

Understanding and Defending the Reasons of our Faith in a World Gone Mad

A case study:

Atheistic Impact on Psychology and the Modern Quest for Happiness

1. Revisiting the sources of competing worldviews:

- a. Passive learning
- b. Active learning
- c. The powerful influences of “teachers”.

2. The evolution of modern psychology:

- a. Naturalism and materialism to psychoanalysis and psychology to expressive individualism and the triumph of the therapeutic.
- b. A history:
 - i. 1883: G. Stanley Hall opens first psychology lab in the U.S. at Johns Hopkins University.
 - ii. 1886: Sigmund Freud begins offering therapy to patients in Vienna, Austria.
 - iii. 1888: James McKeen Cattell first professor of psychology at the University of Pennsylvania. Author of "Mental Tests and Measurements," the advent of psychological assessment.
 - iv. 1892: G. Stanley Hall forms the American Psychological Association (APA).
 - v. 1900: Sigmund Freud publishes his landmark book, "Interpretation of Dreams."
 - vi. 1906: Ivan Pavlov publishes his findings on classical conditioning.
 - vii. 1913: Carl Jung develops his theory of analytical psychology.
 - viii. 1915: Freud publishes work on repression.
 - ix. 1942: Carl Rogers develops the practice of client-centered therapy.
 - x. 1952: The first Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders is published.
 - xi. 1954: Abraham Maslow publishes "Motivation and Personality," describing his theory of a hierarchy of needs. He is one of the founders of humanistic psychology.
 - xii. 2003: Genetic researchers finish mapping human genes, with the aim of isolating the individual chromosomes responsible for physiological and neurological conditions.
 - xiii. 2010: Simon LeVay publishes "Gay, Straight, and the Reason Why," which argues that sexual orientation emerges from prenatal differentiation in the brain.
 - xiv. 2013: The DSM-5 is released. Among other changes, the APA removes "gender identity disorder" from the list of mental illnesses and replaces it with "gender dysphoria" to describe a person's discomfort with their assigned gender.

3. Shaping ideas of modern psychological thought:

- a. Nature vs. Nurture
- b. An outside-in world to an inside-out world (an agrarian world to a technologized world).
Do we live in a world of order, structure, purpose, and meaning that is transcendent and to which we must conform? Or do we determine our own purpose and meaning and strive to conform the world's structure to us?
- c. Authenticity and the return to the natural state.
 - i. Religion enslaves people by imposing external standards.
 - ii. The family corrupts people by conforming children to codes and traditions.
- d. Expressive Individualism and Bagger Vance
The quest to find our own way of realizing our personal humanity and to give expression to our authentic selves without restriction or suppression from outside "authorities".
- e. Therapy and the quest for happiness:
"At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life. Beliefs about these matters could not define the attributes of personhood were they formed under compulsion of the State."
O'Connor, Kennedy, Souter, "Planned Parenthood vs. Casey"

"The difference between killing disabled and normal infants lies not in any supposed right to life that the latter has and the former lacks, but in other considerations about killing. Most obviously there is the difference that often exists in the attitudes of the parents. The birth of a child is usually a happy event for the parents... So one important reason why it is normally a terrible thing to kill an infant is the effect the killing will have on its parents. It is different when the infant is born with a serious disability. Birth abnormalities vary, of course. Some are trivial and have little effect on the child or its parents, but others turn the normally joyful event of birth into a threat to the happiness of the parents and any other children they may have." Peter Singer