrates that the FMSF is primarily a political organization that attempts to rely on the status of its Advisory Board members to give weight to claims for which they have yet to provide evidence. His attempts to similarly discredit the work of Loftus and colleagues is not as successful, however.

His argument that Loftus' lost-in-the-mall-experiment (described above: Loftus & Ketcham, 1994) provides no proof that memories may be implanted in the therapy situation is based on three points. First, he argues that the trauma in the study was not sufficient to demonstrate that severe trauma, as found in abuse situations, could be implanted. The problem with this point, however, is that he is arguing, without proof, that only trauma of a certain sort is non-implantable. Theorists making similar claims have already been criticized above (for example, Terr, 1994). Second, he argues that therapists could never act as the sibling confederate did because they do not have the same relationship: they are not a sibling and therefore could never be as influential as one. This claim does not stand up to the reality of the relationship that many patients develop with their therapist, however. Third, he argues that demand characteristics may have produced the results. However, "demand characteristics" should not persist after debriefing and therefore cannot be used to explain the behaviour of all the research subjects since some subjects argued with the debriefing information (Loftus & Ketcham, 1994, p. 99). That is,

individuals attempting to conform to the researcher's hypothesis would not be expected to argue with debriefing information.

While unconvincing, Pope's (1996) attack on Garry and Loftus'(1994) experiment at least focused on challenging it on scientific grounds. Similar claims cannot be made for all defenders' criticisms, though. Some defenders are guilty of, instead, attempting to discredit sceptics solely on the basis of their perceived political motives.

These theorists seem to make no distinction between the FMSF and academic researchers, and therefore, between the work of one and that of the other. Both researchers and the FMSF are deemed guilty of trying to, "determine reality on the basis of political... agendas" (Belicki, 1995, p. 5), and as such, their work is subject to political attack. A reason why such a conflation could occur is explained by the existence of several memory researchers (e.g., Elizabeth Loftus) on the board of the FMSF. However, the reason for the dismissal of both of their work is not similarly justified.

Kristiansen (1996) and her colleagues have written a series of papers that argue that the existence of the repressed memory controversy is due to the political motives of those who believe that recovered memories of abuse are false (see also, Kristiansen, et. al., 1995). They argue that the debate exists because individuals who disbelieve reports of recovered memories are more likely to be authoritarian, have negative attitudes towards women, and believe in the just-world hypothesis (that people get what they deserve). Belicki (1995) correctly points out that, under such logic, the debate could just as easily

be said to exist because people who accept all such reports uncritically are more likely to have negative attitudes towards men, hypothetically (p. 2). Their argument leaves unaddressed the results of memory research. Such work is akin to criticizing a logical argument by attacking its conclusion and not attempting to find problems with its premises or logical progression. Such an attempt will be unsuccessful. Since this is the primary tactic of defenders seeking to discredit the work of memory researchers on the basis of their political motives, such attempts can be seen as unsuccessful at discrediting the findings of memory researchers.

Note, however, that this argument does not state that political motives are non existent in this controversy. In fact, it is a crucial component of the thesis defended below that different political motives are operating in the RMC. However, it cannot be argued from the existence of these motives, that any work coming from an individual or group shown to have such biases is invalid because of these biases.

Note, also, that all of these theorists fail to consider any internal reasons why such a backlash against recovered memory therapy may be occurring. The role that defenders may have played in failing to criticize their own more radical elements, thus opening the door for others who do not share their concerns for victims of abuse to act as critics, is not explored. Unfortunately, elaboration of this point is also beyond the scope of the present paper.

4. THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL ISSUES

So far, the controversy has been explained from the vantage point of the sceptics, the defenders, or theorists somewhere in the middle of the two. The sceptics would argue that an unnecessary risk of false memory creation is being taken in some therapy situations because cautions offered by memory researchers against the employment of certain techniques and attitudes are not being heeded. The defenders would counter that these "cautions" are really nothing other than political attempts to silence or discredit patients with recovered memories since no proof exists that sexually traumatic events can be implanted through suggestion or any other means. The "middle ground" theorist, finally, would try to argue that both sides make valuable contributions; for example, acceding that there are political attempts to discredit patients with recovered memories but that memory researchers' findings on the potential of memory recall to be constructive should not be lumped in with these.

The view of the controversy put forward by all of these groups is limited, however, because they all fail to take into consideration the concerns of the present thesis, that the controversy is fuelled by philosophical, or more specifically, epistemological misunderstandings between the two sides. I argue that this understanding of the controversy provides more explanatory power over the writings and behaviour exhibited by the two sides than that provided by either the views of the two extreme sides or any combination of their views. In fact, recognition of these differences is quite central to

understanding the real forces behind the controversy. This is demonstrated first by examining the different names that have been assigned to the controversy.

The names used by different groups in the controversy demonstrate not only the dichotomization of the two main sides but also show that a resolution of the problems, as posed by the two sides, would not result in a resolution of the controversy. Following this, Ian Hacking's (1995) theories about the limits of memory's abilities to determine truth about the past are shown to be valuable but also not capable of resolving the controversy. To examine the thesis that recognition of the epistemological differences between the sides is necessary to understanding the controversy, though, an explanation of the relevant epistemology will first be necessary.

Two different kinds of epistemological misunderstandings are occurring between the two sides in the RMC. First, the overuse and misuse of the word truth by both sides suggests a lack of understanding of the difference between the terms truth, knowledge, and belief. Second, the lack of recognition from both sceptics and defenders that these terms can be used differently and legitimately by different groups suggests two things. First, neither are aware of the existence of different epistemological theories that define these terms differently, and second, that sceptics and defenders themselves seem to adhere to different epistemological theories. The relevant epistemology that will thus need explaining for present purposes are the differences between the epistemological terms truth, knowledge, and belief, the different epistemological theories that currently

exist, and how these theories define these terms differently. Since understanding these different definitions is dependent on understanding the different theories first, however, the examination of the terms truth, knowledge, and belief and how they are differently defined will necessarily follow the explanation of the different epistemological theories. First, though, the different names assigned to the controversy and Ian Hacking's (1995) observations of the controversy will be examined.

4.1 What's in a Name?

Different names, with very different connotations, have been used to describe this controversy. Whether the term "repressed", "recovered", "delayed", or "false" precedes "memory controversy" is usually a fair indication to readers of the author's opinions on the matter. "Repressed memory controversy" is most often used by those who have the greatest sympathy for patients and who are the most likely to treat all apparently recovered memories of abuse as true (Bloom, 1995). Although, as seen above, many who use this term use it incorrectly (Kristiansen, 1996). An exception to this rule is psychotherapists who view repressed material as a window, not to the "truth", but to unconscious fantasy. Thus, when psychotherapists use the term "RMC" it is more commonly not in defense of the material reality of patients' claims but rather to point out the difference between material and psychic reality (Fowler, 1994).

"False memory controversy" is most commonly used by sceptics wishing to point out the possibility of false memory creation in therapy situations or by those, like the

FMSF, with the more extreme view that many of the memories of abuse recovered in therapy are objectively false (Loftus & Ketcham, 1994; Ofshe, 1995).

"Recovered memory", or "delayed memory controversy" (Enns, McNeilly, Corkery, & Gilbert, 1995), by contrast, are often used by those authors, both therapist and researcher, who either seek to point out the possibility of a middle ground existing between the two extreme points of view that some sceptics and defenders put forward or to find such a middle ground themselves (Terr, 1994; Stayton, 1995). An additional example of these authors are those who believe that therapists best serve the needs of their patients when they are informed and unbiased but still sensitive to the issues that clients who may have been abused face.

The choice to use the term "repressed" in the present work was made in part because the controversy seems to stem from claims made by those who prefer this term. For instance, the sceptics exist as a category <u>because</u> of their concerns over the claims made by theorists arguing for repressed (and occasionally recovered) memory. This term was also chosen, though, because it is a good analogy for the main argument of this paper. As this controversy would continue regardless of whether repression was proven to exist, scientifically or otherwise -- since the powers attributed to repression would then be debated --likewise, the controversy is not entirely over what it seems to be. Unrecognized epistemological differences exist between the sides that are often attributed to political differences -- which do exist but are being overgeneralized. These include the differential,

and often incorrect, use of epistemological terms by the two sides. As a consequence, the resolution of this controversy will not lie in the adoption of any simple combination of sceptics' and defenders' points. In line with this, the work of middle ground theorists has failed to resolve or even diffuse the RMC. It remains a highly contested, and hotly political, minefield (DePrince & Quirk, 1995; Pope, 1996; Stayton, 1995). The work of one other theorist, Ian Hacking (1995), who wrote on memory's ability to determine truth about the past, can also be used to argue that a theory that does not address the unrecognized epistemological differences between the two main sides does not provide a full understanding of the controversy and why it is continuing.

4.2 Memory and Truth about the Past

In Rewriting the Soul (1995), Ian Hacking discusses philosophical problems involved in the use of memory to determine truth about the past. His observations raise key questions for therapists in this controversy. They do not, however, aid in understanding the philosophical differences between groups within the controversy.

Hacking (1995) challenges the notion of a determinate past existing for memory with the following statements:

> Old actions under new descriptions may be reexperienced in memory. And if these are genuinely new descriptions, descriptions not available or perhaps nonexistent at the time of the episode remembered, then something is reexperienced now, in memory, that in a certain sense, did not exist before. The

> action took place, but not the action under the new description. Moreover it was not determinate that these actions would be experienced in these new ways, for it was not determinate, at the time that the events occurred, that in the future new descriptions would come into being (p. 249).

Hacking is here arguing that a distinction can be made between the occurrence and description of actions at the time that they occurred and at a later time when and if they have been reinterpreted in memory. He further argues.

> These redescriptions may be perfectly true of the past: that is. they are truths that we now assert about the past. And yet, paradoxically, they may not have been true in the past. that is. not truth about intentional actions that made sense when the actions were performed. (Hacking, 1995, p. 249)

Hacking is not necessarily arguing that the past can change but that the way we see and describe the past can change because of the ability of human memory to reinterpret and reconstruct events on the basis of new information. Thus. what we are willing to call "the truth" is malleable. Bowers and Farvolden (1996) give the example, "in a sense. redescribing bathing as abuse determines [italics added] the historical past rather than recalling it" (p. 372).

Hacking's philosophical examination of the issues involved in using memory to search for the truth about the past inevitably leads to the questioning of some therapists' goals for patients. especially in recovered memory therapy. For example. since memories

are potentially malleable and constructible and, therefore, the danger of a patient forming a potentially false self-concept or self-understanding could exist, the search for a patient's memories about her past in order to complete her self narrative and solve her current problems -- a stated goal of repressed memory therapy (Frederickson, 1992) -- may not be a logical and safe course of action. Stated differently, is it proper for therapy to have, as its end goal, the discovery of the truth about the past of an individual, on the basis of her recovering memories, when these memories could be, at least in part, based on constructions formed from the old events themselves and newer information, interpretations, or suggestions gained later in her life? Similar to this is Dalenberg's (1994) caution that trauma (not just physical or sexual) is a common occurrence in childhood and that, therefore, we all have traumatic past experiences that could potentially be misread in detail. In other words, children find a great many more things traumatic than adults. These will differ, as well, throughout childhood as the child's world becomes more predictable and controllable. Dalenberg's (1994) hypothesis is that these memories of early experiences that were perceived as traumatic by the child could theoretically, though, form the basis for a recovered memory, especially if their details remain fuzzy. That is, anyone could have "unresolved" childhood trauma (see Bowers & Farvolden, 1996, for a fuller discussion of this argument).

Hacking (1995) believes the modern concern with "false consciousness" is a "deeply moral judgement", though. In his closing lines of Rewriting the Soul, he states

that the central fear of sceptics who are not concerned with simply "trumpeting the evils of false memories" is the creation of a, "thoroughly crafted person.... Not a person with self knowledge, but a person who is the worse for having a glib patter that simulates an understanding of herself" (p. 266). It could also be argued, however, that Hacking fails to fully capture the concerns of both therapist and research sceptics who fear not only patients running around with "glib patter" but patients running into courtrooms or running to confront families with memories that may or may not be accurate recollections.

Hacking's work has furthered discussion of the issues around recovering and labelling memories of the past, however, it does not provide any new understanding of the conflict between sceptics and defenders. This is primarily because his foremost concern is with tracing the history of the multiple personality movement and examining when and how memory came to be something about which knowledge and truth could be held. He therefore does not examine whether individuals use the terms truth and knowledge correctly or whether different groups mean different things by these same terms. To be fair, these were not his goals. Such analysis is necessary, however, for a full understanding of the RMC because it can provide a better understanding of why the controversy is continuing.

4.3 Introductory Epistemology

Truth determination is the oft-stated goal of both sides in this controversy (Bowers & Farvolden, 1996, p. 363). Both sceptics and defenders seek the truth about the

past of patients with recovered memories of childhood sexual abuse. Yet most of the claims about the past that are made in the controversy, by patients and their therapists, would more accurately be described as beliefs, not as knowledge or as truths, because of the epistemological status that memory (and especially recovered memory) occupies, which will be addressed below. Both sceptics and defenders thus overuse and misuse the word truth. It is further the case that therapists and researchers often mean different things when they use these epistemological terms (i.e., truth, knowledge, and belief) because they operate under different epistemological theories. These combine to make the seemingly simple search for the truth about the past more epistemically complicated than either side realizes. To explain these statements, and to explain what effect they have had on how the two sides in this controversy understand each other, some basic philosophical description will be necessary. Specifically, an introduction to basic contemporary epistemology will be presented followed by an examination of the main epistemological positions. Then a discussion of the different definitions of the terms truth, knowledge, and belief employed by adherents of these positions will be followed by a brief section on the unique epistemic status that memory occupies.

4.3.1 Some Basic Epistemology

Epistemology is the study of knowledge. Epistemologists attempt to answer the questions of what, exactly, can be counted as knowledge and what, in turn, the differences are between knowledge, truth, and belief. Two primary questions that

epistemologists ask are how we know and what we know. The order in which these are asked is a critical concern, as well. For example, many epistemologists prefer to ask what we know first thereby initially specifying what a theory of knowledge would need to explain, in order to avoid scepticism about knowledge in general (Sosa, 1986).

There are also different kinds of knowledge. For instance, the types listed by Everitt & Fischer (1995) -- capacity knowledge, knowledge by acquaintance, and propositional knowledge -- leave out a form of knowledge studied by many psychologists, procedural knowledge. To explain these briefly, capacity knowledge includes knowledge of dates and where your spouse usually leaves the television remote control, for example. Knowledge by acquaintance is not factual knowledge but includes your knowledge of your mother and the geography of your home city. Propositional knowledge is our knowledge of facts or knowledge "that", like our knowledge that there are 360 degrees in a circle. Lastly, procedural knowledge is our knowledge of skills and movements like playing a piano or riding a bike. As well, it has been argued that the types of knowledge traditionally considered by philosophers exclude other types. For instance, feminists have argued that traditional conceptions of knowledge are androcentric and have ignored ways of knowing considered 'feminine', like knowing through emotions (Jaggar, 1989). Further, therapists in the RMC seem to argue that still other types exists. By arguing for the use of different therapeutic memory retrieval techniques to reach different kinds of memories, for instance, they posit the existence of

new types of knowledge, like body knowledge (Courtois, 1992).

While these nontraditional forms of knowledge could be argued not to be novel kinds of knowledge as much as they are novel sources of knowledge, resolution of this problem is fortunately not necessary for the purposes of the present paper. The reason for this is as follows:Both sceptics and defenders are arguing about the truth and falsity of claims like, 'Mary was abused by her uncle when she was around six years old'. While part of their argument is over the source of this memory as a 'valid' source of knowledge, their primary concern is over whether the claim itself is known (to be true). Therefore, propositional knowledge is the primary concern of this debate since it is knowledge that, as in Mary's knowledge that her uncle abused her, that is primarily debated. In other words, the truth or falsity of these propositions and not whether alternate sources of knowledge do or do not exist are what is contested in the RMC. Fortunately for this paper, as well, is the fact that propositional knowledge is the kind of knowledge most epistemologists have addressed.

4.3.2 The Existence of Different Epistemological Theories

All epistemologists face the same basic questions, like how and what we know, and as a consequence, face certain common problems. How epistemologists answer these problems is a useful starting point for classifying the epistemologists themselves.

For example, the regress problem is the problem that stems from the attempt to find the basis of any belief that we hold, because most of our beliefs are held on the basis

of other beliefs (Moser, 1986). For instance, my belief that I see a red ball in front of me is based on my belief that my visual perceptions are usually accurate which is based, in turn, on other beliefs about why I believe this, like that my visual perceptions were accurate yesterday, which in turn was based on additional beliefs, and so on. The problem for epistemologists, then, is where the regress of such beliefs ends or where the ultimate justifications for our beliefs lie. Not all epistemologists have agreed on a common answer to this problem. In fact, how they answer this problem reveals the existence of four main groups. These epistemologists are commonly referred to as foundationalist, pragmatist, coherentist, and contextualist (Everitt & Fischer, 1995; Moser, 1986).

Foundationalists believe that in all such cases -- where a belief is held on the basis of another belief which, in turn, is held because of a third and so on -- the regress terminates because a "basic belief" will be encountered which does not require any additional beliefs for its justification. Pragmatists are less uniform in their responses to this problem. Some early pragmatists claimed that an infinite regress of beliefs was nonproblematic (Hollinger & Depew, 1995). Most recent pragmatists, though, would side with coherentists who hold that beliefs are justified based on the coherence between them and other beliefs (Everitt & Fischer, 1995). The distinctions between pragmatists and coherentists as well as what is meant by coherence between beliefs will be described further below. Briefly, however, pragmatists differ from coherentists in what they accept and reject from foundationalist theories. Coherentism is a far more radical rejection of the

notion of basic beliefs and the pyramid structure of our knowledge built upon them than pragmatism was ever meant to be, especially as it was first conceived by one of its early proponents William James (1907/1964). The notion of coherence thus changes the kind of answer given to the regress problem by conceiving of knowledge not as a problem of vertical justification but of horizontal, mutually supportive networks of justification. Contextualists, finally, are similar to foundationalists in believing in the existence of basic beliefs, however, they also differ crucially by holding that these beliefs can be different in different contexts.

4.3.3 The Four Main Epistemological Theories

4.3.3.1 Foundationalism.

Foundationalists search for absolutely certain foundations for knowledge. Most modern foundationalists believe these can arise from either empirical means or that they can be a priori, or before experience (Chisholm, 1977). Empirical bases are those deemed "testable". They are traditionally derived from the senses and can include beliefs about the external world as well as one's own mind. A priori bases involve the use of reason and include beliefs that are necessarily true. These include propositions like, sisters are female, something being square excludes it being circular, and mathematical truths like 2 + 3 = 5 (Chisholm, 1977, p. 35). Knowledge is then built from these beliefs following a foundationalist methodology. This methodology consists of first finding these indubitable truths; for Descartes, for example, this was the existence of a subject who could doubt its

own existence (Robinson, 1981). Then, other truths could be derived from them by an absolutely reliable method of reasoning. The end goal was the expansion of what we could be said to know. Knowledge, or a theory, could not begin, though, without the identification of a basic belief.

Foundationalism is the oldest epistemic theory. Since it survived through many different shifts in philosophical thought, there have naturally been different kinds of foundationalists. Further complicating the explanation of these differences is the fact that different theorists consider different divisions among foundationalists to be the key ones. for instance, Pojman (1993) talks of radical and modern foundationalists. A radical foundationalist would say that when we have knowledge there is, in fact, no evidence which could defeat it whereas a modern foundationalist would say that there simply is no evidence which is evident to us. The latter are therefore said to be "fallibilists". In a similar vein, but with slight differences. Everitt and Fischer (1995) argue for a distinction between deep and shallow foundationalists. Deep foundationalists argue that our beliefs about the external world are only justified indirectly by the beliefs we have about our sensations of the external world. Shallow foundationalists instead believe that direct justification of our beliefs about the external world can come directly from our experience of it. To simplify the picture, however, Pojman's (1993) radical and modern distinction is most commonly employed because the notion of fallibilism turns out to be important in defending a foundationalist position, as will be seen below.

4.3.3.2 Pragmatism.

Historically, different theorists, using the term pragmatism, have meant different things. In fact, it is doubtful that early theorists in the nineteenth century could have foreseen the "post-modern" direction in which many recent pragmatists have taken the theory (Hollinger & Depew, 1995). The pragmatism of the nineteenth century theorist William James is therefore briefly presented here in order to provide a contrast with modern forms.

As previously stated, the different epistemological theories define and use the different epistemological terms truth, knowledge, and belief differently. Foundationalists, for example, define truth as correspondence to reality. Their theory of truth is therefore called the correspondence theory of truth. It states that propositions are true if they correspond to reality. Thus, the proposition, "the ball in front of me is red" is true if the ball that is in front of me in the real world actually is red. Truth is a static entity under this theory; it can be one thing only. The objections and rival theories of coherentists and contextualists will be presented below as well as the distinctions between the three epistemic terms themselves. For present purposes, however, the key thing to note is early pragmatists' response to this theory as seen in William James' (1907/1964) writing, as opposed to later pragmatists' responses.

The first thing to note about James's theory is that it was not intended as a replacement for the correspondence theory of truth.

> [James] views his theory not so much as a replacement for other traditional ones but as an important addition extending to and accounting for subject matters and occurrences of truth that the other theories have neglected or failed to explain.... the received "dictionary" definition [of truth] was "the agreement of ideas with reality". James does not deny this. But the important point, he contends, is to know what 'agreement' and 'reality' fully mean and pragmatism will supply this meaning. (Thayer, 1975, p. xxx)

James not only did not deny the foundationalists" definition of truth, though, he was careful to state his theory's dependence on it. Thus, James' pragmatism was an extension or improvement to the correspondence theory of truth. Primarily, as Thayer (1975) states, it helped it to redefine a proposition's relation to reality or fact:

> Any idea that helps us to deal, whether practically or intellectually, with either the reality or its belongings, that doesn't entangle our progress in frustrations, that fits, in fact, and adapts our life to the reality's whole setting, will agree sufficiently to meet the requirement. It will hold true of that reality. (James, 1907/1964, p. 166)

The basis of his pragmatism is that a connection exists between what is true and what is useful. Building on Peirce's (1972) notion that beliefs were rules for actions, James likewise did not see truth as a static phenomenon, "truth happens to an idea. It becomes true, is made true by events" (James, 1907/1964, p. 161). In other words, James's pragmatic theory of truth was that, on some occasions, especially those involving human

behaviour, or where reality was difficult to objectively determine, the truth of a proposition could be determined on the basis of its utility.

Hollinger and Depew (1995) note that many recent pragmatists have reinterpreted early pragmatists' work in order to paint a continuous history and add credibility to their own projects. They argue, however, that most of these reinterpretations are inaccurate depictions of early pragmatists. The history of pragmatism is largely not continuous because, at least in part, early pragmatists drew heavily from foundationalist theories and later, especially recent, pragmatists have largely rejected foundationalist ideas (Hollinger & Depew, 1995). For example, James' theory has little in common with theories that believe that the determination of truth itself is a substandard goal or that the justification of beliefs should lie in whether they bring happiness or well-being (see, for example, Stich, 1990). For James, ideas still had to correspond with reality. What he wanted to add to correspondence theory, though, was that there could be more than one way of defining reality, especially in cases where human experience was concerned. Again, his theory was meant to aid the correspondence theory of truth in dealing with these cases.

Today, pragmatists largely do not agree that their theory is a supplement to the correspondence theory of truth. Like coherentism, it is meant as a replacement for foundationalism. Under their theory, truth is not determined by comparison to reality because the conception of a single notion of truth existing is rejected. Hacking's work above showed one possible reason for such a rejection. More were pointed out by

coherentists, especially the problems associated with declaring any belief to be "basic". These will be discussed further below in the section on coherentists.

This rejection is what gives modern pragmatists more in common with coherentists. They still exist as a group distinct from coherentists, however, because their theory of how truth is determined is still based roughly in some form of early pragmatism and therefore some notion of utility. As well, since the determination of utility can not only be subjective but more importantly is dependent on the specifics of each situation, the modern theories of pragmatism can provide no fixed rules for all situations and are therefore post-modern.

4.3.3.3 Coherentism.

The term coherentism covers a group of theories with some basic commonalities. As previously stated, these theories arose as a replacement for the more traditional foundationalist theories of knowledge that have historically dominated the field. In contrast to foundationalism, they hold that the search for basic indubitable beliefs (beliefs not held on the basis of other beliefs) is pointless because our beliefs find justification only in coherence relations with our other beliefs. Coherence relations are said to exist between beliefs when they are not contradictory, when they provide the best fit for the data or with other held beliefs, and can also exist in cases where beliefs help explain the truth or falsity of one another (Moser, 1986). More simply, beliefs are not considered justified by a coherentist because they are basic or "directly evident" (Chisholm, 1977)

but because they are supported by all or some of the other beliefs held at the time.[2] Metaphors for explaining coherentism include webs or wigwams (where each stick serves a role in holding up the others). It should also be noted that under coherentism a notion of degrees of justification can be entertained (the more sticks in the wigwam, the firmer the whole structure).

One of the major reasons that most coherentists reject foundationalism is because they reject the distinction between a priori and empirical bases of knowledge as mentioned above. That is, they argue that even beliefs which seem to be completely untestable and true simply on virtue of what words mean can be shown to be dependent on prior knowledge as well. This is most difficult to prove for mathematical claims like 2 + 2 = 4 and easier to prove for "common sense" claims like, "if A and B occur, then either A is before B or it is not" which have been disproved by Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity (Everitt & Fischer, 1995, p. 111). Basically, however, the coherentist argument is that nothing is ever absolutely immune to possible revision and to believe otherwise, "shows only the limits of our imagination, not that our beliefs will hold true in the face of all increases in scientific knowledge" (Everitt & Fischer, 1995, p. 112). It can easily be seen, then, how this theory has surfaced in the wake of empirical science proving many of our beliefs, that were long assumed foundational, wrong over the course of the last couple

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[2] One of the first divisions among coherentists exists over this latter point, that is, whether beliefs need to cohere with everything else that one believes or with a subset of all held beliefs.

of centuries.

One of the most radical coherentist positions is offered by Richard Rorty (1980). A basic principle of his philosophy is that the justification for any belief considered "basic" is socially determined; that our society tells us what to believe and what beliefs are to be considered basic. A simplified version of his argument is that we all learn a common language and hence a common way of perceiving the world. Therefore, we do not have private experiences and beliefs that are internally justified but public ones that are justified by what others around us believe. His theory has also been labelled pragmatic by others, especially since he tried to tie his work to that of John Dewey (Depew, 1995). Since which other beliefs were considered dominant at the time justified beliefs more than social utility for Rorty, though, his work is classifiable as coherentist. Rorty's work also bears some similarities, especially in its theories on the origin of basic beliefs, to the theory of contextualism.

4.3.3.4 Contextualism.

Contextualism, as presented by David Annis (1993), is a close cousin to Rorty's epistemological theories. It, along with Rorty's theory, claims that our beliefs are justified based on what our society decides to believe. However, they can also have local foundational justification. Different contexts can have different contextually basic propositions upon which they build their knowledge if that is what individuals in that context have agreed upon. So where Rorty would argue that no foundational beliefs exist

because our society determines our beliefs. Annis would argue that different groups could consider different beliefs to be foundationally basic. In other words, "indubitable" beliefs are themselves decided on socially.

For example, the belief of medical science that problems in the functioning of the human body are generally solved better through physiological redress than by finding the right deity or star to which to pray is considered basic in the medical community. All medical researchers and practitioners agree on this belief, though it is not foundationally basic by a foundationalist's meaning of the term. Other social groups, in turn, may believe the same belief to be false and hold its opposite as a basic belief, with the same, or even less, "foundational" evidence.

Note, however, that under this theory it is social groups who decide not only what beliefs are to be held as basic but also <u>if</u> beliefs are to be held as such. That is, Annis' (1993) argument can be seen as an explanation for the coexistence of different positions.

Under the theory of contextualism it is possible to envisage a world in which different epistemological theories coexist. In other words, it is possible to imagine one group, say some philosophers, operating under a modest foundationalist theory with respect to what they were willing to accept as knowledge. Another group, medical practitioners, for example, could also be imagined operating under a more pragmatic theory with respect to what <u>they</u> were willing to accept as knowledge. Both groups, of course, might view the theory of the other as wrongheaded or even dangerous. However,

the important point is that under the understanding provided by contextualism, both could simultaneously coexist because it is the social group which decided what will be acceptable as a knowledge claim. Recognition of this possibility is a key step to understanding the continuing existence of the RMC.

All of these different epistemological theories are theories of knowledge. They seek to answer the basic questions of how and what we know. The section on William James' (1907/1964) pragmatism was an exception since it primarily discussed how he defined truth. As can be inferred from this section, though, these theories of knowledge also differ in their understandings of belief and truth. This is largely because the terms belief, knowledge, and truth are definitionally interrelated. Thus, since different theorists' definitions of knowledge vary, so too will their definitions of belief and truth. How these three terms are interrelated and how they are distinct will now be discussed.

4.3.4 Belief, Knowledge, and Truth

In order to see how the terms belief, knowledge, and truth are used and misused in the RMC, the traditional definitions of these terms need to be explained as well as the different understandings of them employed by the different epistemological theories' adherents. Unfortunately, it is difficult to provide even a traditional definition of these terms that does not depend on how the others are defined in turn. By way of introduction, though, simple definitions of truth, knowledge, and belief will be provided. Truth could be defined as correspondence to reality, knowledge as true beliefs that are believed for the

right reasons, and beliefs as what we hold to be true. Each of these terms will be discussed in turn.

4.3.4.1 Belief.

Beliefs are traditionally conceived as attitudes towards propositions. Further, they are held to entail behavioral tendencies. That is, beliefs can exist even when unmanifested because they are more than just tendencies and exist as conscious psychological states in and of themselves (Audi, 1995). Disagreement exists, though, over how beliefs are held to be justified.

The statement above, that beliefs are what we hold to be true, first becomes controversial when the problem of which definition of truth to use is considered. Since different definitions of what truth is, and how it is obtained, exist, it naturally follows that what we hold as a belief will be influenced by how we define truth. Additionally, though, a difference of opinion between the different epistemological theorists over how beliefs are justified complicates the explanation of the term belief. That is, different theorists have different opinions over what constitutes adequate justification or reasons for holding a belief (Everitt & Fischer, 1995).

Foundationalists hold that beliefs are justified only if they are themselves "basic" or if they can be shown to be directly derivable from a basic belief. As explained above, coherentists have criticized this view by arguing that every belief we hold depends on our other beliefs for justification. Therefore, there are no basic beliefs. These rival theories

are the most commonly referred to and most other theories are reducible to either a search for directly evident basic beliefs for a foundation of what we know, or the view that all of our beliefs must, in some way, cohere. Contextualism, as explored above fits into the latter since it is socially agreed upon cohesion that provides justification for beliefs. Pragmatism could fit here, as well, since the required "fit" (James, 1907/1964) of a new belief with others is a kind of coherence.

It is important to note that foundationalism is still alive and well in philosophical circles and its proponents are, in turn, quite critical of coherentist theories. Foundationalists hold that coherentist theories do not provide adequate justification for the beliefs that we hold (since "cohesion" or social agreement is too relativistic and cannot be traced to basic indubitable beliefs) and therefore, that such theories do not provide a basis upon which knowledge can be built.

4.3.4.2 Knowledge.

Four sources of knowledge have traditionally been considered "valid". In other words, historically, knowledge was said to come either through external perception, memory, self-awareness (sometimes called introspection), and reason (Coady, 1992, p. 122). These sources do not, however, provide a definition of what knowledge is. Defining knowledge properly turns out to be more difficult than defining belief because the definition of knowledge is even more dependent on how other terms are defined. The traditional definition of knowledge contains three key dependencies.

According to the traditional definition of knowledge, knowledge requires belief, justification, and truth, or as it is more commonly put, knowledge is justified true belief (Chisholm, 1977; Pojman, 1993). The traditional or justified true belief definition of knowledge is often given logically in the following way: For an individual *X* and a proposition *p*, *X* is said to have knowledge of *p* when (i) *p* is true, (ii) *X* believes that *p* is true, and (iii) *X* has proper justification or reason for believing *p*. This is what was meant above when knowledge was defined as true beliefs that are believed for the right reasons. Most of the debate around this definition focuses on the relation of knowledge to truth, or the problem of justification, more commonly known as the Gettier problem (Pojman, 1993, Gettier, 1963/1993).

To first explain further the traditional definition, though, knowledge has been defined as justified true belief because when we say we know, we mean the same thing as know to be true. We do not attribute knowledge to someone who believes something that is not true and likewise we do not attribute knowledge to someone who believes something to be true but for whom the belief has absolutely nothing to do with its truth. The justification here required is that the belief be somehow related to the truth, usually it is in the way of providing evidence, though the debates explored above on belief and justifications for belief come to play here as well. For example, foundationalists would require the relation between a belief and the actual truth to be certain in order for the belief to be justified and the person to be said to have knowledge. This assumes, of

course, that basic beliefs are certain truths. Here a problem with radical foundationalism is demonstrated, though, since it becomes obvious that under this theory, no distinction exists between justified belief and knowledge, though the terms are not synonymous in meaning.

The specific relationship between justification and knowledge has been greatly explored since a devastating critique of the traditional definition of knowledge was first offered by Edmund Gettier (1963/1993). In his critique, Gettier challenged the adequacy of the traditional definition of knowledge to properly convey what level of justification was needed before a claim to knowledge could be made. Gettier-style counterexamples are thus instances where all three conditions of knowledge are satisfied but where the individual still cannot be said to have knowledge. For example Mary has justified reasons for believing her boss is dead, possibly of a heart attack. She found him sitting in his car, he was cold to the touch and she could not find a pulse. Twenty minutes later the police arrive and confirm that he is dead. However, unbeknownst to Mary he was not yet dead when she found him, only cold from the outside air and with a very low pulse from having just suffered a stroke. A robber had then come after she found him, but before the police arrived, robbed him and shot him in case he had happened to see his face. Mary thus has a justified true belief but would not be said to have knowledge of her boss's death.

Theories that have attempted to defend the traditional definition of knowledge

from Gettier's criticisms include the causal theory of knowing. This is an attempt to change the definition of knowledge by making it specify the kind of justification that needs to exist, namely, by making it causal. More specifically, it tried to specify that a belief had to be causally produced by the same fact or set of facts that made the proposition true. Unfortunately, it is not clear how facts or truths causally produce any beliefs, much less the right ones (Pojman, 1993).

Some other theories add a defeasibility condition as a fourth condition to the requirements for knowledge. Such theories attempt to add the demand that there be no possible defeater of a justified belief that would undermine the original justification for the belief, as a way around Gettier's criticisms (Audi, 1995). This theory is that held by modern foundationalists, or fallibilists, as explained above. However, similar to Gettier's original criticisms, critics of this theory have pointed out that cases of knowledge can be shown to exist which are not indefeasibly justified true beliefs. Foundationalists, of course, continue to disagree, but such critics can then be classified into two main camps, epistemological sceptics and coherentists.

Scepticism as a philosophical doctrine or alternative predates the existence of Gettier-style counterexamples. Different forms of scepticism also exist, for example, knowledge scepticism and justification scepticism. In its most extreme form, knowledge scepticism is the doubt that anyone can know anything, and justification scepticism argues that no one is even justified in believing anything. The latter seems to go too far in

that we all simply do hold beliefs and most can provide adequate reasons for many of them. Therefore, abolishing the ability of anyone to hold any justified belief seems too drastic a response to some troubling counter-examples. As Sosa (1986) would put it, for the most part, we know what we know and are justified in rejecting any theory of knowledge that radically contradicts this. Knowledge scepticism, on the other hand, may be a valid response to a definition of knowledge that is too restrictive to be useful or, as with justification scepticism, it too may be too reactionary. In other words, we may be justified in adopting this sceptic position with respect to foundationalism since only certain truths could qualify as knowledge, yet knowledge scepticism, with respect to the existence of knowledge, throws the baby out with the bathwater.

The critics of modern foundationalists who reject scepticism in either form, yet still hold that the traditional definition of knowledge is untenable, are coherentists (Bonjour, 1986). The coherentist view towards knowledge is not that knowledge does not exist, rather, coherence theories seem more to imply that it is relative (Quine, 1986), though, in truth, few theories attempt a definition. In fact, a major criticism that could be levelled at coherentism as a theory is that its adherents spend a lot of time writing on beliefs and their justification, and on the problems with the correspondence theory of truth, but devote little attention to the issue of knowledge itself. Further criticisms of coherentism will be addressed when the definition of truth is discussed below.

One of the few theories that has tackled a definition of knowledge is that of

Everitt and Fischer (1995) who claim it simply may be difficult, or even impossible, to provide a single complete definition because it is like many other, "everyday concepts [which] have vague boundaries or merge by degrees into something else" (p. 49). As examples of such concepts they suggest our colour concepts and terms like "fat" or "healthy". They also give the oft-quoted Wittgensteinian example of the concept of a game which is best definable with reference to family resemblance theory (Everitt & Fischer, 1995, p. 49). In other words, all examples have something in common with all the others but a simple definition that includes them all cannot be provided. Coherentists are not knowledge sceptics, though, because they argue that the reality of knowledge's existence does not depend on finding an adequate definition of it, "it is a mistake to think that it is necessarily a defect in a term if it cannot be pinned down by a set of necessary and sufficient conditions" (Everitt & Fischer, 1995, p. 50).

Everitt and Fischer's (1995) theory is flawed, however, because although they argue that a definition of knowledge is not necessary to speak of it, their own writing betrays a tendency to favour a causal connection between beliefs and the truth as a way to explain when we have knowledge, thereby actually implying a definition of their own. The problems coherentists have had with knowledge are not fatal to coherentism, though, since, as they point out, everyone has had problems defining knowledge. The only consensus that has been reached by all epistemologists is that knowledge requires truth and that it requires belief (Everitt & Fischer, 1995, p. 48; Pojman, 1993). What else it

requires, as well as how truth is to be defined, is an ongoing debate.

4.3.4.3 Truth.

The distinction between truth and knowledge is complicated mostly by the fact that epistemological theorists' definitions themselves can blur the distinction. For example, radical foundationalism blurs the distinction between not only belief and knowledge, but knowledge and truth as well since knowledge can only exist in cases where an individual has absolute certainty of the truth. This theory is, again, problematic, however, since although truth determination is clearly necessary for knowledge determination, by the traditional definition of knowledge as well by what is conveyed in our common sense usage of the term, the terms are not the same. By traditional definitions, truth simply is, while knowledge aims at a representation of that truth. These definitions are complicated, though, by the fact that different theories of truth determination exist and that these heavily influence how knowledge is then defined.

The same problems found with radical foundationalism exist, as well, for the most traditional and well-known theory of truth, the correspondence theory of truth, as explained above. Since truth can be one thing only, a radical foundationalist (following the traditional definition of knowledge) would necessarily see knowledge as static as well and, therefore, truth and knowledge again become synonymous. Modern foundationalists, since they focus more on evident truths and are therefore more fallibilist, have less of a problem with this.

A coherence theory of truth also exists that has been touched on, briefly, above. Coherentists argue, counter to foundationalists, that truth is not "self-evident". They do not argue that truth does not exist but they are more than fallibilist in their beliefs about it. James (1907/1964) may have explained it well when he said that, "truth happens to an idea" (p. 161), for although few will so boldly state it, they do not believe in what is often called "big T truth". The notion that the "Truth" is floating out there a priori waiting to be discovered is held to be largely a myth. Instead, truth is relative to situations and to people. Most coherentists are not so bold and prefer discussing the justification of beliefs to truth mainly because these claims are easier to defend (see Everitt & Fischer, 1995, p. 123). Critics are quick to point out this weakness, though, and therefore accuse it not only of relativism, but of conflating issues of justification with truth, and thereby not truly stating what truth consists of.

4.4 The Epistemological Status of (Recovered) Memory

A promise was made above to explain the unique epistemological status occupied by memory. The following section will do so as well as explain how the two sides of the controversy could have opposing views on this topic.

It was stated earlier that four sources of knowledge have traditionally been considered "valid". They were, and sometimes are, stated as if they are all equally valid. Yet important distinctions exist between two of them, namely, perception and memory, that bear greatly on discussions in this controversy. A number of philosophers have

remarked that while the two bear key similarities, memory should not be given the same status as perception because of the different evidence they provide (Audi, 1988; Chisholm, 1977; Everitt & Fischer, 1995). First, memory is assigned a lower status because it is not an original source of knowledge itself but is derived from another, primarily, perception. It therefore runs not only the risk that perception does of being false but runs the additional risk of reproducing perception inaccurately (Chisholm, 1977, p. 79). Second, this differential status exists because of the language that is recommended when one or the other term is used. Speaking from his foundationalist perspective, Chisholm (1977) argues that where perception can make a belief either evident or reasonable, memory can only make a belief either reasonable or acceptable, where evident, reasonable, and acceptable exist on a descending scale of justification (p. 80). Can memory ever provide the same evidence as perception? Audi (1988) argues it can only when it is, "supported by a vivid steady experience of recall that is in turn corroborated by other memory experiences" (p. 38). Thus, the epistemological status occupied by memory is such that, all other things being equal, more evidence is required for memories to be believed than other sources of knowledge, like perception.

It can also be seen, however, how theorists espousing different epistemological views could come to form different views, in turn, with respect to memory. A foundationalist, for example, in their search for basic beliefs, would consider memory a reliable source of knowledge in the case quoted above where it was steady (continuous),

or directly tied to perception. Where memories are of the type presented in this controversy, they are no longer directly tied to perception, though, because they are recovered. Therefore, they are subject to doubt more than perception or continuous memories would be. Alternatively, a coherentist, not seeking such basic beliefs, would look to the other beliefs held by the person with the recovered memory. The recovered memory would only be subject to doubt if it conflicted with any other held beliefs. Further, their treatment of recovered memories would not differ appreciably from that of continuous memories, unlike foundationalists. A pragmatist, in turn, might seek the utility of believing that a recovered memory is true, in the absence of other evidence.

So the same memory could be viewed quite differently by different people depending on their theoretical orientations with respect to knowledge determination. If the two sides of the controversy do have different orientations, then they could have differing views, as well, on the same recovered memories.

5. EPISTEMOLOGICAL MISUNDERSTANDINGS IN THE RMC

Both sides of this controversy demonstrate a lack of epistemological sophistication. This surfaces, first, in their misuse of the epistemological terms truth, knowledge, and belief, but more importantly, is seen in their lack of recognition that the other side is using these terms differently than they are. An examination of the practice of researchers and therapists reveals that these two groups are using the same epistemological terms to mean different things because they are operating under different epistemological theories. This lack of recognition on both sides is then compounded by ignorance of the fact that different epistemological theories can not only be employed successfully in different settings but that some theories are more appropriate than others for certain settings. For example, therapy situations exist, which will be further described below, in which it is difficult or even impossible to use the correspondence theory of truth. In these cases, the use of a more pragmatic or coherentist approach is more appropriate. However, if researchers can be shown to primarily use the correspondence theory of truth in their practice, then researchers and therapists will, at least on occasion, be operating under different epistemological theories. Further, if these different theories are the most appropriate for the setting in which they are being used, then therapists and researchers different usages of the same epistemological terms may be appropriate in their own respective settings even though they are not recognized as such by the other side.

This lack of epistemological sophistication, which will be further elaborated on below, runs deeper than the fact that different epistemological theories are not being recognized as appropriate for different settings, though, because the differences themselves are additionally being misinterpreted. That is, since most writers in the controversy seem unaware that different epistemological theories are being used by the other side, the true source of the differences of opinion that result from the use of different philosophical theories is unrecognized. It is instead attributed to the differences that are mutually acknowledged by both sides, political ones. This is demonstrated in the discussions that result from either side overgeneralizing the use of their epistemological theory to other, less appropriate situations. One example of this, which will be further explained below, is researchers admonishing therapists who do not act like detectives-- by investigating all of their clients' recovered memory claims-- for being overly led by their politics. A more dramatic example occurs when therapists encourage their patients to take their remembered abuser to court on the basis of their recovered memory but fail to realize that the recovered memory will be viewed differently in the legal setting than it was in the therapeutic. In both of these examples, philosophical differences are not acknowledged and writers instead assume that the differences in practice and opinion are purely political. Since philosophical differences can be shown to account for a significant amount of the differences between the two extreme sides in the RMC, the sceptics and the defenders, misattributing the true source of these differences helps perpetuate the

controversy. The two sides become further dichotomized and it becomes less likely that either will recognize the actual source of many of their differences.

5.1 Misuse of Epistemic Terms

The lack of epistemological sophistication on both sides of the RMC is demonstrated first by the misuse of epistemological terms. The epistemological terms, truth, knowledge, and belief are misused in the RMC in two different ways. First, the word truth is used in many situations, especially by defenders, where it would be more appropriate to use the word knowledge or even belief. Instances of this, as well as reasons why this word choice is being employed, will be discussed below. One of the consequences of this choice, though, is a linguistic dichotomization that helps perpetuate the controversy since, for example, memories that are presented as "true" are often assumed to be only true or false thereby further polarizing the sides. The second way that epistemological terms are misused in the controversy is that belief and knowledge are themselves conflated thereby further problematizing the overuse of the word truth. That is, instances where individuals could be said to have knowledge are not being separated from instances where individuals only hold beliefs, by some groups. Both instances are then repeatedly referred to, using the word truth.

As stated above, belief and knowledge differ according to the amount of justification required for a claim to be said to qualify as an instance of one of them. Given the epistemological status of memory, and especially of recovered memory, as discussed

above, a recovered memory claim would more properly be classified as a belief than as an instance of knowledge. Two facts that were mentioned earlier support this assertion. First, the link between recovered memory and perception is less direct than for continuous memory, and second, continuous memories are subject to decay and distortion and there is no evidence that recovered memories are not. Thus, recovered memories, on their own, would not present sufficient evidence to qualify as knowledge of what occurred in most situations. They would be more accurately classified as beliefs until other corroborating facts could be found. At that point in time they could then be said to be knowledge of the truth or at least of a truth of the past, depending on whether foundationalist or more relativistic theories of truth are followed. The debate still exists, of course, over what qualifies as an adequate corroborating fact. However, it is commonly the case that defenders express recovered memory claims not as beliefs, or even as knowledge, but as "truths" (Bass & Davis, 1988; Olio, 1994; Person & Klar, 1994; Schaef, 1992; Terr, 1994). Thus they conflate knowledge and belief, assuming no difference exists between them and then further assume knowledge and truth mean the same thing and can be used interchangeably.

The choice of the word truth over knowledge by defenders, ignoring for the moment that knowledge itself is often a misnomer in these cases, is due to three different reasons. The first two are historical and the last is epistemological. The first reason that defenders choose to use the word truth, which also explains what Loftus and Ketcham

(1994) have called the "desire for certainty" (p. 266) about the past, is that they are reacting to earlier decades of therapy when psychoanalysis was the norm and patients' tales of incest were likely to be labelled as fantasy (Bowers & Farvolden, 1996). Freud's views on incest and his retraction of the seduction hypothesis have been extensively debated elsewhere (Bowers & Farvolden, 1996; Masson, 1984) and will not be addressed here, but are an essential backdrop to understanding the wave of feminist therapies that have surfaced in reaction to them (Kaminer, 1992). This reaction is thus an attempt to emphasize the reality of patients' claims since the "truth" implies the greatest resemblance to reality.

The second reason that defenders (in this case, some feminist therapists) have chosen to use the word truth over belief is that they are responding strongly to what they have seen as a dangerous trend in self-help literature and other sources of assistance for abuse victims. Enns et al. (1995) and Kaminer (1992) have written of an increasing trend in feminist writing in the last 20 years, and in therapeutic advice for abuse victims, for emphasis to be placed on individuals who are divorced from their social world. Noting that a shift seems to have occurred in such work from the personal being seen as political (an important early feminist contribution) to the political being seen as personal (the decidedly unfeminist statement that one's problems are not due to social forces and institutions but to personal problems), they argue that this work is therefore necessarily anathematic to "real" feminist efforts. Enns et al. (1995) believe such an emphasis may

have helped such work grow in the 1980's when many forms of feminism were under attack (see Faludi, 1986) because it does not challenge society, focusing instead on small group work and personal growth.

Many of the feminists who have challenged the trend of divorcing individuals from their society by trying to shift feminism's focus back into the public sphere (for example, through legal court cases (Bass & Davis, 1988)) are also those who choose to label all recovered memories "truths" (Blume, 1995; Olio, 1994). This use of the word "truth", then, is a direct challenge to what is perceived as a feminism that has forgotten its political origins. The labelling of all recovered memories as true is thus seen as a necessary feminist statement against the problem of childhood sexual abuse. As DePrince and Quirk (1995) put it, "the true issue in this debate is violence.... [and] the solution lies in believing that widespread violence occurs" (p. 144). The possibility of labelling recovered memory claims knowledge (not to mention beliefs) is ignored because it does not fit with the revolutionary spirit that these defenders wish to maintain.

The third reason that defenders choose the word "truth" will be explored more extensively below, but briefly, is that such usage of the term "truth" may not be a "misusage" at all if it is used in a limited context. The argument for this runs as follows: If different epistemological theories can be successfully employed in different settings and therefore different definitions of knowledge and truth could be used properly in a specific setting, then, within that setting, different standards of justification may apply for

claims to be classified as knowledge or truth than would be acceptable in other settings. That is, if within a therapy situation it could be successfully argued that a different epistemological theory with different standards for truth and knowledge claims was appropriate, then, within that setting only, claims may be acceptable as knowledge or even truth that may not be acceptable as such outside that situation. That this may be the case is demonstrated by Kimble's (1984, p. 834) empirical study which showed that "experimentalists" and "practitioners" differ in what they accept as a source of knowledge. Researchers rely on "objectivism" or sense data, and therapists believe intuitionism, that is, empathy or self-report is the source of basic knowledge. Note, however, that under this argument, this usage of terms would be restricted to the different setting. That is, therapists need to be careful which other situations they attempt to use the word truth in because other groups may not employ the same meaning of truth that they do. This argument will be expanded below when the philosophical differences between therapists and researchers are discussed. At present, though, it serves to show that therapists choice of the word "truth" is not absolutely wrong in all cases. Generally, however, because this argument is not put forward, implied, or properly followed by defenders, the word "truth" is still misused by them in this controversy.

This choice of the word "truth", as well as the emphasis on reality, has also helped shape the discussion in this controversy, though. Since defenders often present the position that women's stories must be accepted as complete truths or else they are being

called liars, it has made it more difficult for either side to accept the possibility of a middle ground existing. An example of this position is found in the extreme statements of Bass and Davis (1988) such as, "children do not lie about sexual abuse" (p. 282), and, "women don't make up stories of abuse" (p. 316). The controversy is not about anyone lying, however, and such statements obscure recognition of sceptics' evidence that memory recall can be reconstructive and that any memory may contain some true and some false details.

Ironically, given their objectivist stance, the sceptics' writings have also been a force in shaping the linguistic dichotomization that has occurred. The writings of Elizabeth Loftus demonstrate this best. In her memory research she is primarily operating under a specially restricted and defined use of the terms true and false: such terms usually pertain only to specific details that she is testing the memory of, not to memory for the entire event itself (Garry & Loftus, 1994; Loftus 1994). However, in some of her research writing, and especially in her popular writings about the RMC, she has a tendency to label entire memories as being either true or false (Garry & Loftus, 1994, p. 375; Loftus & Hoffman, 1989, p. 103; Loftus & Ketcham, 1994, p. 174). This use of the word "truth" (and falsity) instead of knowledge or belief, or another word like accuracy (which Loftus uses in the rest of her writings), makes the issue of recovered memory seem more simple than it really is and sets the stage for political name calling. She thus helps create an atmosphere where women who are not telling the "truth" are viewed by some as "lying"

(Spence, 1994, p. 298) and women who cannot prove that their memories are completely true can be accused of having FMS, two very political accusations. More important than the misuse of the word "truth" for hampering understanding and communication between the two sides, however, is the mutual lack of recognition that both sides are employing different understandings of terms like "belief" and "truth" because they operate in different settings that require the use of different epistemic theories.

5.2 How Different Settings Lead to Different Usages

The lack of epistemological sophistication of both sides of the RMC is demonstrated further by the ignorance of the two sides that they are using epistemological terms differently because they operate under different epistemological theories. However, these differences can, in turn, be traced to the different settings that memory researchers and therapists operate in. Memory researchers operate in a highly controlled scientific setting and therapists operate in a more subjective, less controllable setting.

5.2.1 Memory Researchers

Memory researchers attempt to be, first and foremost, empiricists. Whether they are similar to or different from the first philosophers who called themselves empiricists is a separate issue and is less important to understanding the present controversy than the fact that they value observation highly in theory creation and hypothesis testing. Empiricists are also modern foundationalists. They seek basic beliefs upon which to base their theories or knowledge. They are also fallibilist since, in theory, they are always

ready to modify their hypotheses in the light of contradictory evidence. In terms of their practice, modern day empiricists further ideally seek manipulable objects so that their hypotheses about them can be tested (Hacking, 1983). This is why scientists have stated their wariness of the concept of repression in terms of its non-manipulable nature. Loftus and Ketcham (1994), for example, attempt to demonstrate their strict adherence to empiricist principles when they label all talk of repression as nothing more than "speculation" (p. 52). Of course, this statement raises a problem for them, though, of how they can then justify speaking of other theoretical memory processes like short term storage (STS) and long term storage (LTS).

All memory researchers also face this same problem since memory itself, as well as its processes, is a theoretical entity. Being scientists, though, they wish to be able to make claims that would satisfy a foundationalist standard of knowledge. Therefore, as others, they attempt to frame their research hypotheses around manipulable objects and constrain their research settings to fully controllable surroundings. For instance, research settings are always constructed such that the truth is always known and comparable with the investigational outcome as, for example, in a memory recall test of a finite set of items. Yet, the use of the correspondence theory of truth, and hence, the kinds of conclusions that can be drawn with it are not applicable to many of the cases of recovered memory debated in the RMC, since the truth of "what really happened" can be indeterminate, as Hacking (1995) argued (see above). In other words, although the

foundationalist theory of knowledge is the preferred theory of scientists in research settings, it does not necessarily follow that it is the ideal theory that all individuals should aspire towards adhering to regardless of the setting in which they operate. This argument will be continued when researchers' specific criticisms of therapists are critically examined in the section below.

It must be noted here, however, that when researchers are said to "adhere" to foundationalist theory, it is not implied that this adherence is always conscious. Many researchers follow the methodology they have been taught in classrooms and laboratories. They are usually not taught about different philosophical theories and therefore do not "choose" the correspondence theory of truth over other possible theories because it best suits their philosophical ideals. Rather, the correspondence theory of truth, and foundationalism in general, best describes the standards of evidence that most researchers demand of themselves and others for findings to be considered "scientific". Researchers, therefore, do not admonish others for not adhering to the levels of evidence required under a foundationalist theory of knowledge but for not adhering to "scientific" methodologies. This distinction is critical to understanding researchers' attitudes in this controversy because most researchers do <u>not</u> recognize the existence of different legitimate theories of knowledge determination. They instead view methods and results in terms of the dichotomous categories of "scientific" and "unscientific".

5.2.2 Therapists

The "world" in which most therapists find themselves is, by contrast, quite different from the controlled "world" of the researcher. Therapists cannot constrain their settings the way that researchers often can. In attempting to aid patients in dealing with the real world and their pasts, entirely different methodologies must be chosen from those a researcher would use in a laboratory. Even when their goals are the same, for example, the determination of the truth of the past, the kinds of evidence that the two groups would have to work with necessitates the adoption of completely different theoretical, as well as physical, practices. As discussed above, researchers' notion of "the past" in memory work usually pertains to an extremely controlled set of circumstances, like the words on a recall list. Therapists, in contrast, usually deal with events that cannot be viewed this objectively. In many cases, for instance, therapists cannot determine the "historical truth" of many of their patients' claims where historical truth requires, "corroborating hard evidence from relatively objective sources" (Pennebaker & Memon, 1996, p. 382). That is, therapists often simply cannot use the correspondence theory of truth. It is also simply not possible for most therapists to switch into the role of a professional detective every time one of their clients makes a statement about their past, that might concern another individual, that the client could not substantiate in a courtroom (even though some critics have suggested they do just this: Hacking, 1995, p. 118).

Therapists therefore face two choices. First, they could be good foundationalists

and label all such claims "beliefs" only. Alternatively, though, they could operate according to a different theory of knowledge determination by accepting different kinds of evidence than researchers would for knowledge claims. This choice would enable them to believe their clients had knowledge of their past and therefore were telling the truth when convincing but less than, for example, legal standards of evidence existed. This option would be especially attractive in settings where the therapist's belief in the truth of the client's statements was in some way necessary for the continuation of therapy. This acceptance of different kinds of evidence than those which would be acceptable in a research setting would enable therapists to believe that their clients were telling the truth and to get on with the therapy itself. Different kinds of evidence might include feelings or other memories and other sources of information that may not be externally verifiable. Exactly what different therapists deem acceptable ranges in the present controversy. For example, some therapists accept all of their patients' recovered memory claims as certain truths (Bass & Davis, 1988), others believe that all such claims contain "essential truths" (Olio & Cornell, 1994, p. 85), and still others accept claims temporarily until meaning can be extracted from them later (Fowler, 1994). Therapists in the latter part of this range would not be defenders, however. Why therapists would so differ will now be explored.

Kimble's (1984) surveys suggest that therapists do, in fact, operate under a different theory of knowledge determination. As mentioned, Kimble found that his sample of practicing therapists considered different kinds of evidence sufficient for

knowledge claims than his sample of researchers did. Specifically, they were more willing to accept as knowledge claims information gained from more intuitive and less objective sources (Kimble, 1984, p. 834). Given the different settings in which researchers and therapists operate, there is no reason to believe that these different choices made by Kimble's samples are not reliable differences. Exactly which epistemological theory therapists operate under is more debatable, however. Since therapists do not operate in the constrained "world" of researchers, their situations vary more than researchers' situations do. Different therapists may thus make different choices not only from researchers but from other therapists as well, if their situations vary widely enough.

Since they are generally no more philosophically sophisticated than researchers are, their epistemological choices are shaped less by conscious choice of epistemological theory and more by the demands of the situation. The case described above of therapists wishing to progress with therapy, when less than legal standards of proof existed for their patients' recovered memory claims, would be one example of how a situation might determine a therapist's epistemological choices. Therapists, therefore, do not strictly follow any one of the epistemological theories as outlined above but choose from two of them in what could best be described as a pragmatic fashion.

Fowler (1994) provides a rare exception of a therapist choosing, identifying, and defending the use of a single epistemological theory for the therapeutic setting. He argues

that recovered memories should be viewed "pragmatically", by which he means that their truth should be judged based on the meaning that they provide for the patient with respect to his or her past. His interpretation of pragmatism ends up producing a psychoanalytic theory much like those that defenders' work is a response to, but it demonstrates well the way some therapists have begun to attempt to distinguish different "kinds" of truth. Fowler (1994), for example, makes a distinction between "psychological truth" and "objective truth". A feminist, or coherentist, critique of his theory, though, with which Hacking (1995) might even agree, would question whether objective truth could be so partitioned from more subjective "psychological" truths (Harding, 1986). Regardless, most other therapists do not identify their epistemology like Fowler. They do, however, operate with justification requirements that most closely resemble the theories of pragmatism or coherentism.

Therapists seem to operate under a pragmatic theory of knowledge when, for example, they take improvement in a client's symptoms and functioning, following the recovery of a memory of abuse, as evidence that the recovered memory is actually "true" (Bowers & Farvolden, 1996, p. 382). They are operating pragmatically because they are finding justification for a knowledge claim in what worked for the client. Since believing they were abused aided the client's recovery, the memories of the abuse can be accepted as "true". Similar therapeutic decisions are reviewed by Spence (1982). He notes that a "strict correspondence with the specific past event is no longer necessary" for some

therapists when a strong enough conviction of the truth of a construction of the past that has emerged in therapy is held (p. 289). A pragmatic decision to accept what seems to work is made. This example also hints at what will be discussed shortly, that both pragmatic and coherentist theory are used interchangeably by some therapists.

In contrast, therapists seem to operate under a coherentist theory of knowledge when they are willing to accept as "true" that which fits with their clients' other beliefs and statements about the past. For example, Bowers and Farvolden (1996) could be labelled coherentist for statements in praise of a fellow therapist for focussing on, "the patient's current feelings and perceptions, which are doubtless related in some coherent way to the patient's historical past" (p. 366). Spence (1982) additionally reviews the use of the "tally criterion" by some therapists under which interpretations of a patient's past are accepted if they "tally with what is real in the patient" (p. 289). The term tally seems to be used in a form analogous to the notion of coherence.

As suggested above, Spence's (1982) work can also be used to show that both pragmatism and coherentism are used interchangeably by at least some therapists. His arguments specifically refer to psychoanalysis but are easily generalizable to other therapeutic methodologies as well. He argues that both epistemological theories are used in psychoanalysts' attempts to construct a "true" history of an individual's past because an analyst has only the patient's acceptance of coherent narratives (coherentism), that must also function to make sense of the patient's present concerns (pragmatism), to use in

forming the history.

Despite sceptics' cautions to the contrary, though, therapists' use of different theories of knowledge and therefore different kinds of evidence in the therapy situation is not necessarily dangerous as long as its situational specificity is not forgotten. Further examination of this argument will be the focus of the section below. Additionally, though, it is not the case that therapists are exceptional for choosing different kinds of evidence as adequate for knowledge claims. Everyday life situations commonly exist outside of the therapy situation where similar decisions to accept claims that would not qualify as knowledge under a foundationalist definition are made. The most common ones involve the differential acceptance of testimony in different situations.

For example, two neighbours talking about a neighbourhood crime might form beliefs on the basis of testimonial evidence of dubious reliability. A police detective, in contrast, would require more reliable testimony as well as other forms of "hard" evidence for his or her beliefs than the neighbours because of the different settings in which they may subsequently be asked to justify these beliefs. It is also commonly the case that claims are accepted as knowledge outside the therapy situation when different kinds of evidence than those required by the foundationalist definition of knowledge exist. For instance, Moen (1995) speaks of "narrative truth" as distinct from "legal truth" and holds that both of these "truths" are determinate independent of knowledge of the reality of events to which both pertain. That is, that in therapy and courtroom situations,

"knowledge" of a kind can be arrived at even without certain knowledge of the "truth". Both situations use the best evidence available to paint the most coherent picture possible. Thus different kinds of evidence can be acceptable to different groups in different situations.

However, two caveats with respect to statement, mentioned earlier, bear repeating. First, it is usually not the case that different theories of knowledge are considered and one of them is chosen. Generally, neither researchers nor therapists are very epistemologically sophisticated. Rather, a group in a specific setting will decide that certain kinds of evidence are sufficient for a knowledge claim in a process outlined by the theory of contextualism as described above. Second, it is not the case that these decisions can be expected to be upheld by groups in other situations because these groups, in turn, may have decided that different kinds of evidence are necessary for their specific setting.

5.3 Different Theories as Appropriate in Their Own Settings

The last section demonstrated that the two main sides of the RMC use different epistemological theories. It is further the case, though, that both sides fail to see these differences and, therefore, assume their own theory is or should be universal. These assumptions cause both sides to overgeneralize the appropriateness of their methodology to other settings. Additionally, many of the problematic criticisms sceptics and defenders offer can be traced to these assumptions. The contextualist theory of knowledge, however, offers an alternative understanding of therapists' and researchers' usages of

different theories.

In Kimble's (1984) survey, he found that "experimentalists" and "practitioners" in psychology differed along six key dimensions including the most important scholarly values (scientific or humanist), the most appropriate level of analysis (elementalism or holism), and, as mentioned earlier, the basic source of knowledge (observation or intuitionism). Kimble (1984) believes the differences between the two groups date not only from the beginnings of the discipline itself but predate the differentiation of psychology from philosophy, as well. If he and others (Barasch, 1996) are right, it would be fair to say that psychological researchers have been critical of therapists' methodologies, and vice versa, since before this controversy began. Researchers' criticisms of therapists' methodologies in this controversy should, therefore, not be surprising. However, as suggested in the last section, it is the case that the different methodologies of researchers and therapists can be seen as legitimate, in their appropriate settings, under the aforementioned theory of contextualism.

Researchers' criticisms in the present controversy include an argument of Loftus and Ketcham's (1994) that amounts to the statement that only hypotheses that are scientifically testable should be proposed and Spence's (1994) contention that the data of the controversy -- by this he means actual clinical notes -- are not being released for public scrutiny the way that scientific data are. On the issue of self-help literature, which overlaps with the present controversy, Kaminer (1992) has also argued that there are

degrees of objectivity worth striving for (p. 41). All of these, however, do not take the different settings of researchers and therapists into account, and, in Spence's (1994) case, the differential ethical considerations they face. That is, epistemological considerations aside, sceptics in this controversy are guilty of not considering the different settings in which therapists operate and demanding that they use the same methodologies researchers employ. Sceptics, therefore, are also guilty of not recognizing the limits of their own epistemology. It is unreasonable to expect a therapist, who cannot exercise the same control as a researcher, to run their therapy sessions like experiments. Experiments require an ability to control variables and outcomes that simply cannot be demanded of therapy situations. This does not mean, however, that all sceptics' criticisms of therapists are without merit.

Loftus and Ketcham (1994) correctly note that once a client's claims are believed and the additional step of confronting the alleged abuser is taken, if the memory turns out to be inaccurate, it is not the case that the client can, "always apologize and set the record straight" (p. 173). They also note the dangers of some defenders' statements that, "requests for proof only revictimize the patient" (Loftus & Ketcham, 1994, p. 55). When recovered memories are especially unusual (as in cases of so-called satanic ritual abuse), when someone's reputation is on the line, or when cases have entered public courtrooms and large sums of money are at stake, requests for proof are quite legitimate. The statement about apologizing is drawn from Frederickson (1992) and the revictimization

statement is drawn from Bass and Davis' 1988 book The Courage to Heal. For this statement, as well as for others mentioned above, some therapists have argued that Bass and Davis' book gives bad therapeutic advice (Terr, 1994, p. 172). One of the reasons why it does, however, is not a reason most therapists would identify.

Therapists are no less guilty than researchers of not recognizing the limits of their epistemology to the therapeutic setting alone. Bass and Davis (1988) provide one of the clearest examples of this in the advice they give to patients and therapists, as seen above. However, many other therapists, like Bass and Davis, because of the epistemological ignorance mentioned above, also do not seem to discuss with their clients the notion that the claims that have been accepted as "truths" in the therapy setting may not be accepted as such in other settings, like the legal setting, without additional evidence (Loftus & Ketcham, 1994, p. 55; Pennebaker & Memon, 1996, p. 382). The next section will deal with the consequences of these actions.

Note, however, that the above criticisms, as well as those of sceptics, pertain less to what is done in the therapy situation per ce and more to what can happen when terms acceptable in the therapeutic setting are used outside the therapy situation. That is, such criticisms are not fatal to the use of more pragmatic or coherentist theories of knowledge within the therapy situation. This is not surprising for two reasons. First, as explained above, therapists often have little choice in employing these theories lest they change their profession to that of private investigator and second, it is predicted by the

contextualist theory of knowledge; that individuals in different situations will collectively decide what norms and methodologies are acceptable. Some of the "middle ground" of writers in the RMC provide further proof for the contextualist theory of knowledge by noting that different kinds of evidence are acceptable to different groups in the controversy. The beginnings of such an acknowledgment can be found in Spence's (1982) differentiation between historical and narrative truth.

Briefly, Spence's (1982) now classic work was an important contribution to a debate that preceded the present controversy but shared many common concerns. This earlier debate was over the historical accuracy of the version of patients' pasts that came to be accepted as truth in, specifically, psychoanalytic therapy settings. Spence's (1982) distinction between historical truth and narrative truth was an attempt to critique Freud's faith, especially in his early writings, "that psychoanalysis is an archeology of memories" (p. 176). In a passage which predates some of Hacking's (1995) work, Spence (1982) argues that truth about the past is determined on the basis of "narrative fit":

> if a piece of the past completes the unfinished clinical picture in just the right way... then it acquires its own truth value and no further checking is necessary.... the construction that began as a contribution to the coherence of the narrative... gradually comes to acquire truth value in its own right and is assumed to satisfy the criteria of accuracy. (p. 181)

Following this passage he states, "narrative fit speaks to narrative truth; it says relatively

little about historical truth" (Spence, 1982, p. 189).

In the RMC, not only have these terms resurfaced (Bowers & Farvolden, 1996; Hacking, 1995), but additional distinctions between different acceptable "kinds" of truth have been attempted as well. Fowler (1994) has referred to "psychological truths" (p, 682) which are highly reminiscent of Spence's (1982) narrative truths, and Moen (1995) has added the concept of "legal truth" (p, 481). Moen also uses legal examples to demonstrate that "legal truth" itself can be achieved on different occasions with different kinds of evidence.

Without specifically mentioning it, these writers are arguing in favour of the contextualist theory of truth. By making these distinctions between different "kinds" of truth, their theories argue in favour of the notion that different theories of truth determination co-exist in the controversy.

Under a contexualist gaze, then, what some therapists are guilty of in this controversy, is not of failing to use evidence acceptable to researchers in their therapy, but of not recognizing that different kinds of evidence <u>are</u> required in different settings and of not so advising their clients. Researchers, in turn, are guilty of not recognizing the same and of believing that their methodologies are superior to those of clinicians in all settings (Loftus & Ketcham, 1996).

An additional barrier that exists to the acknowledgement of these epistemological differences lies in the fact that therapists' and researchers' differences are misattributed.

Since the true source of their differences is not recognized by these two groups, the opportunity exists for them to be misattributed to differences that are commonly acknowledged, namely, to politics.

5.4 From Epistemic Misunderstandings to Political Differences

The end result of researchers' and therapists' lack of epistemological sophistication is that their epistemological differences are not acknowledged as such. Instead, the different practices of therapists and researchers are assumed to be motivated by political differences. How these misattributions are formed will be explained below.

Politics loom large in the present controversy. Both sides make political accusations and some defenders have even stated that the controversy is about nothing but politics (Kristiansen, 1995). It is instead the case that politics sustain the controversy because politics prevent the acknowledgment of genuine epistemological differences between the sides and cause the subsequent misattribution of all further differences. The most dramatic cases of this occur when cases of recovered memory are taken to court. These cases demonstrate how epistemological differences between researchers and therapists can be given political labels which result in further communication difficulties between the sides.

Politics seem to prevent the acknowledgment of epistemological differences most blatantly in the work of many defenders. These theorists' writings demonstrate a complete conflation of the more political statements made by the FMSF and all statements made by

any memory researcher that might be critical of their work. Blume (1995) is not atypical in this regard in her refusal to acknowledge any of the criticisms offered by researchers as legitimate (see also Olio & Cornell, 1994). Instead, she argues,

> Backlashers (which movement is not limited to the membership and board of the so-called "False Memory Syndrome Foundation") have absolutely no scientific basis for their claims. Virtually none of the "experts", whether clinicians or researchers, have any experience working with incest, or other trauma. (Blume, 1995, p. 132)

Sceptics' work is therefore assumed to be completely politically motivated. Kristiansen (1996) calls the work of Loftus and others "pseudoscience" and Blume (1995) further argues that, "some of the most visible backlash spokespeople and experts have revealed themselves to advocate paedophilia" (p. 132).

Politics can, of course, be found in the work not only of the FMSF but of Loftus and others, as well. Loftus and Ketcham (1994) and Ofshe (1994), another well-known sceptic, often demonstrate a lack of empathy for abuse victims in their motivations to decry the dangers of recovered or repressed memory therapy, despite their occasional statement to the contrary. Ofshe (1994), for example, insinuates that all recovered memory patients are highly hypnotizable, a statement with negative psychological, if not social, connotations. However, politics are not the primary reason for their advocacy of different methodologies and opinions, epistemological differences are. Politics do work

to prevent the acknowledgment by sceptics of the epistemological source of many of their differences from defenders, though. That is, for both sceptics and defenders, politics, which do legitimately exist in the controversy, act as a convenient and mutually-acknowledged difference to which all unrecognized epistemic differences can be overgeneralized.

The most obvious example of this occurs when unsuccessful attempts to seek redress for childhood sexual abuse in courtrooms are blamed on political bias and not on the fact that different epistemologies are operant in different settings. In other words, it is not recognized that the therapeutic and the legal setting use different theories for determining knowledge and truth. As mentioned above, therapists who do not recognize these epistemological differences consequently do not caution their clients of this fact (see Bass & Davis, 1988). Even more problematic, however, is the fact that some of these therapists actually encourage their clients to take their claims outside the therapy situation. Specifically, some clients are encouraged to sue the assailant in their recovered memory. The most blatant example, again, is offered by Bass and Davis (1988). They first tell clients, "to say 'I was abused' you don't need the kind of recall that would stand up in a court of law" (Bass & Davis, 1988, p. 22), but then argue,

> Ultimately it's educational for society as a whole for these cases to come into the courts. The legal system is so important to the American consciousness. If you can take it to court, there's a way in which you symbolically get vindicated that

doesn't happen in any other way. (p. 310)

Therapists who state this less blatantly, but advocate something much like it, include Belicki (1995) and Gleaves (1994). The reasons for such encouraging are primarily political and include the desire to make society realize the horror and extent of incest, as suggested above, and the feminist desire of therapists to give their patients a public voice. Both of these are, themselves, laudable goals.

Unfortunately, when, and if, such cases fail, the reasons why are misunderstood and are consequently misattributed. Failure is often due to a lack of sufficient evidence for the legal courts to convict because of the difficulty of amassing evidence for a crime that occurred years, or even decades, earlier, which could only have been witnessed by the victim and the perpetrator (Loftus & Ketcham, 1994; Pennebaker & Memon, 1996). This is most commonly the case where the victim's main evidence is their recovered memory. That is, recovered memories, on their own, are often considered insufficient evidence for a guilty verdict, for the reasons mentioned above pertaining to recovered memory's unique epistemological status. The kinds of evidence required for convictions in criminal courts are quite different than the kinds of evidence many therapists use in determining the truth about a patient's past, as discussed above. Courtrooms are generally unable or unwilling to accept a claim as truth because it coheres with a patient's other memories of her past, for example. Reasons for this, again, are due to the stakes involved in legal decisions which have necessitated the use of stricter definitions than those that

are be employed in most therapy settings. However, since many defenders are operating under the additional belief that society at large is resisting acknowledging the existence of incest and childhood sexual abuse (Bass & Davis, 1988; Byrd, 1994), they misattribute legal failures to resistant political forces. Numerous defenders have stated their belief that this is, in fact, the case (Blume, 1995; DePrince & Quirk, 1995). This belief of defenders would only be reinforced by the fact that, in many of these cases, memory researchers like Elizabeth Loftus, who also happen to sit on the scientific advisory board of the FMSF, act as expert witnesses for the defense (Pope, 1996). Such beliefs also gain credence from cases where determination of the truth seems to have been thwarted by judges themselves. Prince and Quirk (1995) quote one judge as stating:

> The Court finds that the testimony of the victims as to their memory of the assaults shall not be admitted at trial because the phenomenon of memory repression, and the process of therapy used in these cases to recover memories, have not gained general acceptance in the field of psychology; and are not scientifically reliable. (p. 142)

A jury was thus not even allowed to hear patients' recovered memories because the judge decided that since they were recovered memories, since they were not "scientifically reliable", they could not possibly be judged to be true in a court of law, seemingly regardless of what other evidence may have existed. Yet, on the whole, such cases are unfortunate exceptions. While it could be argued that politics play a key role in the

determination of "truth" in some court cases, politics cannot be blamed for every legal decision that runs counter to a recovered memory (see Moen, 1995, for a further discussion of this). Politics are not the reason the majority of failed legal cases are lost; a lack of sufficient legal evidence is (Moen, 1995; Pennebaker & Memon, 1996; Stayton, 1994). Believing that politics plays a larger role in the controversy than it in fact does thus prevents defenders from recognizing the epistemological differences in the practices of those operating in the therapeutic and the legal (as well as research) settings.

These misattributions also further politicize the controversy and mar communication between the two sides. An example of such politicization is found in Byrd's (1994) statement, "it was not clear that Loftus appreciated the existential experience of surviving incest and having one's credibility about the matter challenged" (p. 440). Similar to this is Kristiansen's (1996) attempt to label anyone who believes in the FMS, as well as anyone who does memory research, as authoritarian and sexist. These arguments are simply personal political attacks. They are not, however, unusual examples.

At this point it should be clarified that when epistemological differences go unrecognized, the subsequent misattributions that occur may be more accurately described as a chain of events. When, for example, defenders read criticisms of their work from sceptics, which themselves may be based on a particular understanding of how truth and knowledge are determined, defenders' own epistemological theories will influence

how these criticisms are taken. What then happens can be roughly characterized as follows: defenders, specifically therapists, will recognize a difference in objectives and will even recognize a difference in setting that produces these different objectives but will fail to recognize that the different settings also give rise to the use of different theories for determining what can qualify as truth or knowledge. Thus, when the sceptics' criticism of their work seems to ignore the existence of what they consider evidence of their patients' knowledge or labels such evidence insufficient, they see a group unwilling to accept the "truth" of women's (or victims') experiences instead of a group operating under different philosophical definitions. Likewise, sceptics reading defenders' criticisms of their work fail to see the epistemological underpinnings of their differences, which themselves form the basis of defenders' criticisms, and therefore attribute these criticisms to defenders' political leanings.

The misinterpretation of valid criticisms from both sides demonstrates these points. For instance, sceptics' cautions that memories can be composed of both objectively true and false details, that it may be impossible to distinguish between these, and therefore, that therapists should use memory recall techniques, for example, those encouraging non-judgemental free recall, only with caution, are interpreted as false memory syndrome propaganda by some defenders (see for example, Blume, 1995). It is not recognized by these defenders that a memory composed of some true and some possibly false details that may be viewed as "true" in a therapy situation may be viewed

as "false" in a research one not because of political differences, but because different epistemological theories and therefore definitions of truth are being employed. Sceptics, likewise, are quicker to attribute political motives to therapists who do not address research findings on their scientific merit than they are to recognize their own ignorance of the relationship of therapeutic theory to its setting. Therefore, they fail to see the lack of appropriateness of some of their recommendations for therapeutic practices.

This overattribution to politics thus serves to weaken the already strained communication links between the sides as well as rendering some writers incapable of believing that the other side could have any legitimate arguments or suggestions to offer about their work or practice. An example is Loftus and Ketcham's (1994) claims that, "this is a debate about memory". How they are able to justify that the debate is not also about therapeutic methodologies when, as stated above, the controversy is over the truth or falsity of claims made in the therapeutic situation, is not explained. Nor is the attitude reflected in defenders' repeated attempts to prove that the findings of memory research are inapplicable to their work fully explainable without reference to the motives defenders assume memory researchers are operating under. This, then, is why an acknowledgment of the epistemological differences between the sides is necessary to fully understand the controversy. The underlying motives of sceptics and defenders are either unintelligible or misattributed without it.

6. CONCLUSION

Different groups exist in the RMC that seem to have different opinions of what is going on in the controversy. First of all, there are two different kinds of sceptics. The first seem primarily interested in what Hacking (1995) calls, "trumpeting the evils of false memories" (p. 266). Ofshe (1996) and other writers working on behalf of the FMSF fall into this category. The second are composed of researchers like Loftus who do engage in some "trumpeting" but are primarily interested in informing therapists of the dangers of some memory recovery techniques and of the current theories of memory in cognitive circles. These researchers find themselves on the same side as the FMSF not for political reasons but because years of independent cognitive research have revealed findings at odds with what is currently being practiced in some therapeutic circles.

Defenders also come in two main kinds. The first seem to refuse to acknowledge any criticisms of therapeutic work from sceptics and hold that the controversy is about people not believing victims' stories of the horrors that occur in some children's lives. These theorists, like Olio (1994), Bass and Davis (1994), and Blume (1995) therefore see sceptics' attempts to inform as political attempts to silence. The second kind of defender is more like Terr (1994) who seeks to form theories of how repression and recovered memory could be possible given memory researchers' findings. These defenders usually acknowledge that memories are composed of true and false details but maintain that recovered memories of abuse contain "essential truths".

A group of middle ground theorists also exists in the controversy composed of those attempting to acknowledge the valid criticisms and suggestions being made by both sides. Pope (1996) and Bowers and Farvolden (1996) would fall into this category. These categories, additionally, are not absolute and writers routinely defy simple classifications. For example, Loftus has become a more extreme sceptic over the years and her popular writing (Loftus & Ketcham, 1994) does not contain the cautiousness of much of her, especially earlier, scientific writing (Loftus & Hoffman, 1989).

The picture of the controversy that the media has chosen to portray is a biased representation containing only the first kind of sceptic and the first kind of defender, as seen in newspapers, television documentaries, and talk show episodes on the controversy (Landsberg, 1994a; 1994b; 1994c). This picture has had at least some effect on academic writing since many writers, in turn, often write as if only two extreme sides existed in the controversy (Blume, 1995; DePrince & Quirk, 1995; Green, 1996). Yet the media did not create the controversy nor are they responsible for its continuation. The controversy over the truth of recovered memories that should have been resolved by the writings of middle ground theorists and others who have stressed that few memories are completely true or completely false instead continues because of the perceived political differences between the two sides. These differences are further assumed to motivate the actions of writers on the other side of the controversy. Therefore, any criticism of an action in this controversy is, at the same time, a criticism of the underlying politics that are assumed to motivate it.

These perceived differences can, in turn, be divided into two groups, real differences in political motives and misattributed epistemological differences, as explained above.

Real political differences between the two sides include some defenders' resistance to the use of any word other than "true" to describe recovered memories of sexual abuse. This naturally makes them resistant to what has been referred to here as the sceptics' model of memory, or the fact that memories of events can be, and often are, composed of both "true" and "false" details. This position is not an epistemological misunderstanding. It is a very conscious political choice on the part of these theorists to make a political point and attempt to defend a group they strongly believe to be in need of representation. The same can be said for the sceptics who believe that accused parents are an underrepresented disadvantaged group. These theorists, usually also those allied with the FMSF, take the position that defenders underestimate the impact of false positives (Belicki, 1995; Loftus & Ketcham, 1994; Ofshe, 1996).

Therefore, the positions of some defenders and some sceptics are based on political differences that could be labelled legitimate in the sense that there are no misunderstandings of the other side involved in their difference of opinion-- they back different political groups, those accusing and those accused of child abuse. However, while the positions may be legitimate, the assumptions regarding the actions of the two groups are often based on misunderstandings. That is, other legitimate practices of both sceptics and defenders are assumed to also be motivated by political differences. In this

way, politics is perceived as playing a larger role in the controversy than it in fact does and the two groups become unable to distinguish legitimate differences in practice from differences in political motives. For example, the scientific model to which most researchers adhere and the more narrative methods of knowledge determination accepted by many therapists are not differences in practice that can be attributed to political motives. They are differences that have resulted from the different settings in which researchers and therapists operate and the kinds of epistemological claims it is possible to support in each of them. The differences are assumed to be political in origin by some sceptics and defenders, though, since they necessarily make sceptics and defenders arrive at different epistemological conclusions when they are given the same recovered memories.

To elaborate, many recovered memories that are considered "true" in a therapy setting would often not be similarly labelled by memory researchers or sceptics. As demonstrated above, many therapists will consider recovered memories "true" even when they cannot be compared to an "objectively determined" reality. Their judgement is, instead, based on the fit of the recovered memory with other revealed facts about their client or on the fact that it creates a more coherent narrative of their clients' past. Researchers operate under different epistemological definitions because their data are collected under more controlled conditions. Therefore, they would consider the data provided by most recovered memories insufficient for a truth claim. That is, the truth

claim would be considered a false one.

The use of the word false is considered a political statement against patients by defenders, however, instead of a legitimate questioning of their claims. A series of misunderstandings is therefore operative in the political escalation of the controversy. Therapists fail to recognize that their use of the word truth is not universal. They therefore misunderstand why researchers dispute their clients' truth claims and assume political motives are always operative. Researchers, in turn, fail to recognize therapists' use of different epistemological definitions and assume that their use of the word truth is solely politically motivated because it does not satisfy their definition of truth. In short, both therapists' and researchers' major mistake is the assumption of common epistemological definitions. The overuse of the word truth then allows the political escalation to begin.

The issue of who is more at fault in these assumptions, sceptics or defenders, will not be resolved here although it may seem that the present paper leans more heavily against defenders' work. This appearance is due solely to the fact that defenders have made a larger number of different hypotheses. Sceptics are as guilty as defenders in this controversy for their belief that their methods of knowledge determination are the most appropriate for all possible settings.

In fact, it is ironically defenders who come the closest to acknowledging the epistemological differences between the two sides. Defenders who advocate the separate

memory system hypothesis examined above acknowledge that some researchers are advocating a methodology that is inappropriate to the kind of data revealed in therapy sessions but they misunderstand how researchers are wrong. It is the fact that the data are "recovered" memories and that the therapy setting is not a controlled one, like a laboratory, that makes the straight application of scientific methods of knowledge determination to such therapeutic data problematic. That is, strict adherence to only methods of knowledge determination acceptable to scientists would mean that patients could uncover little new knowledge of themselves. Whether that knowledge is "traumatic" or not does not seem to be the crucial issue here, though. The issue of patients' uncovering new knowledge about themselves, however, bears further consideration.

It was mentioned above that therapists rely on the malleability of memory in therapy settings in order to assist patients' forming of new understandings of themselves and their past. One last misunderstanding of which both sceptics and defenders are guilty in the RMC, then, is not recognizing the complexity of therapeutic work by using the labels "true" and "false" to label patients' memories. The use of these labels is actually a conflation of two very different goals on the part of defenders and some sceptics. The first is the goal of creating a narrative for a patient that is "true" for him or her and makes sense of the past. The second is the goal of receiving societal acknowledgement. In the case where a recovered memory brings to light events for which an individual may be

long overdue for civil or criminal prosecution. this matter may best be decided by a court of law. If a court of law then finds the recovered memory and any other evidence of the defence insufficient it is still not the case that the recovered memory is false. This terminology is not only too simplistic, it has also been shown to carry inflammatory political connotations.

It is not the contention of the present paper that ceasing the use of the terms "true" and "false" will solve the present controversy or even that removing all of the epistemological misunderstandings between the sides will resolve it. Political divisions between the sides will continue to exist. The controversy will not be resolved until these misunderstandings are acknowledged, however, because they will otherwise continue to be perceived as political in origin and will continue to escalate the existent political differences.

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