

21st Century American Philosophy

EXPOSED



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A Treatise on

THE THREE FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES
OF MODERN AMERICAN EDUCATION
AND WHY THEY LEAD TO DESPAIR

If life can be described as an ocean we must cross without sinking (into despair), then we must find a vessel that is worthy enough to withstand the storms we will experience along the way. As crossing an ocean without a well-equipped, sturdy boat would be foolish, so crossing through life without a well-constructed B.O.A.T. would be foolish. That is, a well thought out and verifiable set of Beliefs, Opinions, Attitudes and Theology. Our very nature requires us to have an explanation of life, so we adopt beliefs by which we attempt to craft such an explanation. Our adopted beliefs then become our philosophy of life or the frame of reference by which we try to make sense of that which we encounter or expect to encounter throughout life. Everyone develops a B.O.A.T., but most do so without determining whether the “materials” utilized will actually withstand the tests of life. The greater the variance is between our philosophies of life and reality, the greater our inner tension.

Our beliefs are the propositions we decide are true, which does not cause such beliefs to become true. Ironically, the belief that there is truth is a concept that we decide is true or false. Our philosophies or frames of reference are influenced by a myriad of sources: parents, family, teachers, acquaintances, television, films, books, etc. Many beliefs are adopted without proof of their veracity. Interestingly, Noah Webster’s 1825 *American English Dictionary* includes, “a belief without evidence,” under its definitions of “superstition.”

In America, a significant portion of most frames of reference is a result of the educational system. Education, in turn, is significantly impacted by the philosophies of those who design the system. Did the designers seek verification of

their beliefs or did they just select whatever they felt would justify their lifestyles or desires?

Modern American education rests firmly on the three foundational beliefs of John Dewey, who is known as the father of American education. The foundation of the vast majority of Americans' philosophy of life comes from Dewey's own beliefs. Are they accurate? Each person who has adopted these beliefs as his own has, unwittingly or otherwise, staked his life on them. If they are false, then those who have adopted them will suffer the consequences of believing that which is false and their lives will eventually become a morass of inconsistencies from which they will seek to hide.

What are these three foundational beliefs that permeate America's educational system? Before examining them be prepared to ask yourself, "During my educational experience what evidence or proof has been offered to verify these beliefs?" Why would you accept a belief that could not withstand verification? If an individual adopts the "belief" that beliefs need not be verified, he or she could never actually be certain of anything. He or she could only hope the belief is true. What an insecure position in which to find yourself. A life of one superstition built upon another.

In order to properly examine any topic you must be intellectually honest. You must be willing to seek the truth about the topic examined and be willing to accept the truth when discovered. Without intellectual honesty one is seeking to deceive himself as well as others. Ask yourself, "If I find the verifiable truth in any area and do not like it, will I still accept it and conform to it?" If the answer is "no", you are not

intellectually honest and your inquiries will be only to justify your adopted position and continue to deceive yourself.

Now, if you choose (and it is a choice) to be intellectually honest, we will examine America's core beliefs upon which our culture is currently based. If the core, or foundational, beliefs are false, then society will ultimately crumble around them. John Dewey's influence on public education laid the groundwork for these three prevalent foundational beliefs:

1. There are no absolutes (An absolute would be a proposition or fact that does not change, regardless of time or circumstance);
2. The theory of evolution is true (Therefore, man is just a complex mix of chemicals); and
3. Man is basically good ("Good", however, cannot be defined in absolute terms).

The Absence of Absolutes

What are the consequences of believing that there are no absolutes? First, there would be no valid method to verify anything. This would be convenient for those who adopt beliefs without evidence. Words would become meaningless symbols because an absolute definition could not be given or accepted for any word. Communication would be an illusion. How could one actually know what another is saying without absolute definitions? Even the word "god" would become a meaningless word that would convey to the listener whatever concept the listener would choose. How the listener feels

about what is said becomes more important than what is actually said. As long as what is being said “feels right” the listener will accept it as true without further examination. There would be no need to truly understand another if there are no absolute meanings. The terms "lying" and "cheating" would be meaningless without absolutes. "Anything to get ahead" would become the standard for behavior.

When one believes there are no absolutes, thinking is a waste of time. Remember when the letter “a” is used as a prefix, it transforms the word to which it is affixed to the opposite meaning (but only if there are absolute rules). “Muse” is defined as thinking, so “amuse” would be non-thinking. Without absolutes amusement trumps musing. There would be no point in reasoning. Therefore, fun and excitement would become a standard for decision-making. Of course, the standard of “fun and excitement” is totally subjective and non-verifiable by anyone other than the one experiencing those sensations. Even that individual will not always find the same things “fun and exciting.” The only way for one who accepts the belief that there are no absolutes to avoid the futility of life is to lose oneself in his or her feelings. Life can become a fantasyland. Virtual reality becomes as good as reality itself in the non-thinker's mind. One reason American’s culture has become one of necessary amusement is the lack of thinking on the part of its citizens. Thinking without a proper frame of reference will lead to despair, so thinking is avoided. Americans accept frivolity as reality to avoid despair.

What would happen to marriage in a land of non-absolutes? The institution would become a temporary, convenient arrangement rather than a commitment for life. There would be no standards for sexuality. Love would be a

meaningless subjective term fluctuating with one's feelings. Would love even exist?

How would value be determined? Would everything be of the same value or no value at all? Without standards, value is totally subjective. In the marketplace advertisers would attempt to manipulate the consumer's feelings. As consumers act on their feelings the economy eventually breaks down as they end up "buying" more than they can afford. With no absolutes what activities would be worthwhile? What would be the purpose of working; to supply the funds to pursue pleasure? Diligence would subside, a "just get by" mentality would prevail and productivity would suffer.

The justice system would also be a victim, for without absolutes there would be no right or wrong behavior. No one could be guilty of doing wrong. Behavior would be measured by what is socially acceptable or unacceptable. Who will determine this elusive standard? The majority? Politicians? Academicians? Since there would be no absolutes, there could be no reliable standard to apply to their decisions. There could be no wrong behavior, so the struggle to change what constitutes "socially acceptable" would be ongoing until all ideas are acceptable except the concept of right and wrong behavior. Attorneys would have a field day as they manipulate the system with "clever" arguments instead of standing for the truth. Judges would become a law unto themselves, ignoring precedents and applying their own feelings to the matters before them.

If absolutes do not exist, life would have no meaning or purpose and non-thinking self-indulgence would be the norm. Because each citizen would be applying his or her own

shifting standards to his or her decisions, confusion and insecurity would dominate society. Most younger Americans cannot find any depth of meaning in life while looking through the prism of their education. Life without a well-defined purpose is seen as an exercise in futility. The inescapable consequence of believing there are no absolutes is despair; the conclusion that life is nothing but emptiness. A proper conclusion if the premise is correct. Ever read Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*? The saga was one of total despair. How did Hemingway end his life? Suicide. What did George Sanders, Academy Award-winning British actor write just before he committed suicide? He was bored. Two individuals who seemed to have had "it made" gave into the despair to which their philosophy led them.

The essence of man is his ability to make rational decisions. The word "essence" is defined as that which constitutes the particular nature of a being and which distinguishes it from all others (Webster's *American English Dictionary*, 1825). A decision involves choosing between or among alternatives. Removing any basis by which he may make a correct decision destroys a man, for the individual's essence is extinguished. Eliminate the concept of absolutes and it is impossible for one to know if he has made a correct decision. One may try to believe otherwise, but must avoid thinking to maintain such a belief. As more and more citizens adopt this philosophy, society begins to collapse until anarchy reigns. What can parents really teach their children, if there are no absolutes? Why should children pay any attention to what their parents teach anyway? Increased crime is the result of the destruction of man's ability to make correct decisions. Non-absolute thinking is recognizable by the terms used in society to attempt to decide on a course of action. Does one

look for the right course of action or does he submit to the consensus course of action? Terms such as “fairness”, “consensus” and “socially acceptable” reveal the lack of absolute thinking in the individuals who use them.

Are there absolutes? In today’s American society, as opposed to 50 years ago, one cannot just state that there are absolutes without proving absolutes exist or he will immediately lose credibility with his audience. The proof is simple for the intellectually honest. Proof begins and ends with the statement, “There are no absolutes.” Because the statement is an absolute it cannot be valid in a system that claims there are no absolutes. Nor, obviously, will it be valid in a system of absolutes. Therefore, the statement, “There are no absolutes,” is invalid in both systems and absolutely fails. If the major premise fails, all that is constructed upon it fails. Similarly the statement, “There is no right or wrong,” cannot be right.

One who is intellectually honest will clearly understand there are absolutes. Since his actions will demonstrate his honesty, he will then diligently seek to discover all of the absolutes possible. A system of verification of information and knowledge will be formulated. Gathering enough evidence to verify each proposition will become the norm. Each previously accepted, but unverified belief will be examined and the false ones discarded. A solidly based philosophy of life will emerge and certainty will provide a deep security. One does not need to make a “leap of faith” to believe absolutes, but because truth is consistent with itself, just a step of faith. The more proof the shorter the step and the more secure the belief. If one refuses to seek verifiable

absolutes it reveals his choice of intellectual dishonesty. Where will such a choice lead? To despair and misery.

The Theories of Evolution

It was not until the late 1800's that the first theory of evolution was presented in any serious way. Charles Darwin, while ignoring contrary evidence, introduced a theory of origins consistent with his atheism. This theory is the second belief that was promoted by John Dewey and is instilled in the American educational system. It is interesting to note that one who takes the position that there are no absolutes can contend that the theory of evolution is an absolute. Such a position is an obvious inconsistency, but not to the intellectually dishonest.

There are at least three theories - or models - of evolution:

- Darwin's theory of slowly and uniformly evolving life forms over great periods of time. (Time + Chance + Natural Processes = Change).
- Stephen Gould's theory of Punctuated Equilibrium or Catastrophic Evolution. Long periods of stasis (normalcy, or no significant change) punctuated by key changes in lineages over short periods of geologic history.
- Neo-Darwinism. The current paradigm accepted by most evolutionists that combines traditional Darwinian evolution (i.e. natural selection) but adds mutation theory and population genetics.

The conclusions of these models are basically the same. Man is just an accidental mixture of chemicals. And as such our perceived decision-making is just a complex series of biochemical reactions based on whatever environmental stimuli we encounter. Although we appear to be making what we describe as decisions, in reality the “decisions” would just be the result of random chemical interactions. If origin was impersonal matter no matter how much time passed, random acts occurred or mysterious unobservable natural processes took place, humans would just be a concentration of impersonal chemicals plus complexity.

If evolutionists do not have empirical (experimental) evidence supporting real, vertical evolution, and they do not, they must make a “leap of faith” to believe any of the theories. On the other hand, if one does not have exclusive evidence supporting his or her belief in God, he or she must also take a “leap of faith.” Noah Webster would have considered both to be superstitious and insecure in their beliefs.

Why is determining the accuracy or fallacy of evolution important? If evolution is to be believed then the believer would conclude that man must be all he is ever going to be during his lifetime. Furthermore, man would have never been better than he is currently. This eliminates the Judeo/Christian claim that man was created perfectly and through rebellion (deciding to “do his own thing” instead of obeying God) became “fallen” or abnormal. If there was no “fall” then the Judeo/Christian hope of a Redeemer is ludicrous.

Is it not strange that many individuals who identify themselves as “Christians” claim to have reconciled a belief in

evolution with a belief in God or with other Christian beliefs? Without the need for a redeemer (no fallen man) how could there be anything more irrational than believing Jesus Christ rose from the dead to “save” anyone from anything? If the Bible’s claim that God created heaven and earth, which is repeated throughout the Bible, is untrue, then what portions could be believed? The Bible would then be made to appear to be without absolutes.

If one believes in evolution and somehow believes there is a god, that god would be far less than omnipotent if he needed evolution and so unintelligent that he has not gotten it right yet. If a god used evolution to bring about man’s existence through the survival of the fittest, could he be a god of love? All the suffering in the world would be his fault, not man’s bad decision-making, and he would, if he could, be required to “save” everybody as a matter of justice, not love. Beliefs in the Bible and in evolution are actually mutually exclusive. If evolution is true there is no need to be concerned about a Creator or what He has communicated to His creation. We would be just chemicals, there would be no absolutes and there would be no God to hold us accountable for our decisions.

If evolution is true, there is no fallen man, redemption is unnecessary and impossible for there is nothing to redeem. Chemicals cannot repent. The story of Jesus and the Cross would be just that, a story to help us cope with our futility. It would be a cruel fantasy at that, because it gives false hope. Man would have no real hope of escaping his futile, self-gratifying life. If there were no fallen man, there would be no fallen thinking or fallen decision-making. Chemicals have no hope of being anything other than chemicals.

Would chemicals, no matter how complex, ever ask the question "Why?" Would they ever attempt to determine their purpose? Would they ever have hope? Could they experience love? They would not even have personalities.

If someone told you he had found an accidental cell phone that just happened to come about because through "nature" a number of needed materials had happened to accumulate in the same place, what would be your response? When considering objects outside of nature (cell phones, automobiles, microwaves, buildings, airplanes, watches, and so on) have we ever thought they had an "accidental" origin? Ridiculous – right? But when we encounter living organisms, most of which are infinitely more complex than the manufactured items of man, should we be irrational and believe they just "occurred" without a Maker? A belief in evolution requires us to suspend our logic and accept it on blind faith. We are required to abandon our essence to believe in evolution.

There is no solid, empirical evidence that supports any theory of evolution. It is philosophy, not science. If one cares to examine evolutions "supportive" dating systems, he or she will find them wildly inconsistent. Carbon 14, which dissipates in a matter of tens of thousands of years, has been found in specimens claimed to be millions of years old. This falsifies such dating systems. Unprovable assumptions also underlie the dating systems, e.g., the amount of decay material present when formation occurred, or that decay has occurred uniformly.

If man has evolved or transitioned from lower life forms (Darwin's descent with modification), then where are

the transitional fossils? There should be thousands of transitional fossils found among the millions of fossils that have been unearthed. But, such fossils have not been found. Evolutionists have not been able to account for these glaring "gaps" in the fossil record. There have been impressive drawings of how the transitional beings would have appeared using a few bones or teeth and an abundance of evolutionary artistic license (Walt Disney would have been proud).

If an individual has truly examined the theories of evolution, it takes a great, but absolutely blind faith to believe in any of the theories. One must believe that the precision, from an observational stand point, with which the earth was placed within its solar system, its galaxy and even the universe was completely by chance. Are you aware that the moon's size and location are precisely what is necessary for man to be able to observe the sun during a full eclipse? How did that "just happen?"

Consider the second law of thermodynamics, the compelling geological evidence from the Mount St. Helen's volcanic eruption, the physiology of the bombardier beetle and the electric eel, or the metamorphosis of a butterfly. All tend to falsify the theories of evolution.

Have you considered the earth's magnetic field? It has a measurable half-life of 1,400 years. (Please see www.icr.org/article/earths-magnetic-field-young) In 1,400 years from now it will be half as powerful as it is today. And 1,400 years ago its force would have been twice what it is today. If, as many evolutionists have assumed, the earth's processes have been uniform over its history, then 11,000 years ago the earth's magnetic field would have been over 250

times stronger than today. What life forms could have existed?

The earth's atmosphere is made up of gas molecules. It stays in place blanketing the earth as a result of a perfect balance of gravitational force and kinetic energy. Kinetic energy causes the gas molecules to be in constant motion. Hence, gravity cannot exert its complete force upon the energized molecules. Yet the molecules do not have enough kinetic energy as a whole to escape the gravitational pull the earth does exert upon them. If the gravitational force were greater, at some point it would overcome the kinetic energy leading to the collapse of the life-sustaining atmosphere. On the other hand, higher kinetic energy would cause the atmospheric molecules to escape the earth's gravitational pull. Either way – the end of life on earth. Why do we choose to disregard our God given ability to reason in order to accept the extremely illogical conclusion that such perfect balance was somehow achieved by chance? Something other than reason and evidence must be motivating such a drastic departure from reason.

The intricacy of the human body defies the belief it could have been formed by chance, time and natural processes. Studying the immune, circulatory and nervous systems reveals an amazingly complex design. Not the "stuff" of chance. Could you imagine pouring unrefined oil into your gas tank and expecting your car to refine it and send the lubrication to the parts needing it and the fuel to the engine while separating out the unneeded material? How simple when compared to the human digestive system that is designed with specific enzymes (biological catalysts) that immediately break food down for energy. Without these

enzymes it would take many decades to digest your meal. Most of us do not have that long.

Humans have personalities, can reason (though many choose not to), can love and are aware of their impending deaths - none of which could originate from impersonal matter.

No, the theories of evolution do not stand up to the evidence against them. Why are they taught as true? Could someone truly argue that institutions of higher learning are teaching faith-based theories out of ignorance? Or is it because the theories, if believed, excuse our actions? The theories, although disguised as explanations of life, are actually a refuge for the selfish. If I want "to do my own thing", I will need a covering to allow me to do it. Evolution appears to excuse my rebellion against my Creator and allows me to believe I will not be held accountable for my wrong decisions. But the price of such a belief is tremendous – the suspension of my ability to reason and the acceptance of purposelessness and futility for a short lifetime of partial self-gratification. And then?

Keep in mind that a belief in evolution precludes the belief that man was created in a better state than he is now and that some destructive intervening cause (rebellion) changed mankind into the destructive force it is today. The belief also eliminates the hope that man, as he is now, is abnormal and not the way he was created to be. Lastly, a belief in evolution eliminates the hope that the Creator, if He loves His creation, has the means and inclination to allow men to return to the state in which they were first created. This would discourage man from seeking his Creator.

The “Goodness” of Man

Dewey’s third belief is exactly what we would want to believe. This is the belief that man is basically good. Although without absolutes the term "good" remains an undefined subjective standard. No major change in life could be expected, much less required - no repentance necessary. "Good" could be a relativistic sliding scale determined by social decisions without reference to moral absolutes.

The vast majority of historical evidence, when measured against an absolute scale, indicates that man is basically selfish. With no moral compass or absolutes, selfishness would be as "good" as benevolence; yet something (not a chemical reaction) within most human beings recognizes that benevolence, or caring for others is better than selfishness. In an absolute system, since selfishness and true benevolence are opposites and therefore mutually exclusive, if one is correct then the other must be wrong.

Selfish individuals live to gratify their own involuntary feelings and desires. They are actually governed by their feelings. Noah Webster's 1825 *American English Dictionary* defined "selfishness" as:

“The exclusive regard of a person to his own interest or happiness; or that supreme self love or self preference, which leads a person in his actions to direct his purposes to the advancement of his own interests, power or happiness, without regarding the interest of others. Selfishness, in its worst or unqualified sense, is the very essence of human depravity, and stands in direct opposition to benevolence,

which is the essence of the divine character. As God is love, so man in his natural state, is selfishness.”

Apparently, Noah Webster knew more about man's nature than most "modern" psychologists, who assume away the truth and then attempt to explain man's nature.

Man's natural state of selfishness inclines him to believe John Dewey's propositions. A selfish person does not want to be accountable for his or her decisions, so he or she willingly adopts a belief system that justifies his or her selfishness and eliminates standards. If there are no absolutes and I am just an accidental mass of molecules then no other mass of molecules would have the right to hold me accountable. A convenient belief, but deadly.

No individual can ever gratify all his or her desires. Such a realization brings misery to the selfish person. Desires conflict, they change, they waiver in intensity leading to frustration. Once desires are gratified, since there is no real satisfaction, the desire comes back later demanding to be gratified again. One seeks to escape his or her miserable existence through a myriad of methods. Intellectual suicide is common - the refusal to think before acting on emotions or desires. Addictions caused by attempts to escape through drugs, alcohol and bad relationships add to the misery. The most recent statistics indicate that America's suicide rate has increased as despair permeates society.

The current foundational beliefs of our culture render true hope dead, yet we, as somehow more than chemicals, cling to the possibility of hope. We attempt to justify any belief that seems to make life worthwhile regardless of how

irrational such a belief may be. Without any real evidence we will look to causes, politicians, entertainers (could include politicians), marriage, significant others, "alternate lifestyles", food, sex, religion, drugs, sports, prestige, even "partying" to give the hope of a fulfilling or "exciting" life we somehow know we should have. This is the irrational "leap of faith" our society has adopted to cope with despair. All such attempts ultimately fail as despair continues to break through when we have time to think or reflect on our lives. Unless our hope is based on evidence and true reason it will continue to give way to despair.

If there are no absolutes, if we are just chemicals and if we are the best we are ever going to be, what is the point of living? Is self-gratification really the answer? It only leads to more misery and destruction. Why adopt a belief system that renders love and joy meaningless and unattainable? Each of us needs to learn to think for himself. Do not adopt a system of beliefs simply because you want to. Examine your beliefs - what evidence do you have to support your basic beliefs? You are responsible to seek verifiable truth. Your life depends upon it.

We at the Embassy House at Oceanside can answer your questions. We can assist you in building a solid verifiable B.O.A.T. that will withstand life's greatest challenges, while providing you joy, true hope and real purpose in life.

Visit us at EmbassyHouse.org

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