

WTSU. Class Notes

Lesson 9 11/12/13

- I. Despite what some folks may say, worldviews can be tested. We are going to look at four-way test of a worldview.
 - a. Is it reasonable?
 - i. Does our worldview violate the primary laws of logic namely the:
 1. General reliability of sense perception
 2. The law of non-contradiction, and
 - ii. What do we mean by those:
 1. If we can't generally trust our senses to perceive things, if I really believe that what I see is an illusion, then reason becomes impossible. I can't have any facts or sensations to which reason, my mind, can be applied.
 2. By the law of non-contradiction we mean that something can't be and not be at the same time and in the same relationship. All that means is that I can't be here in the studio at 9:30 a.m. and not be here in the studio at 9:30 a.m.
 - iii. Why a test of reasonableness?
 1. Because reasonableness is necessary. If our worldview is too unreasonable, it is irrational and if we're irrational enough we wind up in the mental hospital having lost our minds.
 2. And because no worldview answers every question conclusively.
 - a. Even Christianity
 - i. "Without faith it is impossible to please God because we must believe he exists.
 - b. It is impossible to prove conclusively that God exists, even as it is impossible to prove he doesn't exist. But the question is which belief -

which premise, naturalism or theism -
is most reasonable.

b. Test of the outer world

- i. What is the evidence that supports that worldview
- ii. Evidence for a worldview doesn't mean it is true, but if a worldview is true, there should be some evidence for it.
- iii. It would be unreasonable to hold to a worldview that is contradicted by the evidence.
- iv. CAUTION: Our worldview can determine what counts as evidence.

c. Test of the inner world.

- i. Does it explain the issues of life?
 1. Is there meaning or purpose to life
 2. Is there a basis for ethics
 3. What am I to think of pain, suffering, death.

d. Test of the real world

- i. How does my worldview look in application? Can I live with my worldview? Does it work in the real world?
- ii.

II. Naturalism

a. Test of Reasonableness.

- i. Very appealing because of its perceived association with science, which we said two weeks ago has become the basis for knowledge and truth.
 1. **Science has its limits.** It can tell you what something is and it can tell you how something works, but it **can't tell you what you should do.** It is philosophy and religion, shaped by your worldview that tells you what you should or should not do.
- ii. Because of it's perceived association with science it has **an aura of objectivity and being values neutral.**
- iii. But in terms of reasonableness, naturalism "cannot offer proper foundations for its conclusions."
 1. Richard Dawkins, in his book River out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life, "The

universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless, indifference."

2. However, if this is the case, then minds that we use to develop theories are also accidental and purposeless as well. So where does real knowledge come from?
3. How could our cognitive faculties be reliable and, interestingly enough, how can we be sure our cognitive functions are providing real knowledge about naturalism itself.
4. How did order and reason arise from disorder, randomness, and non-reason?
5. **Reason itself is a matter of faith. It is an act of faith to assert that our thoughts have any relation to reality at all."**

III.G.K. Chesterton, Orthodoxy

1.

b. Test of the Outer World

- i. There is some evidence that supports evolution grounded in naturalism, though there are some very difficult things that are a problem with evolution.
- ii. Fossils
 1. Gaps in the fossil record
 2. Fossils with other fossils where they should not be
- iii. Biology
 1. Molecular Biology has shown that evolution by small gradual changes is impossible - Irreducible complexity
 2. Where does information come from? No explanation
 3. Evolutionist criticism of Theist - "Because you cannot imagine something evolved, you conclude you must not have evolved." But evolutionist do the same thing, because they

cannot imagine a creator then things must have evolved.

4. Intelligent Design? - Sagan and others who looked for radio type frequencies said it would be a sign of other life forms is the concept of seeing something that would seem to be designed is sign of other intelligent life. Yet they deny the premise of intelligent design that there can be evidence for design and intelligence behind the design.

c. Test of the Inner World/Real World?

- i. Human beings possess powers of reasoning and where does reasoning come from if life is random.
- ii. Why do we have art as it would seem to provide nothing necessary to our survival.
- iii. Why do we have this sense of ethics, right and wrong? Even in denying the existence of right and wrong we are using some standard otherwise how would we know that nothing was right or wrong.
- iv. There is no meaning to life.
- v. Free will
- vi. Audio Clips of William Provine:
 1. Meaning? "Life can have lots of proximate meaning." Problem: Unless he has some concept of what would give life meaning, which would imply there is meaning, how could he determine that life is meaningless?
 2. Free Will? "There is no free will" and the thought there is justifies us "treating people like crap." Problem: The child rapist cannot be held guilty for his crime because there was nothing volitional (free will) about his act of rape.
 3. "No afterlife; No explanation for suffering." Problem: Life is meaningless. No hope. Jack Nicolson: "What if this is as

good at it gets" from the movie, "As Good As It Gets."

4. "Ethics can be robust with no ultimate foundation for ethics." Problem: upon what basis does he determine that an ethic is "robust?"