

Words from My Heart – Presidential Address, May 2003

Ronald Turco, M.D.

Marcel Proust was convinced that one could not escape from the prison of one's subjectivity except by seeing the world through the eyes of the artist who has the capacity to express a perception of the world in music, words, or paint. Literature, like all art, should break the ice of the habitual and the rational which instantly congeals over reality and keeps us from ever seeing it. Art, religion (spirituality), physics, and psychoanalysis are the four disciplines that bring us closer to the reality of our interconnectedness.

In discussing the fundamental issues which we, as humans, are confronted we can begin by examining the physical universe. One group of fundamental subatomic particles is known as hadrons. Hadrons are made up of quarks and/or antiquarks. There are at least six known varieties of quarks, which are combined into protons, neutrons and mesons. Examples of particles which are not hadrons are leptons (electrons, neutrinos, muons, etc.), photons, and W and Z particles. I am talking about the formation of particles travelling at the speed of light. In 1943, Werner Heisenberg (perhaps the most brilliant theoretical physicist of all time) proposed the

S-matrix” theory to describe particle interactions and probabilities. This important new concept involved the shift of emphasis from objects to events. The basic concern is not with particles but with their *interactions*, a position required by both quantum theory and relativity theory. A subatomic particle can only be understood as a manifestation of the interaction between various processes. It is an occurrence, or event, not an isolated object.

As Heisenberg noted the world is divided not into objects but connections. The world is a complicated tissue of events which combine and determine the texture of the whole. Relativity theory has forced us to consider particles in terms of space-time patterns and processes. The S-matrix approach combines these viewpoints. Hadrons exist as reaction *probabilities*.

Between May 1941 and 1942, Heisenberg produced a book-length manuscript (published fifty years later), *Ordnung der Wirklichkeit* (*The Order of Reality*). He attempted to give his scientific work the significance of a larger, transcendent scheme. He argued that the task of the scientist was to comprehend a reality in the context of a hierarchy – a general order. In my opinion this became a philosophical perspective of transcendence, with denial utilizing the perspective of

his favorite author Goethe. Science and all that he treasured in life were layers within a grander, transcendent hierarchy that made everything worthwhile.

Heisenberg considered the war then raging as the expression of fundamental movements in the foundations of human thought.” He established for himself the helplessness of the individual before the forces of national and international struggle and closed his essay with the recommendation that one could do little more than to accept one’s fate within the broader circumstances of one’s life.

Thus, he is conveniently relieved of responsibility for what is going on outside of himself. He wrote: We should conscientiously fulfill the duties and tasks that life presents to us without asking much about why or the wherefore. We should transfer to the next generation that which still seems beautiful to us ... and then wait for what happens.... Reality is transformed by itself without our influence.” In the meantime he played a leading role in integrating research for the German war effort, served as cultural representative to occupied and oppressed territories, and acceded to the demands of Nazi functionaries, assuring himself that his actions made no difference on the grand scale of reality. He had convinced himself of what he wanted to believe: that he could live and work as a subject of this system and not be a part of it. The use of numerous defense mechanisms helped –

isolation, denial and rationalization to name a few. Actively, he refused to participate in the anti-Nazi activities of the Wednesday Society even though he was a member of it. He and his mother asked for assistance from Heinrich Himmler, Chief of the Gestapo. Heisenberg's telling comment as Germany was losing the conflict: "How fine it would have been if we had won this war." Even then the Nazi leaders were hoping to use the secret of nuclear fission as a bargaining chip in negotiating a conditional surrender with the Allies.

Morris "Mo" Berg, former baseball player for the Washington Senators and the Boston Red Sox, had graduated from Princeton University magna cum laude with a degree in modern languages. He spoke eight to twelve languages. "Mo" gave up a successful baseball career as well as a professional career to join the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). In December 1944, he was given a weapon and orders to shoot Heisenberg if "Mo" learned from him that the Germans were close to succeeding with a nuclear detonation. This action proved not to be necessary, but "Mo" learned the whereabouts of many of the leading German scientists, allowing the Allies to round them up before hostilities ended.

My purpose in discussing Heisenberg is less one of antagonism and more in the spirit of understanding lest we make the same mistakes. Substitute the word psychoanalysis for physics, and we come closer to the abyss.

Nature cannot be reduced to fundamental entities, such as elementary particles or fundamental fields but rather must be understood through its self consistency. In the context of the S-matrix theory this idea is known as the "bootstrap" hypothesis or the "hadron bootstrap" hypothesis. Its main advocate is Geoffrey Chew, and this hypothesis constitutes the final rejection of the mechanistic world view in modern

physics. The world cannot be understood as an assemblage of entities but as a *dynamic web of interrelated events*. The overall consistency of the mutual interrelations determines the structure of the web. This view of nature is now in harmony with Eastern thought. The bootstrap hypothesis denies the existence of fundamental constituents of matter and accepts no fundamental entities whatsoever –no fundamental laws, equations or principles. The "laws" physicists describe are creations of the human mind, representatives of our conceptual scheme of reality rather than reality itself. This conceptual scheme is limited and approximate. All natural phenomena are ultimately interconnected. To explain one we need to explain all of them and this is impossible. We come to understand an

approximation of nature and the mutual self-consistency of the Eastern world view, the world of Taoists, Hindus and Buddhists, Jewish mystics, and Native Americans.

In the Eastern view, as in modern physics, everything in the universe is connected to everything else and no part of it is fundamental. The properties of one part are determined by the properties of other parts. Einstein took this a step further. He referred to his friend Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian poet and Nobel Prize winner, as Rabbi Tagore. Their philosophical colloquy began about 1918 and continued through the thirties. Einstein grasped Tagore's and Gandhi's view of universal truth not as an abstraction but as a *reality spiritually related to human personality*. Einstein later invented the term "objective reality" for his deep belief in the extra-human nature of truth. (Neither Tagore nor modern physicists could accept this view). Einstein noted: "Concepts and propositions get meaning" viz. content," only through their connection with sense-experiences." This connection is purely intuitive and the degree of certainty with which intuitive connections can be undertaken differentiates empty fantasy from scientific truth." Einstein struggled with this conceptualization of reality." He could not accept the fundamental role of probability." ("God does not throw dice.")

Cosmologists tell us that the scientific perception of the universe is changing all the time. Utilizing contributions such as the Kaluza-Klein theories and differential geometry, they now postulate a five- to eleven-dimensional universe. According to these theories we in the universe are encompassed in a membrane. Added to this complication, they hypothesize that the world is made up of strings, not particles, the M-theory. Strings of nonvanishing size have different amounts of vibrational energy. In the ultimate unification scheme these strings exist in multiple dimensions as P-Branes to which time is added. Thus, space-time appears "atomized" in this world of non-commutative geometry. The speed of light in this scheme is NOT constant but varies and is color dependent. In 1994 David Deutsch closed the loop by postulating time-travel in closed time like curves, allowing the possibility of bumping into our former selves in a parallel universe. The significance of all of this is that we do not know where we come from, how we got there, where we are going, and we do not even know where we are!

In 1928 Einstein twice declined to co-sign the nomination of Freud for a Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine. He referred to Freud as "the old one," a man with "an exaggerated faith in his own ideas." (He held this view throughout his life.) Perhaps psychoanalysis was not "exact enough." After all it did not produce a nuclear bomb

or the concept of mutual assured destruction, or the body count.” Also, Einstein did not deal with the contradictions between his theory and his philosophical beliefs.

Another contemporary physicist, Robert Waelder, was deeply influenced by Freud’s ideas and, as you know, introduced many important advances in psychoanalysis, including the principle of multiple function. His early book, *Psychoanalytic Avenues to Art*, paved the way for a generation of later study in creativity.

One of the main aims of Eastern mysticism is to free the mind from words and explanations. We thus have a conceptualization of Eastern mystics and contemporary physicists that shares the bookstrap hypothesis with emphasis on *mutual interrelation and self-consistency of all phenomena* and on the denial of fundamental constituents of matter. The universe is an interconnected whole in which no part is any more fundamental than the other. The properties of any one part are determined by the others. Every part “contains” all the others.

This hypothesis also contains the conjecture that the existence of consciousness is also necessary for the self-consistency of the whole. Francis Crick, co-discoverer of the double helix of DNA, is currently exploring this area of neurobiology. We are faced with the unprecedented possibility of including human consciousness in

future theories of matter. Fred Allan Wolf, in his book, *The Spiritual Universe – How Quantum Physics Proves the Existence of the Soul*, discusses the principle of superposition from quantum physics to consciousness. Sharon Sageman, an Academy member, discusses co-creating and the “non-dual” self and applies these concepts in constructing a therapeutic technique using spiritually oriented group therapy as a means of healing women with severe mental illness. In her paper, “Breaking Through The Despair,” she discusses how patients integrate and share philosophical insights and a communal mystical awareness, associating this with neurobiological changes. This is “front line” psychoanalysis. Rabbi David Cooper, in his book *God Is A Verb*, discusses the Jewish mystical paradigm shift to an entirely new level of awareness. Jewish mysticism is built upon the idea that every aspect of creation interrelates with every other, and every thought, word or action reverberates throughout the entire creation. Cooper introduces us to the term *kavanah* or “intention.” This is a continuous awareness of the implications of everything we do.

In the foregoing discussion my focus has been on the concepts of character and its interrelationship to science and the interdependence of all of life. Please consider my additional comments in this light.

Who am I?

In 1887, after the battle of Clear Water at Bear Paw, Chief Joseph of the Nez Pierce surrendered his army. Lt. C.E.S. Wood wrote Joseph's words in his journal: Tell General Howard I know his heart. What he told me before, I have it in my heart. I am tired of fighting. My heart is sad. From where the sun now stands Joseph will fight no more forever." Lt. Wood went on to become Commandant at West Point and to later found a law firm that exists to the present day and deals with laws pertaining to inland waterways, a unique situation that developed in the Northwest to encourage westward migration. He sent his young son to live with Chief Joseph, and his family distinguished themselves for generations by their contributions to life in the Northwest.

The focus of psychoanalysis on early developmental experiences as they foster a sense of morality, character, sacrifice and duty is perhaps one of Freud's greatest achievements. This focus echoes what all great writers and philosophers have known. Shakespeare wrote in Richard II, Act 2, scene 1, Mine honor is my life; both grow in one. Take honor from me, and my life is done." In Henry VIII (act 5, scene 5)

he wrote, "Those about her from her shall read the perfect ways of honor." In 500 BC Heraclitus wrote, "A man's fate is his character."

Central Oregon, east of the Cascades is cowboy country. Huge vistas of desert plain with rolling tumbleweed backed by snow capped mountains. The pungent odor of sage permeates this high desert country, adding to a deep sense of spirituality. It is a place where man meets God. My life did not begin there.

My mother was an orphan who never learned to read or write in any language. My father's background was similar. Once he tried to show me how to write the numeral 8." Sitting on his lap I watched him put one small circle on top of another. This was perhaps the only cognitive learning he provided, but I thought it a revelation! My parents provided me with something far more important in the overall scheme of life, something far more important in the spiritual dimension than mere book learning could ever approximate. Their compassion for others was infinite.

One of my childhood memories is carrying food to the trolleys that passed before our Philadelphia home. They were packed with soldiers going off to the last battles

of World War II, and my mother packed lunches for as many as she could. They were all her children, and she gave what she could. Those sandwiches were packed with love and respect.

We lived in a row house with a back alley. I didn't know it then but the Black family across the alley in the back was poorer than us. In the late afternoon my mother would set out large pots of freshly cooked food in the yard by the always unlocked wooden door. As if by magic they would appear in the morning, empty and meticulously washed. The "colored lady" (as we called them in those days) fed her children with what my mother could give. As children we never thought about these acts. It was just something Mom did. She never told me to be kind to my neighbors. She never preached civil rights. Years later, after returning from a trip in the deep South she told me how upset she was because a "Colored" man was not allowed to pass her on the street. He had to put his head down and cross to the other side. She didn't tell me what I should think or what I should do, only what she thought was injustice. Although this was before the days of the Civil Rights Movement I learned something about decency and respect. My mother never heard the word "diversity," but she taught me to respect and learn about human differences, to be

compassionate with my friends and to *unconditionally* accept the individual identity of others. After all, everyone was someone's child.

One day my brother found twenty dollars blowing in the wind in the street. He was ecstatic as twenty dollars would go a long way in those days. When he proudly told my father, Pop made him knock on every door in the neighborhood to find out who lost the money. It was dark when my brother returned after the successful completion of his assignment. My father didn't have to tell me to be honest. I loved him and incorporated his values. When he died the "Coloreds" in the neighborhood wanted to attend his wake. It was 1950, and they had to ask my brothers and sisters for permission to do so. Kneeling at the casket in our home they prayed like everyone else. Even in death my father taught me.

In her book, *Lazy B*, Sandra Day O'Connor discusses the values she learned from her parents while growing up on a 160,000 acre ranch on the Arizona-New Mexico border. Although miles apart culturally I could relate and identify with her biography and the integrity by which her parents lived. Incidentally, she was inducted into the National Cowgirl Hall of Fame in June 2002. Connie Reeves, 100 yrs old, is the oldest living member. Their motto is, "A real cowgirl saddles her own horse."

Of course our family was not perfect, and growing up was fraught with the usual adversities of life. However, the fundamental values were reinforced by example on almost a daily basis. The example of kindness and compassion my family members taught by example has extended to the present day. This is my fortunate background.

Life's Harsh Realities

Plato tells us that only the dead have seen the end of war. We learn from the Bible that there will always be wars and rumors of war. These are remarkable insights into the unconscious. We must not lose sight of the spiritual message of war so pungently delivered on September 11, 2001.

In the Spring of 1864, largely as a result of misinformation spread by white settlers, war was on between the Cheyenne Indians and the Colorado volunteers. Colorado's governor arranged a meeting, and Black Kettle and White Antelope headed the Cheyenne peace party. As a result the Cheyenne established a village thirty miles from Fort Lyon. Reverend J.M. Chivington, colonel of the Colorado volunteers,

arranged a sneak attack on the village and killed about two hundred Cheyenne women and children, about seventy men, and about forty Arapaho people in the massacre of Sand Creek. Black Kettle's wife was shot nine times. Black Kettle escaped. Anna Freud has taught us about the important process of dehumanization. After all the Colorado volunteers were just killing savages. White Antelope stood in front of his lodge singing his death song: Nothing lives long, except the earth and the mountains." Black Kettle made increasing efforts for peace following the Sand Creek massacre, but in the winter of 1868 his village on the Washita River in Oklahoma was suddenly attacked and 38 men, women, and children were killed along with 103 warriors and Black Kettle himself. This was Custer's first stand."

When gold was discovered in the Black Hills in 1874, life became even more problematic for the Indians. The Sioux organized their allies into a strong army under the general command of Crazy Horse, an Oglala warrior, and Sitting Buffalo known as Sitting Bull, war chief of the Teton Dakotas. The Indians established a large camp at Little Big Horn. The camp was attacked on a Sunday afternoon by the elite Seventh Cavalry, and every soldier in that unit was killed in this battle that lasted less than half an hour. This was Custer's last stand." Crazy Horse led the

attack shouting, "Today is a good day to fight. Today is a good day to die." This statement reflects a desire to sacrifice for a cause greater than one's own welfare. Native Americans were unable, however, to keep a standing army in the field for any length of time, a problem that contributed to their defeat.

In 1887 the U.S. Congress passed the Dawes Act, which created untold hardship for American Indians. A few years after the surrender of Chief Joseph in the Bear Paw Mountains, Seventh Cavalry troops rounded up a band of Sioux, two-thirds of whom were women and children. Along Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, Seventh Cavalry troops massacred them using four Hotchkiss guns. Even a few women who managed to escape a few miles away were hunted down and killed. A few others froze to death in the hills. At least two hundred Sioux were killed, and the frozen dead were thrown in a communal pit.

These events in our own history are echoed in a repetition of similar barbarity in contemporary political events. I previously discussed the psychoanalytic determinants of these activities in papers dealing with human destructiveness and archaic sadism (*Academy Forum*, Vol. 45, No. 2, 2001), the psychoanalysis of war and sacrifice as instruments of foreign policy (*Academy Forum*, Vol. 42, No. 1, 1998), the

psychoanalysis of hate and sacrifice, and a number of related papers and presentations over the past ten years. I've previously discussed the importance of burial grounds and memorials. A generation unable to mourn its losses passes its unfinished business on to its progeny who then exhibit shame for elders who were victimized. It's also important to note that the historian Keegan writes of the sterility of war and notes that all societies which have achieved escape from the constrictions of heroism and warlike activities have done so by separating the warrior from the rest of society and according equal or superior prestige to functions more creative than war – those of the judge, scholar, diplomat, politician and merchant.

This brings us back to the issue of humanity. Although Einstein's stepdaughter Margot tried to interest him in reading Freud's writings, he soon lost interest. Nevertheless he did maintain a correspondence with Freud, and these letters have been published in a booklet, "Warum Krieg?" (Why War?). Included in the Standard Edition of Freud's work, it is well worth reviewing. Perhaps Freud's perspective dismayed Einstein when he said that efforts to abolish aggression have no prospect of success because of the underlying aggressive impulse to destroy and kill. Freud eventually apologized to Einstein: If my observations have disappointed

you....” Freud’s overall perspective was that the role of culture is to strengthen the intellect and keep primitive urges in check thus allowing aggressive inclinations to be internalized. Einstein was practical. Although Einstein recognized that Ghandi’s idealism was feasible to practice in India against the British, he realized it could not be used in Germany against the Nazis. He did not recognize Freud’s deeper perspective of the problem of aggression. Einstein wrote that “The work of (such) statesmen is lasting who by example and educational action awaken and establish the moral forces of their people,” and he believed that the allegiance of men could be won “through the living example of a morally exalted way of life.” He does not ponder how this is to be achieved only noting that, “For human community life cannot long endure on a basis of crude force, brutality, terror and hate.” His perspective was that the hatred of Jews stemmed from “those who have reason...to fear the influence of men of intellectual independence,” all the while recognizing that the common bond among Jews was spiritual rather than narrowly religious.

In the meantime Freud was producing work addressing the fundamental issues of human destructiveness, including “The Taboo of Virginity” (1917), “Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego” (1921), “Beyond the Pleasure Principle” (1920), “Moses

and Monotheism” (1939), and “Civilization and Its Discontents” (1930) to name a few.

More recently the work of such writers and theorists as Franc Fornari, Vamik Volkan, John Broughton, Robert Rieber, and Robert Kelly (1991) have advanced our understanding of the psychoanalytic perspective of Freud and have held out some promise of continued enlightenment of those in a position to make decisions.

James Glass, in his book *Delusion – Internal Dimensions of Political Life* brings this deeper understanding closer to a political reality.

The politics of hatred encompasses the crimes of “ethnic cleansing” and terrorism.

The group belief system underlying these crimes include the grandiose sense of fusion with God and the certainty that participants are carrying out the will of God.

What this amounts to is a regression to the more primitive ego mechanisms – splitting, projection, denial and distortion in association with extreme narcissistic needs.

In summary we have a perspective of the need to recognize the deeper elements of aggression, the overwhelming importance of early developmental influences and the possibility of an ever expanding human consciousness as the world grows smaller. All humans are born with a primal biological archaic aggressive-destructive

drive, and civilization is charged with helping the individual or group sublimate or neutralize this drive. As we cannot rely on man-made laws to foster change, we vigilantly strive to examine in an incisive way the deeper motivations of our psyche, collectively and individually. No group of people has a monopoly on cruelty and the so-called "suitable targets of externalization," to use Dr. Volkan's phrase. The constant vigilance I refer to is not that of the enemy outside but that of the darker side within – our own Shadow and our need to approach ever so directly what I call the pinnacle of human refinement. Both Einstein and Freud, as different as they may have been, have given us an opportunity to view this struggle in the light of philosophical humanism. Both men were deeply spiritual in their own way and both had a perspective of the soul of man. Both taught, as did my mother, by example, addressing not just the intellect but the heart and soul. The author Anna Quindlen once said that people don't talk about the soul anymore. It's so much easier to write a resume than craft a spirit." She also mentioned that if we win the rat race we are still rats.

Thomas Jefferson said there were four sins: Cruelty, Hypocrisy, Indifference, and Ignorance. Thomas Merton tells us that sin is the refusal to accept unconditionally the love of another. Jefferson said that he had sworn eternal hostility to every

form of tyranny over the mind of man. Speaking of tyranny, we must look inside ourselves as well as outside.

To paraphrase Ellie Wiesel, All that is necessary for tyranny to take hold is for good people to do nothing. I appeal to your heart and your soul to consider Faulkner's optimism that man shall prevail and to be activists in your own way. To follow not just your bliss but your heart the same way my mother followed her heart. In General MacArthur's farewell speech to the students at West Point, he spoke of duty, honor, and country and asked for a "higher form" of honor and sacrifice from the soldiers, the only group of people trained and ready to give their lives for their country. Martin Luther King, Jr., in one of his speeches on Viet Nam, spoke of a higher sacrifice in recognizing the inequities of our lives and the need for social justice. Both men, from different disciplines, are asking for something above the ordinary, something beyond one's self interest and complacency.

In closing I would like to quote Martin Luther King, "Somehow we must be able to stand up before our most bitter opponents and say, We shall match your capacity to inflict suffering by our capacity to endure suffering. We will meet your physical

force with soul force. Do to us what you will and we will still love you.” Thank you.