

Woody Allen's movie *Sleeper* was made in 1973. Though it is set in the year 2173, the science fiction elements in the movie are used as the set-ups for gags. For instance, a farmer raises giant plants including giant bananas. Woody Allen's character, Miles Monroe, peels a giant banana, and in the fight scene that follows, Monroe and his antagonist slip repeatedly on the giant banana peel.

One of Monroe's jokes invokes an often unspoken of subject. The joke goes something like this, "Of course I have issues. I was seeing a psychologist once a week. Dr. Rosenthal was a strict Freudian and if I had continued seeing him regularly, I would almost be cured by now." The joke is that since Monroe was cryogenically frozen for 200 years, it would have taken that many years of weekly visits to almost cure him.

The failure of the science of psychology is rarely discussed. One reason is that it is an ongoing medical speciality that promotes a positive view of the science's accomplishments while acknowledging some setbacks. Allen Bloom claims that psychology is one of the forces that is debasing our civilization. Once the

products of rationality, especially those that fall into the category known as the humanities, are explained psychologically, they are reduced to being euphemisms for the basic (baser?) drives.

How do these notions show up in our everyday life? It is generally acknowledged that weather forecasters and their associates go to great lengths to detail all the present dangers and the potential dangers of any weather event. This proclivity is often looked on with disdain. Yet, what is unremarked is that automobile drivers do not seem able to drive with caution when the situation warrants it. A psychological explanation of driving turns it into a euphemism for a hunter chasing his prey or the psychology of the mob. The strategy of civilizing the drivers is abandoned and instead the strategy becomes filling the driver with so much fear he won't drive when the weather is inclement.

Jorge Luis Borges's story *The Encounter* is about a knife fight between two gauchos, which ends with the death of one of the gauchos. The story is written in a realistic style. Yet, in the last two paragraphs of the story Borges writes that it was something in the

knives themselves that lead to the fight. He writes, "They [the knives] had sought each other for a long time, down the long roads of the province, and at last they had found each other; by that time their gauchos were dust."

It is jarring for a realistically written story to completely abandon the psychological explanation of human behavior, especially when Borges writes that the men were merely instruments of the knives. Even in the fantasy genre characters usually struggle against being the instrument of some magical power.

Borges explanation of the knife fight as the result of a feud between two knives doesn't make any sense. Or, is it that once we accept the psychological explanation of human behavior it becomes to unsettling to admit that other explanations are just as sensible.