

# *WTSU. Class Notes*

## *Lesson 7 10/22/13*

I. Summary of Class 6: Even atheist's worldview must address Man's relationship to God.

A. Even atheists have to explain man's relationship to God because they have to explain this universal, timeless phenomenon that men have believed in God and how is that so if there is no God.

B. In the context of the article from the LA Times, we saw that the evolutionist believes that God is a product of man's evolution in consciousness and thinking.

II. A natural question is whether there is a worldview, or view of the world, grounded in evolutionary thinking? YES!

III. Examples of evolution as a worldview:

A. Social Darwinism. One of the first expressions of evolutionary thinking beyond the natural sciences of matter was called "Social Darwinism."

1. Social Darwinism - a belief, popular in the late 1800's and early 1900's in America grounded in the belief that the strongest or fittest should survive and flourish in society, while the weak and unfit should be allowed to die.

2. Theory was chiefly expounded by Herbert Spencer. His ethical philosophies had always been elitist, BUT his views were boosted by the application of Darwinian ideas of adaptation and natural selection.

a) The concept of adaptation allowed him to claim that the rich and powerful were better adapted to the social and economic climate of the time.

b) Concept of natural selection allowed him to argue that it was natural, normal, and proper for the strong to thrive at the expense of the weak. After all, he claimed, that is exactly what goes on in nature every day.

3. Indeed, some extreme Social Darwinists argued that it was morally incorrect to assist those weaker than oneself.

Not helping weaker promoted the survival and possible reproduction of those who were unfit for building a stronger society.

4. Social Darwinism was used to justify numerous exploits. IDEAS HAVE CONSEQUENCES!

a) Colonialism. Colonialism was viewed as natural and inevitable; some saw natives as being weaker and more unfit to survive, and therefore felt justified in seizing land and resources.

b) Eugenics-Racism. Social Darwinism was used to justify eugenics programs aimed at eliminating "undesirable" genes from the population; sterilization laws were one result directed against "unfit" individuals.

(1) For example, full title of Darwin's book is On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life. Darwin's theory was used by Hitler to justify his murder of weak and sickly members of the human race. This included the handicapped, the mentally disturbed, and anyone that did not fit his prescription of the Aryan Superman.

(2) Eugenics movement was relatively popular in America between about 1910-1930; 24 states passed sterilization laws and Congress passed a law restricting immigration from certain areas deemed to be unfit.

(3) Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes statement in Buck v. Bell upholding sterilization law: "two generations of imbecile are enough." Query: How does worldview behind these ideas compare today to the test to determine downs syndrome and the promotion of abortion?

c) Capitalism. Social Darwinism was a justification for the exploitative forms of capitalism. Social Darwinism also justified big business' refusal to acknowledge labor unions and similar organizations

d) Charity. Social Darwinism used by some to justify the rich not donating money to the poor or less fortunate, since they were less fit anyway.

(1) For example, some major capitalists, like Andrew Carnegie, combined philanthropy with Social Darwinism; he used his wealth to set up hundreds of libraries and other public institutions, including a university, for the benefit of those who would choose to avail themselves of such resources. He opposed direct and indiscriminate handouts to the poor; this favored the undeserving and the deserving person equally.

5. Social Darwinism is philosophically flawed (though its concepts still linger in different form - aborting down syndrome babies)

a) It makes the faulty assumption that what is natural is equivalent to what is morally correct. In other words, it wrongly believe that if something takes place in nature, it must be a moral.

b) This is what is called the "naturalistic fallacy", which consists of trying to derive an "ought" statement from an "is" statement.

c) The "born gay" argument and the search for the "gay gene" is an attempt to draw an "ought" from an "is." That is, "I was born with this attraction therefore it IS okay for me to act on it."

## B. Sexuality and Marriage

1. Marriage. *Is Marriage Necessary* by Lawrence Casler - Critically views the institution of marriage, considers alternatives and suggests that couples develop relationships that will bring them the most personal happiness. Says man must evolve away from the Christian concept of marriage because "marriage and family life have been largely responsible, I suggest, for today's prevailing neurotic climate, with its pervasive insecurity, and it is precisely this climate that makes so difficult the acceptance of a healthier way of life." [1] - See more at: <http://americanvision.org/6284/do-evolutionists-have-an->

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