

An unfinished didactic novel. Chapter 3: Berlin

by Richard D. Chessick, M.D., Ph.D.

Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Northwestern University

It seems to Alfred that there are two kinds of love: the one that cares for your welfare, your food, your comfort, and the one that engages your wildest dreams and impulses. At this blessed point in his life, still in childhood, Alfred possesses both types of love, sacred and profane. He will grieve for such plenitude forever after.

Anita Brookner, *Family and Friends*
(1958, N.Y.: Vintage, pp. 47–48)

The sun or, as Homer would say, the rosy fingered dawn, was just appearing when a bleary eyed group of travelers assembled in the lobby of the Ankara hotel waiting for the hopefully prompt arrival of a bus to take them to Cappadocia. No one looked their best, and several individuals had obviously eaten too much of the high calorie high fat breakfast food that was served in the hotel buffet since it was free as part of the price of the hotel room, rendering them unable to restrain their greed. Standing back, I allowed my eyes to rove gently over the group that I thought I would have to now take to a place that was far away in time and in history.

Sitting at the center and sleepily conjuring up his usual impeccable self was Richard, still dressed in his suit that miraculously had not lost its pressing. At this point it still looked like he was ready to start receiving patients in his consulting room. His wife Pearl, on the other hand, seemed even dumpier than ever and had clearly not managed to wake up yet. She was hiding behind yesterday's issue of the *International Herald Tribune*. Over in one corner sat the beautiful Claire, her husband Edward, J., and Henry. The two men clearly felt out of place in the group and were trying to prepare

This is chapter 3 of An Unfinished Didactic Novel. Chapter 1: Chicago appeared in the Archives of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy 2:45-66, issue 3, September 2000; and Chapter 2: Ankara appeared in the Archives of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy 2:53-73, issue 4, December 2000. Readers are urged to read or to review these chapters before proceeding. Please note that on p. 66 of chapter 1 there is an error: the name on the first line of that page should be Steven, not Ken.

themselves to enjoy the scenery and ignore the discussions; they had already indicated contempt for the whole psychoanalytic process. Claire was radiant even in the morning and was trying in some way or the other to avoid the gaze of Richard, who was sitting upright and looking across at her with his steely blue eyes.

Henry, as usual, showed little interest in his wife J., who was trying hard not to look uncomfortable, although she felt left out of the foursome and saw me watching her. She was trying to engage Gertrude and Sarah in some sort of conversation but it did not work very well. Gertrude was rather possessive of her lesbian partner Sarah and looked with some suspicion on any woman who attempted to befriend her partner and rather keen professor of English literature. I thought to myself, "How will I ever get this prickly group through three weeks of touring, get them to pay attention, and keep the remarkable manifestations of lust and aggression which have already surfaced, at bay?" It was almost like having to maintain a civilization in the middle east today or like Prospero attempting to civilize Caliban. Yet Caliban represented the dark side of Prospero, just as Alberich represented the dark side of Wotan. In my younger days I wrote about this¹.

The boredom increased as everyone was waiting for Professor Kozturk and Ali, his chief resident in the department of psychiatry — the young gentleman who seemed so interested already in Claire. When they finally arrived, I was surprised to see the professor looking very upset and there was even a depressed and crestfallen expression on Ali's usually smiling face.

"I am very sorry", he moaned, "We cannot go to Cappadocia. I have been informed by the Turkish authorities in Ankara that there are Kurdish terrorists in the area and it is dangerous to make the drive at this time. Turkish soldiers will be combing through the place and it is estimated that in about a week it should again be safe. There have been three killings of civilians by these terrorists over the last 24 hours and so we are forbidden to go".

The room was in an uproar. Everyone was speaking at once. What to do? Richard was angry and began complaining that he had been cheated on the tour. Edward and Henry began insisting that we make a protest to the Turkish government through the American embassy, apparently in their frustration not remembering that Turkey had a political system quite different than the United States. The women disagreed strongly because they did not want to travel in an area that was dangerous even if they could have received permission through the American consulate. The whole argument was academic, as I knew and Professor Kozturk knew, because one does not argue with the military authorities in Turkey.

I began thinking very hard as to how I could rescue this trip; after all we had just begun. I finally came up with the suggestion that we fly to Berlin for a week and have a look at the many museums of ancient culture that are available as well as experiencing the rebuilding of a city that was almost completely ruined in World War II. I have always thought of the production of World War II and the amazing support that

¹The Ring: Richard Wagner's dream of preoedipal destruction. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis* 43:361-374, 1983.

the demonic murderer Hitler received from the German people as possible manifestations of the death instinct in that culture. Surely Freud also would also have thought so. I hoped perhaps if I took the group on the two hour drive from Berlin to Dresden and showed them how the Germans had managed to get their own treasure, one of the most beautiful cities in the world, completely destroyed, perhaps this would have some impact on their thinking about the death drive.

Of course the question came up in my mind at once as to whom I could get to be our host in Berlin. I telephoned my friend Willy, an executive of the *Deutsche Psychoanalytische Gesellschaft*. Willy was more than happy to be our host and he also engaged a guide in the same capacity as was our guide Sema in Turkey for us, a young American woman named Lisa who preferred to live in Germany rather than in the United States for reasons that were unclear at the time. I then made the usual boring series of telephone calls aided by the concierge at the Ankara hotel, and was able to get reservations on a flight to Frankfurt and then a transfer flight to Berlin for the entire group. So by evening a group of very tired and somewhat disoriented and disappointed individuals found themselves checking into the Hotel Forum at Alexanderplatz in what used to be Communist dominated East Berlin.

In return for Willie's kindness I agreed to address a *Deutsche Psychoanalytische Gesellschaft* meeting which happened to be going on during that week. We would stay a week in Berlin and Professor Kozturk and Sema would meet us on the same day of the following week when we returned to Ankara.

I also thought that some attention to the Prussian historical figure Frederick "the Great" would be helpful for our group because this unusual individual managed to combine an Enlightenment mind suffused with the appreciation of reason and possessing the capacity to appreciate, compose, and play music, with the behavior of a violent and cruel dictator who was willing to gamble his entire country and the lives of its people on major military expeditions. Fortunately for him, his military gambles usually paid off and he was therefore awarded the title of "the Great", for establishing the Prussian state as a major continental power. I remembered his interesting ambivalent relationship with Voltaire and hoped it would stir up some discussion.

So the next morning, instead of having Lisa show us around Berlin, I decided to take the group to Potsdam for a visit to Sanssouci, the summer residence of Frederick "the Great". This is less imposing than his castle in Charlottenburg in Berlin but really was the place that Frederick enjoyed and perhaps showed himself to his Enlightenment best. What I had in mind was to illustrate through the discussion of Frederick "the Great" the dual character of human instinctual life, what Freud called the Eros and the death instinct (named Thanatos by his disciple Federn²). This is another way of highlighting the endless universal human interplay of lust and aggression and of trying to explain how these powerful forces play themselves out in the history of civilization.

Speaking of lust and aggression, I recalled my previous visit to Germany a couple of years ago, during which I went to see Freiburg, home of the university that was a

²*Ego Psychology and the Psychoses*, by P. Federn. Edited by E. Weiss, Basic Books, N.Y.

central teaching post for both Husserl and Heidegger. When I got off the train from Heidelberg to Freiburg I was stunned by the sight that awaited me in the *Bahnhof*. Armed police with ferocious German shepherd dogs wearing muzzles stood guard, surrounding a group of skinheads — late adolescent youths who were marching and singing at the top of their voices and were obviously drunk on good German beer. The whole scene was reminiscent of what I remembered from 50 years ago when the Germans were marching in the streets to the *Horst Wessel* march. *Horst Wessel*, you will recall, was a typical Nazi thug who died in fighting on the streets. This was like Wagner's adolescent bully Siegfried, another German hero of the Nazi party. The son of a Protestant chaplain, Wessel deserted his family and dropped out of school. He went to live in a slum with a prostitute and devoted his life to marching and fighting for the Nazis. Communist thugs killed him in 1930; a tune he made up became the official song of the Nazi party.

With this introduction to Freiburg, we visited the stately university with its imposing entrance framed by statues of Plato and Aristotle. I was able to see where Heidegger gave some of his famous lectures. Husserl lived some distance from the university in a very modest apartment, although it was always open to students, including Heidegger, one of his star students. Heidegger lived even farther away in a very imposing home and actually had a walking path named after him in Freiburg. His cruelty to his ex-teacher when he became a Nazi is well known; Husserl lost his post and was not even allowed by Heidegger, then rector of the university, to use the library. This scene along with a tremendous pouring rain all day dampened my spirits and reminded me that in all these civilized countries, the so-called enlightened countries of the world, there is a chronic undercurrent of fascism and its destructiveness that always waits to emerge like Caliban when political or economic times become difficult.

But I digress; this nothing new. On the way to Potsdam, Pearl made the interesting observation that the statues of the Virgin done by Tilman Riemenschneider (1460–1531) and many other sculptors during the German Renaissance — for example those statues in the *Mainfränkisches Museum* in Würzburg — all have sad and mournful looks; there were no smiling happy Madonnas as in the many Italian paintings and statues from that era. “For”, she said, “Germany is a gloomier place with a gloomier climate, a place where the Niebelungs dwelled”. Sarah added, “In 1523 Riemenschneider was arrested for siding with the peasants in the ‘peasants’ revolt’ that was shockingly condemned by Luther. He was tortured for eight weeks and never sculpted again; he and his work were buried and forgotten for nearly three centuries”. Recalling this cruel calamity, everyone became quiet and pensive. “Somehow”, said Lisa as she drove us along, “an assault on artists and art is an assault on civilization. But were the British bombers in World War II any better? Or the Americans attacking Hiroshima?”

I could see Richard starting to bristle and I didn't want to start a debate about who deserved what in World War II. So I said, “Lisa it is not that simple. I am taking this group to study the depths of the human psyche through studying selected sites ancient and modern. I know from Willy you studied art history in the U.S. and so you know there has been in all cultures a tension between barbarism and conformity on the one hand, and creativity on the other”. To my amazement this tall slender young

woman replied that she would like to come with us in exchange for functioning as my assistant with reservations, luggage, and the usual details. She was apparently capable, intelligent, and well educated but peculiarly aloof, without roots, and unattached. Since the trip was getting more complicated than I expected and I was uneasy about my cardiac status, I agreed. So, in spite of Richard's angry look, Lisa was to be our guide in Berlin and my executive assistant — it used to be called "girl Friday" — from then on. This decision turned out to have major consequences for all of us.

We arrived at Potsdam. Of course Henry and Edward were only interested in visiting the Cecilienhof Manor, which played a special role after the end of the Second World War as the meeting place of the victorious powers. Richard pontificated, "On February 8, 1945, there was this conference in Potsdam and efforts were made to settle post-war problems by Truman, Stalin, and at first, Churchill. ... Churchill was replaced to his amazement in the middle of the conference by Attlee. They dealt with such issues as the political and economic future of and the general treatment of defeated Germany, military occupation, de-Nazification, and an overhaul of the German educational and judicial system". His wife continued, "the German economy was also placed under Allied control and German foreign assets were taken over", and I added sadly for the group, "Königsberg, the home of the great philosopher Immanuel Kant in east Prussia and its bordering areas were placed under the administration of the Soviet Union, and the western and northern borders of Poland were redefined, leading to the creation of the Oder-Neisse line". But Sarah laughed and pointed out correctly, "Much that was regulated at that time lost its validity as the East-West conflict soon divided the victorious powers".

Cecilienhof Manor is today used as a hotel and a memorial dedicated to the Potsdam conference; it contains a tourist attraction consisting of a museum of very little interest. The last Prussian palace, it was built in 1913 through 1917 for Crown Prince Wilhelm. It was taken over by the Allied powers for their meeting. To the annoyance of Henry and Edward, I did not allow the group to linger there but proceeded directly to the Sanssouci castle of Frederick "the Great", who ruled Prussia for 46 years from 1740-1786 and was regarded as the "philosopher of Sanssouci". Due to his passion for French art and culture, he sought out the company of French men of letters and philosophers, notably Voltaire, who lived in Sanssouci for three years. Ultimately they quarreled bitterly and Voltaire left.

After a brief tour of the relatively modest castle we sat around in the garden and there I tried to initiate and moderate a discussion in spite of the tourists milling about.

"Well, Frederick knew how to live", said Gertrude. "His dinner was an extended formal affair that lasted a couple of hours in the afternoon. It was the central point of his day and well spiced with conversation both animated and lively. Frederick employed twelve cooks, but what interests us of course is the conversation at his dinner table which some people feel was forced and pretentious with its parade of what may have appeared ostentatious over-cultivation. Sarah quoted Fraser's³ recent biography: "It suited Frederick, however, and when his boon companions disappeared he missed them sadly. . . After dinner, and before his letter-signing session, Frederick walked or

rode. He had a strong streak of hypochondria” (p.235). She seemed to have a remarkable memory, producing such quotations!

Richard held up a huge poster that he was able to purchase at the bookstore of the castle. It portrayed a classical Enlightenment dinner party hosted by Frederick “the Great”. Around the table were his friends Lord Marshall, the Marquis d’Argens, Feldmarshall Keith, Graf Algarotti, and others. Most prominently placed at the dinner table were Voltaire and La Mettrie, of Enlightenment fame. La Mettrie died at 43. He was a materialist and atheist philosopher as well as a former French army surgeon. Marshall was nineteen years older than Frederick, trusted utterly by Frederick, and sent to Paris as Prussian ambassador in 1751. He was probably the man Frederick esteemed the most. His brother James Keith, three years younger, was a brilliant linguist in addition to his military ability. An accomplished man of letters, he corresponded with many members of the Enlightenment all over Europe. He died in battle at the King’s side. Algarotti’s main asset was his charm. The Marquis d’Argens was a Provençal, a free-thinking philosopher, whom Frederick made the director of philosophy at the academy in Berlin. He was a good-natured and good-hearted man whose vivacity and good manners did much for the atmosphere in Sanssouci.

“Who can tell us a little more about Frederick?”, I asked. As expected, Sarah quoted the biography again: “Frederick showed little change in skepticism about human nature, about the affairs of the world, or about religion. . . Frederick, the *philosophe*, was still eager for a fight with any intellectual willing to take him on, although, as one of his readers shrewdly observed to him, the king’s skepticism was so frequently and ostentatiously paraded that it might be thought he was a little uncertain; even a little uneasy”(p. 495).

Claire spoke up: “Martin, Frederick seems to have been a mass of contradictions, an enigma. I have read biographies of him also and he seems to have spent most of his time not talking philosophy or playing or composing music for the flute, or enjoying his art collection, but fighting wars and battles and killing people. His main interest seems to have been to drill the Prussian army into a superb fighting force”.

“It is certainly clear”, I responded, “that Frederick was not a completely integrated human being but a complex of human desires, instincts and faults”.

“Fraser seems to think that he fell below his own standards of how a sovereign should react and behave because of his complexes”, added Sarah, “for Fraser wrote, ‘The idealism of youth and ambition had often to be tempered by the sour lessons of experience and expediency’” (p. 615).

Richard admitted that autocracy and toleration were the basic qualities of Frederick “the Great” but he insisted that basically Frederick “the Great” was a totalitarian and a destructive person who did not hesitate to be vicious to his friends and everybody else when he felt like it. I pointed out that, on the other hand, he was unusually tolerant of various religions and beliefs. He was a sincere son of the Enlightenment who abominated the sort of fanatical “certainties” that often leads followers of one creed to persecute those of another, an even worse problem today

³Fraser, D. *Frederick the Great*. Penguin Books, N.Y., 2000

“He was indeed a strange mixture”, said Sarah, and for the last time she quoted Fraser (She was afraid of being accused of narcissistic showing off):

He found French vainglory absurd, and said so. But he never lost his admiration and love for French artistic, literary and intellectual achievements. He adored the French language — its rationality, its precision, its music, its conciseness. France, from such viewpoints, was his spiritual home. The proceedings of the Berlin Academy of Sciences were conducted in French (p. 621).

“But”, Gertrude interrupted, “Frederick never personally attended the Berlin Academy of Sciences and was often at war with France!

I tried to sum it up. “Frederick “the Great” illustrates to my mind the terrible paradoxes and inconsistencies of the human mind. As Fraser tells us, ‘in his tastes, his love of learning, his artistic talents and predilections, Frederick was a sensitive and distinguished polymath’ (p. 628). But he was extremely conservative; Haydn composed during his middle and later years but he showed no knowledge of it and he probably heard of Mozart but showed no interest. His energy and military accomplishments were all accomplished at the cost of violating his Enlightenment orientation, in my opinion. His heavy physical presence and rapacious wit as well as his capacity to kill and destroy existed side by side with his fine intellect, love of the arts, and aspirations towards Platonic ideals. This is what I want to show you over and over again on this trip, how each and every human *au fond* is a mass of lust and aggression with which he or she has to grapple with from birth. The consequences of this for the future of civilization are grim”.

The next day we took a tour of modern Berlin, Lisa driving us from the east Berlin area and our hotel at Alexanderplatz around the city and into the west Berlin area, now all integrated. We went through the *Prenzlauer Berg*, and crossed the site where the famous Berlin wall once stood to what is now the Turkish worker area of *Kreuzberg*. We returned across the previous wall demarcation into east Berlin and visited the old Jewish quarter that was called the “*Scheunenviertel*”, in the Mitte district. I was very disappointed in east Berlin, for a lot more renewal of buildings is needed and those which have been nicely renewed were made ugly by extensive graffiti. It was my feeling that a Fascist-anarchist underclass is involved in this graffiti and waiting its chance when the next economic calamity hits the Western world.

The city seemed large, sprawling, and crowded and I heard much less English spoken than in previous years when I visited. That evening I took the group to the Philharmonia Hall to hear Haydn’s *Stabat Mater*, part of an outstanding concert by the RIA Chorus in the chamber music hall of the Philharmonia building.

The following day we drove around Dahlem and the lovely area of the *Frei Universität* and visited the Max Planck Institute. We ended up at Humboldt University and went across the street to look at the memorial excavated into the ground on the spot where the Nazis carried out the famous burning of books in 1939. It was this book burning that Freud called progress, pointing out that, as he thought, “In the old days they would have burned me, now they just burn my books”. Little did he know what was coming! The memorial is built into the ground and consists of empty bookshelves; we all found it exceptionally moving, a silent reminder of how thin and easily broken is the veneer of civilization that Prospero has available to keep Caliban in check. That

night to the *Komische Oper Berlin* for a marvelous production of Prokofiev's *Love For Three Oranges*, a supremely civilized creation.

The next morning I took the group to the Pergamon Museum, unique in its kind and reuniting us in spirit with our trip to Turkey. This museum, opened in its present form in 1930, is arguably the most remarkable site in Berlin. It contains the Great Altar of Pergamon built about 160 B.C. on the site of the present day city of Bergama in Turkey and is dedicated to either Zeus or Athena. The theme of its great frieze — the battle of the gods and giants — was chosen to commemorate the struggle of the Pergamons against invading forces from Asia Minor. How it was preserved during World War II and the battle for Berlin is a miracle. This was the third or fourth time I visited it, and somehow it seemed out of place in a museum and colder and colder with each visit. Most of the group were awed and transfixed by its size and splendor and this gave me another chance to look them over.

Of course the one I wanted to look over the most was J., as her husband was taken up with the museum's sights, but she carefully did not respond to my interest. I think she was exhausted by this time and I sensed the tension growing between she and Henry. There was so much running around in Germany that, in contrast to the ambience of Turkey, little energy was left for expressing the personal difficulties that were emerging in our group. Claire stayed carefully out of Richard's way, but I noticed that Edward was watching him warily. I wondered if Henry was watching me warily and I felt a growing sense of disgust and despair at the whole set of primitive difficulties as well as a premonition that sooner or later, in spite of my best efforts, things were going to explode. Even Gertrude and Sarah, who seemed at this time on the surface most composed, were insecure and unsure about the stability of their relationship. There was not going to be a battle of the gods and giants but a "battle of the giants" as Freud called it, lust and aggression tangling in the dust to which we all must eventually return.

In the afternoon we went to the Berlin *Akademie der Wissenschaften* where I presented my promised lecture. The room was filled. It was flattering to have such a large audience but the moderator took up a lot of my time talking about herself. Shortly after I stood up and began speaking, someone rudely and noisily started working on a slide machine in the middle of the room for the next talk. I stopped him; perhaps my assertiveness stunned the audience. Here is my lecture, beginning with this quote from Heidegger (2001)⁴ in the *Zollikon Seminars*: "It is especially the case in psychiatry that the continuous encounter between the thinking of the natural scientist and that of the philosopher is very productive and exciting" (p. 238).

Everyone agrees that the field of psychoanalysis is undergoing a widespread dispersion and dilution these days with many schools of thought and many new opinions being offered. In order to maintain our sense of identity we need to have a clear notion of what we regard to be psychoanalysis and what it stands for. I will first discuss the

⁴References from this lecture appear at the end of the chapter. An expanded, complete version, titled "The contemporary failure of nerve and the crisis in psychoanalysis" may be found in the *Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis* 29:661-680, 2001.

decline and closing of the most famous academy of all time, that of Plato, and review historically how and why this academy disintegrated. Historians agree this disintegration represented a failure of nerve in the thinkers of the time as a consequence of their efforts to fit into the prevailing Christian cultural milieu which increasingly replaced that of classical Greece and the Roman Empire. I want to suggest that a similar failure of nerve is taking place today in the era of global capitalism and managed care in which, as Foucault (1973, Chessick, 1992) pointed out, the nature and structure of the human sciences are generated by the prevailing political power of the particular era. Because we are in the era of the popularity of brain studies there is a tendency to forget that psychoanalysis is a unique discipline combining natural science observations of the transference with hermeneutics and energetics (Ricoeur, 1970). Being unique it is not replaceable or reducible to a materialist substrate.

For Pythagoras in about 550 B.C. mathematics was the key to the order and the beauty of the universe. The intellectual satisfaction of mathematics leads us, as Plato subsequently said, to the realm of the perfect; it is, he thought, a way of truth, a way to recognize the real objects of the world, a way to approach the Form of the Good. Similarly, Aristotle believed that a life of *theoria*, pure inquiry, was the best life.

Everything from that time on was down hill. For example, the sophist Antiphon said that the whole of life is wonderfully open to complaint; it has nothing remarkable, great, or noble, but all is petty, feeble, brief-lasting and mingled with sorrows. But Plato believed that reason was for the purpose of enabling humans to live for something, to identify and set up appropriate goals and then focus one's life on achieving them. However, even Epicurus and Lucretius already recognized that few humans are not slaves to lust and aggression, and with the decline of Greek civilization began a basic controversy that exists to the present day.

The first Academy known to history and devoted to the examination of these humanistic issues was opened by Plato after the death of Socrates. Over the entrance was the admonition that one must learn mathematics before entering. This Academy lasted about 900 years in one form or another. The first Academy was like a college or a group of self-supporting intellectuals teaching an enormous range of subjects. Members of this Academy were required by Plato to have certain natural gifts for the pursuit of learning, a willingness to work very hard, and to adopt a well-ordered scheme of living. Plato hoped the love of knowledge in its purest form would be the basic motivating force of those who were admitted to his Academy.

It is very interesting to watch the subsequent development of the Academy after Plato's death. It broke up into groups of quarreling factions in which, for example, some leaders developed and rigidly followed what they took to be Plato's dogma and doctrines, while other groups adopted a more tentative questioning and somewhat more sceptical approach in the attempt to acquire knowledge. Arguments between the factions finally led to a fragmentation of the membership and the establishment of new schools, institutes, and academies.

Aristotle, Plato's most famous pupil, split off and developed a philosophy that only

remotely resembled that of his master Plato. When Plato died, his nephew Speusippus inherited the leadership of the Academy. Aristotle, resenting that he was not appointed leader, went with a few other students to Atarneus, a small city on the West coast of Asia Minor governed by a friend of his who had been a student at the Academy. On land this friend gave him, near the site of ancient Troy, he established his own "institute".

The first two centuries after Aristotle's death were marked by a spirit of competition among the proponents of rival philosophies between and within various Academies or "institutes". Others attempted to reconcile them and still others simply dogmatically promulgated the doctrines of earlier thinkers whom they idealized. The debates degenerated and took on an increasing mystical tone since there were no ways of convincingly demonstrating who was right and who was wrong, nor was the importance of clinical or empirical studies even recognized at the time as a legitimate method to settle humanistic disputes.

By this time Christianity was on the ascendance in the classical world and the aims of the Academy had shifted from the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake to attempts to reconcile classical philosophy with the increasingly influential Christian theology, to "fit in" so to speak, with the prevailing cultural ambiance. The Christian emperor Justinian found a quick way to put an end to all this obscure philosophical squabbling by simply closing down all the philosophical schools in Athens and attempting to ban all non-Christian philosophy throughout the Roman Empire.

I think it is quite fair to label this story of the progressive degeneration of the academies and institutes and schools of thought as a loss of nerve among the intellectual lights of classical antiquity. Hegel (1830) in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* pointed out that all the contributory factors that led to the eventual decline of the Greek world can be ultimately condensed into a single one: the emerging principle of corruption. Indeed, with the death of Alexander, Hegel believed, the moment when Greece was a significant power departed from the stage of world history and the role of a world-historical people now passed to the military and barbaric Roman empire, rendering the world spiritless and heartless in comparison with the Greek world that had preceded it.

The parallels to the current cultural situation are obvious. For example, one may ask which concept of *Bildung* should we follow, both of which were extant during the time of Hegel. The first conception, developed by philosophers such as Fichte, views *Bildung* as a spontaneous, natural instinct towards self development. The opposing concept, presented by Hegel, refers it to a process of development whereby the merely natural individual is transcended, raised to the level of spirit as a member of a moral community, or as a citizen of an ethical state. In today's world the first concept of *Bildung* is what we use in explicating the goals of psychoanalysis and we are inclined to think that the second concept represents a value system that should not be imposed upon the patient. It is important to point out that this decision to reject the second concept represents an underlying philosophical premise about the nature of humans. For example, Marx argued contrary to this premise. He claimed that humans are predominantly species-beings, borrowing Hegel's notion of *Bildung*, and insisted that given the proper conditions humans naturally would develop to where they would

be concerned with each other's welfare. This clashes directly with the spirit of global capitalism prevalent today, so-called rugged individualism, the spirit of "me-first".

The whole drift and fashion in psychoanalysis today, in the direction of intersubjectivity and interpersonalism and even promoting the analyst's self-disclosure, represents a development in psychoanalysis similar to the changes that occurred in Plato's Academy. We tend to forget about Freud's admonitions and hopefulness that scientific objectivity is at least relatively possible in psychoanalysis. Bergmann (2001), in discussing Freud's structural theory, explains, "Within this structural point of view, the aim of psychoanalysis became the strengthening of the ego against the other two institutions, and also helping the ego free itself from the power of some of its own defense mechanisms, acquired during childhood which can cripple the ego's freedom of movement. The aim of psychoanalysis became the achievement of a more favorable kind of intrapsychic compromise formation" (p.20). The retreat from such lofty aims to a study of the here-and-now interpersonal interactions in the analytic consulting room represents evidence of a loss of nerve among psychoanalysts. It is hard to maintain our original ideals in a world that is morally disintegrating around us, posing the same problem that was unsuccessfully faced by the members of Plato's Academy who attempted to live the life of *theoria* while classical Greek culture crumbled all around them and eventually fell to the rule of the Roman military state.

The preconceptions and internalized object relations of patients profoundly affect the entire "here-and-now" interaction between the analyst and patient. In the current rush to relational or constructivist psychoanalysis, this extremely important discovery of Freud has tended to become relegated to the background, whereas in my (Chessick 1996b, 2000, 2000a) opinion it belongs in the foreground! Freud's profound delineation of how the earliest years of life affect and determine to a great extent the patient's experiences later in life or, more precisely, determine the way the given patient experiences his or her experiences, in my judgment is powerful evidence that Freud's basic conceptions of psychoanalysis are just as valid today as they were in his time. It would be a great loss for our profession to lose sight of this fact. The kinds of patients we see today are not the kinds of patients for the most part that provided the cases upon which Freud built his theories, but the principles of the practice and theory of psychoanalysis should remain the same because they are still entirely applicable and effective when employed by well-trained professionals.

I turn now to the current fashion, that of attempting to reduce mental functioning to brain functioning, based on the assumption that since this reducibility is possible then everything we know about mental functioning can be restated in neurobiological terms. If this is true it allows us to alter the neurobiology by the use of drugs and to ignore the language of psychoanalysis entirely. The problem as we shall see is that, in the opinion of many powerful minds in the philosophy of science, it is not true.

Connecting what we know about the brain with what we think we know about the mind requires us to move beyond the confines of neuroanatomy and neurophysiology into the murky regions of philosophy of the mind. The third person perspective cannot convey the private nature of consciousness, the first person aspects of human life, what it is like to be conscious. So certain aspects of conscious experience are beyond

the limits of science.

Dennett (1991) and certain other students of the mind-brain problem manifest a casual optimism, based on the early work of Gilbert Ryle (1949), that the mind-brain problem can be cleared up empirically; the usual solution of this approach is to simply eliminate the mind. Searle (1994) on the other hand, has attempted to rediscover the mind on the basis of the fact that consciousness is ontologically subjective even though it is a physical property of the brain in spite of its subjectivity. It is irreducible, he claims, arguing in contrast to proponents of eliminative materialism like Rorty and the Churchlands (1984). For the Churchlands, mental states do not exist, they are postulates of a primitive theory of folk psychology. So all materialist theories end up denying the reality of mind by identifying it completely with something else. Or, as Chomsky (2000) suggests we do, by simply ignoring mental states as a legitimate subject for scientific study.

Searle (1997), on the other hand, advocates what he calls biological naturalism, a view in which consciousness is seen as a higher level emergent property of the brain even though it is based on the physical, just as liquid, solid, or gaseous states are properties of systems of molecules. The physical states are ontologically objective and can be studied empirically, but consciousness is ontologically subjective. Both the distinguished philosophers Nagel and Searle agree that the solution to the mind-brain problem is nowhere in sight. In fact Searle (1994) argues that it is a mistake to think that all that exists is comprehensible to our brains. Similarly, McGinn (1991), in his book *The Problem of Consciousness*, claims that we are constitutionally incapable of understanding the mind-brain problem.

Voorhees (2000) also insists that consciousness has an a priori ontological existence. He agrees with Searle that Dennett's view eliminates the very thing — first person conscious experience i.e., subjective consciousness — that was to be explained! Dennett, a distinguished proponent of eliminative materialism, dodges the issues of the overall unity of consciousness recognized even by Kant (1781), and of how various sensory aspects of a perceptual object are parsed by the brain and so combined into a unified percept. This in mind-brain philosophy is called the “binding problem”. Even more significant is the so-called “hard problem” (Chalmers 1996), which the artificial intelligence or functional and the eliminative materialist approaches, both restricted to third person empirical methods, cannot answer: how does neuronal activity lead to first person experiences such as envy, love, and so on. Thus Voorhees, like Searle, concludes that consciousness is irreducible and ontologically primitive, an a priori given.

Searle (1994) marshals powerful arguments against the “functional” point of view, the idea that the mind is some sort of a computer. This view is the natural outgrowth of so-called token-token identity theory, a more sophisticated form of eliminative materialism than Ryle's (1949) behaviorism. He also emphasizes how both the philosophical rejection of realism and the denial of ontological subjectivity leads to attacks on rationality, on truth, and on intelligence.

There has been an increasing tendency in our field to emphasize the importance of neurophysiology, neuroanatomy, genetics, and various other aspects of the organic study of the brain. This of course is a salutary development as far as the science of

psychoanalysis is concerned. Certainly well established contemporary neurobiological findings derived from standard empirical scientific experiments should and would cause we psychoanalysts to be sure that our basic premises are consistent with them. But at this point there are relatively few generally accepted and replicated experimental demonstrations of brain function that are definitively inconsistent with the basic principles of psychoanalysis. Probably the most well known of these is the discovery that the brain seeks stimuli rather than a state of total rest, the latter being an incorrect assumption Freud made from the neurobiology of his time. Just as Freud attempted to found psychoanalysis on what was thought to be sound principles of neurophysiologic functioning, we of course must do the same today.

However, it does not follow that we have the right to assume that with a complete knowledge of brain physiology and genetics we will automatically have a complete knowledge of mental processes. There are a substantial number of philosophers of science today who believe that in principle the so-called “hard” problem of the mind-brain enigma (as described above) is insoluble. This “hard” problem is essentially the same as that which baffled Freud and caused him to abandon his “Project for a Scientific Psychology” (1895). It is the question of how one makes the mysterious leap from neurophysiological functioning to the individual subjective personal conscious experiences, the “qualia” of consciousness itself. We should not lose sight of the fact that it may never be possible to base psychoanalysis completely on a knowledge of neurophysiological functioning, and so a humanistic language such as that invented by Freud when he gave up the “Project for a Scientific Psychology” will always be necessary. To put it formally, the qualia of consciousness are irreducibly ontologically subjective (Searle 1994).

We always need to have a basic orientation and a psychoanalytic language and identity of our own. It is the gradual loss of this identity that is generating a demoralization in the field of psychoanalysis, a loss which has been precipitated by the demands of insurance companies for empirical proof of the validity of the psychoanalytic process. It has become obvious that such “proofs” in the humanistic sciences can not be established with the same kind of certainty that one finds in the natural sciences and that we must be content with accumulating observational data provided by well analyzed psychoanalysts. A vicious circle is involved here, since if it becomes impossible for patients to afford psychoanalysis then we are in a situation where less and less reliable data can be gathered out of the psychoanalytic process from the treatment of many patients.

That such a gathering is fruitful is evident from studying the history of psychoanalysis beginning from the early days of Freud’s Wednesday evening society as it has evolved over the last hundred years in a direction that is clearly less idiosyncratic and much more efficacious. The emphasis on neurobiology, which has rhetorical value for obtaining third party payment, should not cause us to think of ourselves as neurologists or empirical scientists or “neuropsychologists”. It is because we are a unique discipline that we should proudly hold to a focal identity. Our sense of professional integrity demands this in spite of the fact that insurance companies exploit uninformed public opinion on this matter.

In the current rush to get on board the neurobiological express that is so much more acceptable to our current “fast-fast-fast relief” culture, we tend to lose sight of the fact that Freud’s psychoanalysis developed a language and a methodology that allowed the investigation of mental functioning without the necessity to know everything there is to know about brain functioning. We need to preserve that unique language of Freud and that unique discipline that he invented, and to preserve it with pride as a legitimate and separate method of scientific investigation. It is not simply an offshoot of neurophysiology soon to be discarded, it is not simply a relativistic interchange between a unique analyst and a unique patient in the “here-and-now”, but rather it rests on a solid foundation of accumulated information over the past hundred years and a methodology invented by Freud that has proven to be of lasting value and yielded many fruitful results and new insights into the human psyche in all areas of the human sciences.

We are facing a similar situation today that was faced by Plato’s Academy during the decline of the Greek culture. If we as psychoanalysts do not clearly articulate and maintain our basic ideals, we, as it happened to the ancient Greeks, are liable to progressively degenerate into groups of squabbling physicians accompanied by a cacophony of tediously disputatious psychologists and social workers. The entire field of psychoanalysis will become marginalized in our culture and regarded as just another mystical cult without any empirical or scientific grounding and without any basic orientation. No emperor will be required to shut these schools down; they will just die by attrition and neglect, much to the joy of the insurance company executives.

There is a clear similarity between Freud’s ideals and those of Plato. For example, Freud (1927) writes, “The voice of the intellect is a soft one, but it does not rest until it has gained a hearing. Finally, after a countless succession of rebuffs, it succeeds... No, our science is no illusion. But an illusion it would be to suppose that what science cannot give us we can get elsewhere” (p. 53, p. 56). What are we expecting to be given by “our science”? The centerpiece of Freud’s psychoanalysis is the discovery that in the first few years of our experiences of childhood, in combination with our genetic endowment, we lay down certain patterns of behavior and certain core archaic fantasies that govern the rest of our lives. These patterns and fantasies are based on combinations of experiences and our infantile interpretations of these experiences which taken together constitute a threat to the ego or to the integrity of the self. So patterns of behavior and core archaic fantasies are formed that are the result of compromise formations that allow the ego and the self to remain intact. They represent a pair of glasses through which the person experiences all object relations in life and that repeat themselves endlessly in the patterns of behavior that constitute the personality characteristics of the individual, and in the endless striving to repeatedly actualize some derivative of the archaic fantasies and desires. The gratification in this actualization makes our life a perpetual striving that Freud correctly called the program of the pleasure principle. The pursuit of the pain that is also involved he considered beyond the pleasure principle, one of the evidences for a so-called death instinct as he conceived of it in his final instinct theory.

How do we uncover and hopefully correct patterns and strivings which in our patients are so maladaptive and cause them so much suffering? That method is the

method of free association in a situation where there is relative neutrality, objectivity, and abstinence. The analyst observes the transference, which is the closest to natural science phenomena that he or she has available for study. Listening from at least five channels (Chessick 2000, 2000b), the analyst allows his or her own mind to wander in free floating attention, picking up subjective conscious associations to the patient's material. After considerable careful and patient listening on all the channels that the analyst is trained to work with, the analyst gains a sense of conviction about the material and is able to interpret it to the patient. One then observes the patient for behavior, dreams, and further associations, in an attempt to validate or invalidate analytic interpretations, which must always be thought of as hypotheses. It is very much the same as in any other scientific procedure where hypotheses are tested and accepted, rejected, or modified as the case requires. The most essential insights of psychoanalysis derive directly from the inference of the patient's unconscious mental life as it exposes itself through free association and resonates with the analyst's evenly suspended attention, just as Freud said.

It represents a failure of nerve to drift this way and that with current fads and with the continuously deteriorating ambiance of our culture. Franz Alexander said years ago that psychoanalytic psychotherapy is one of the last remnants of the humanistic ideal, focussing on the individual unique person and his or her transcendent possibilities as well as maladaptive pathology. As the famous American novelist Saul Bellow puts it (Atlas, 2000) in his discussion of the disappointing current situation for the arts and the humanistic disciplines, the intelligent public is waiting to hear from these disciplines what it cannot hear from pure science:

Out of the struggle at the center has come an immense, painful longing for a broader, more flexible, fuller, more coherent, more comprehensive account of what we human beings are, who we are, and what this life is for. . . the individual struggles with dehumanization for the possession of his soul. (p. 462)

Bellow points out, in talking about writers, and in a discussion equally applicable to psychoanalysts, that if we do not "come again into the center it will not be because the center is preempted. It is not. [We] are free to enter if [we] so wish" (p. 462).

The lecture was fairly well received as far as I could tell from my rudimentary understanding of German. That evening I took the group to the *Berlin Staatsoper* to hear a production of Mozart's *Abduction From the Seraglio*, which I thought was done very strangely, as they made a heavy German drama out of it and had the two women tormenting the Pasha and Osmin by sexually arousing them deliberately, which I had not seen in any production of that opera before. That night a group of drunken youths pounded on our door in the evening and I had to chase them away.

The next morning we walked on the Kurfürstendamm and shopped at KAY-VEE-DEE, probably the most fashionable department store in Berlin. It was mobbed with shoppers, almost a caricature of an American shopping mall, a commercial paradise. More museums in the afternoon and then to the *Konzerthaus* to hear some chamber music (Janacek, Mozart, Shostakovich) well played for a very appreciative audience.

All this running around with a group of people in tow was beginning to get me down and, although I was not drinking much coffee or having much in the way of alcohol and beer, I awoke in the middle of the night with atrial fibrillation, severe angina, and sweating. After taking a couple of nitrostats I was able to fall asleep. Some time during that sleep my damaged heart reverted to a normal cardiac rhythm. I should have paid attention to this warning but I did not.

To end our week in Berlin we took a bus tour to Dresden as I had hoped. On February 13, 1945 the city was utterly destroyed by British bombing and it still is in very bad condition. The East Germans did very little to restore the ruins. The buildings they constructed were as ugly as possible and built in the usual Soviet housing style. The highlight of the city now is the Semper Opera House, where we attended a performance of Strauss's *Arabella*. What a sad disaster World War II was for all these beautiful European cities and their heritage! Europe, like the ancient Greeks, committed suicide in two world wars.

We sat around in the café after the opera and asked ourselves "How can people do this to themselves?" Arrogance, bullying, adolescent marching songs, and middle aged members of gun clubs parading down the streets of Bayreuth, the city that is a shrine to Richard Wagner's magnificent music. The amazing commercial opulence of the Kurfürstendamm and the shabbiness of former east Berlin with the disappointing graffiti uglifying what has been restored. What does it all mean? Is this all the secretion of global capitalism?

For a special final treat I took the group to hear the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra play Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in the main concert hall of the Philharmonia, an evening to celebrate our farewell to Berlin. It was played in an uninspiring manner without the grandiosity of the performance that took place in Berlin shortly after the wall came down. The next morning Lisa in blue jeans arrived with her light traveling bag, drove us to the airport, returned the rented car, and joined our group. We boarded our plane for the return to Turkey with a sense of foreboding about the future of Europe, the future of civilization, and the future of the human species itself.

Lecture references

- Abend, S. (2001). *Expanding psychological possibilities*. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 70:3-14.
- Althaus, H. (2000). *Hegel: An Intellectual Biography*. Trans.M. Tarsh Cambridge,UK: Polity Press.
- Atlas, J. (2000). *Bellow: A Biography*. NY: Random House.
- Balter, L. (1999). *Constant mental change and unknowability in psychoanalysis*. *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* 54:93-129.
- Bellow, S. (2000). *Quotation in Atlas, J.:Bellow: A Biography*. NY Random House.
- Bergmann, M. (2001). *Life goals and psychoanalytic goals from a historical perspective*. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 70:15-34.
- Chalmers, D. (1996). *The Conscious Mind: In Search of A Fundamental Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chessick, R. (1992). *What Constitutes the Patient in Psychotherapy?*.Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson.
- Chessick, R. (1994). What brings about change in psychoanalytic treatment?. *Psychoanalytic Review*

81: 279-300

- Chessick, R. (1995). Postmodern psychoanalysis or wild analysis? *Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis* 23:47-62.
- Chessick, R. (1996a). *Dialogue Concerning Contemporary Psychodynamic Therapy*. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson.
- Chessick, R. (1996b). *The application of postmodern thought to the clinical practice of psychoanalytic psychotherapy*. *Journal of American Academy of Psychoanalysis* 24:385-407
- Chessick, R. (2000). *Psychoanalysis at the millennium*. *American Journal of Psychotherapy* 54: 277-290.
- Chessick, R. (2000a). *Psychoanalysis at the end of the third millennium*. *Journal of American Academy of Psychoanalysis* 28:587-608.
- Chessick, R. (2000b). *Psychoanalytic Clinical Practice*. London: Free Association Books.
- Chisholm, R. (1957). *Perceiving: A Philosophical Study*. Ithica: Cornell University Press.
- Chomsky, N. (1972). *Language and Mind*. NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Chomsky, N. (2000). *New Horizons in the Study of Language and Mind*. NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Churchland, P. (1984). *Matter and Consciousness: A Contemporary Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Dennett, D. (1991). *Consciousness Explained*. Boston: Little Brown.
- Foucault, M. (1973). *The Order of Things*. NY: Vintage.
- Fodor, J. (1975). *The Language of Thought*. NY: Crowell.
- Fotion, N. (2000). *John Searle*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Freud, S. (1895). *Project for a Scientific Psychology*. Standard Edition vol. 1, pp. 283-346. London: Hogarth Press.
- Freud, S. (1927). *The Future Of An Illusion*. Standard Edition vol. 21, pp. 3-58. London: Hogarth Press, 1961.
- Gottlieb, A. (2000). *The Dream of Reason: A History of Philosophy From the Greeks to the Renaissance*. NY: Norton.
- Hegel, W. (1830) *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*. Trans. H. Nisbet. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1975).
- Kant, E. (1781). *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N. Smith. NY: St. Martin's Press, 1965.
- Kim, J. (1982). *Psychophysiological supervenience*. *Philosophical Studies* 41:51-70.
- Lasch, C. (1978). *The Culture of Narcissism*. NY: Norton.
- McGinn, C. (1991). *The Problem of Consciousness*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Nagel, T. (1995). *Other Minds: Critical Essays 1969-1994*. NY: Oxford University Press.
- Ricoeur, P. (1970). *Freud and Philosophy*. Trans. D. Savage. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Ryle, G. (1949). *The Concept of Mind*. NY: Barnes and Noble.
- Searle, J. (1994). *The Rediscovery of the Mind*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Searle, J. (1997). *The Mystery of Consciousness*. NY: New York Review of Books.
- Searle, J. (1998). *Mind Language and Society: Philosophy in the Real World*. NY: Basic Books.
- Symons, J. (2002). *On Dennett*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning Inc.
- Symons, J. (1995). *The Construction of Social Reality*. NY: Free Press.
- Turing, A. (1950). Computing machinery and intelligence. *Mind* 59:433-460.
- Voorhees, B. (2000). *Dennett and the deep blue sea*. *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 7:53-69
2000.

Author's address:

9400 Drake Ave., Evanston, IL. 60203-1106

USA

e-mail: r-chessick@northwestern.edu

fax: (847)329-0528