

Is Psychology Based on a Fallacy?

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Abstract

The discrepancy between expected human behavior and that actually observed leads to the possibility that data gathered in experimental settings may be totally misleading as to how people actually conduct themselves in real life. The life style may be properly labeled "Beyond reason".

1. Introduction

The state motto of Florida should be "The state where no one does his job", and there is unfortunately abundant evidence that this assertion is justified. It is a state in which the police break the law. The prosecutors go after the victim not the villain. Lawyers look after themselves rather than their clients. Settlements usually include a non-disclosure clause designed to protect the guilty. The media make up stories rather than present the facts. Cape Kennedy-based NASA has two major malfunctions/disasters to its credit. Only the physicians appear to abide by their commitment to provide the best care possible to their patients, although dentists have prevailed upon the state legislature to require procedures like x-rays which are not necessarily needed by the patient, but they certainly build up the bill.

2. Discussion

Unfortunately, there is a parallel in the scientific community in which the Washington-based American Psychological Association publishes misinformation and fails even to ask the source of the error to provide a citation or documentation for claim made in print [1].

Perhaps all the expectations we have of the way people are supposed to behave are based on studies conducted in laboratories in which subjects behave rationally rather than humanly. We need a science of human behavior which reflects what people actually do rather than what they should do if they obey the rules. Certainly no one would predict the behavior described in the examples cited here from studies published in the psychological literature. Such studies would lead one to expect the police would abide by the law while enforcing it and welcome public scrutiny of their actions. Lawyers would be ethical and the Florida Bar Ethics committee would answer the phone and mail in an open,

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responsible manner, but the job of the Florida Bar Ethics Committee is to protect unethical lawyers from legitimate complaints of unethical conduct. The media might forgo fiction in favor of facts, politically correct or otherwise. After all, if we do not know what is broken, we cannot fix it, but one of the rules of society is that no one is allowed to say what is actually going on, so whatever is broken remains unfixed.

3. Conclusion

“Should” appears to be the missing principle in all the example provided, with people routinely doing not what they should but what they should not. Perhaps we need a science of “Should”. We now need a spirit which not only expresses but transcends the techno culture which produced us. We need an enlightened spirituality which retains the means for us to reach beyond ourselves.

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