

***The Future of Psychoanalysis* by Richard D. Chessick, State University of New York Press, New York, 2007, pp. 265.**

Richard D. Chessick's new book is so multi-varied and comprehensive that a review will not do it justice. The present writing will hopefully serve to introduce the interested reader in its contents.

Chessick's perspective and purpose in writing "The Future of Psychoanalysis" is a focus for psychoanalysts to return to Freud – "...the Freud of the entire *Standard Edition*, the record of a lifetime of Freud's evolving thought that formed the centerpiece of the training and thinking of psychoanalysts of my generation." In doing so, the author utilizes a variety of philosophical conceptions and related psychoanalytic concepts. First and foremost, but by no means exclusive, are the ideas of Hegel and his conviction of an inevitable unfolding of consciousness and individual self awareness akin to Freud's contribution of neutrality in allowing the subject matter to unfold with its own inevitable momentum. Hegel's approach, as with Freud's, allows ordinary consciousness to direct itself through several stages resulting in the ultimate resolution of contradiction and vindicating itself as a clinical science. In this regard, the author draws in material from multiple sources. Chessick is in a unique position to discuss the various philosophical perspectives cogent to psychoanalytic work and, for example, notes that the philosopher Paul Ricoeur pointed out that psychoanalysis combines both hermeneutics and empirical study. To Ricoeur's ideas the author emphasizes the crucial phenomena of the transference describing this as the link with Freudian conceptions of natural science. He writes: "The methodological incorporation of hermeneutics and energetics was Freud's crucial epistemological discovery . . . a new form of investigation." He also points out that the transference far from being shaped in the present is a revival of unconscious infantile conflicts and traumatic experiences associated with precognitive memories, "which have been worked over during infancy into archaic core fantasies." These intrapsychic and self and object representations are the material of the transference.

The author reviews his conceptualization of the five channel approach to psychoanalytic listening (which he has expanded upon in other writings) and its importance as a polyvalence concept, allowing seemingly incompatible theories to employ the same basic concepts such as the unconscious, repression, psychodynamics, defenses et cetera. He expands upon his idea of the importance of a "scientific ideology" as a form of intellectual adventure for scientific advances. He regards psychoanalysis as scientific and discusses the reasons for this and the "good-enough" objectivity necessary in a properly conducted psychoanalysis. Object

representations will appear in the analytic process and reappear with a different analyst, assuming that the psychoanalysts are competent. He also notes that although some phenomena generated in the analytic process may not be traditionally scientifically replicated this does not demonstrate that psychoanalysis is not a science, but rather the evolution of our empirical work

I can appreciate Chessick's freedom and openness with his opinions when he discusses the contemporary "failure of nerve" associated with intersubjectivism and the interrelationist approach to psychoanalysis. This is material one does not find in other books on psychoanalysis. The author is also free with his ideas of contemporary moral decay and how the current cultural milieu influences psychoanalysts and the importance of their understanding the impact of their own individual values on patients.

The effect of countertransference, the failure of nerve in contemporary society and understanding the mind in the contemporary world are important aspects in the author's integration of philosophical and psychoanalytic concepts directed toward a very practical goal – the treatment of human beings in distress.

With regard to phenomenology, Chessick writes that the greatest value for psychoanalysis is that it provides a focus on the role of subjectivity and consciousness in all knowledge and in descriptions of the world. The author courageously sums up his thinking and approach best when he writes: "One must educate oneself in the language of phenomenology and ontology as it is presented by these major contemporary thinkers if one is to rise above the narrow mechanistic and materialistic conception of humans that dominates American psychiatry today and has led to the usurpation of the profession by the international drug companies and managed care organizations. Psychoanalysis must lead the way in the task of liberation from reductive materialism."

This book is a gift. I have found it immensely interesting, broad in perspective (the author presents multiple divergent points of view on any subject he discusses), and very useful in clinical practice. I highly recommend it to anyone working in psychoanalysis.

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