

THOMISTIC COUNSELING
COURSE 1: THOMISTIC PERSPECTIVES – THE NATURE OF MAN
CLASS 7: CONCEPT REVIEW, MENTAL HEALTH, AND CASE APPLICATION

Class Outline

I. Review of the operation of the faculties

A. Appetitive Faculties

- Appetites and passions

B. Sensitive Faculties

- 1 Exterior senses - sight, hearing, taste, touch, smell,
- 2 Interior senses / passive intellect
 - a. Common sense power - grasps what is seen, heard & smelt as one thing and places that into the imagination
 - b. Imagination - retains impressions made on external senses long after stimulation has ceased. Control of the imagination is central to mental health.
 - c. Memory - associates objects of sense perception with past time
 - d. Cogitative power - collates sense impression & achieves judgments that are concrete & individual. It has three acts.
 - i Composition & Division
 - ii Assesses harmfulness, goodness or usefulness of something.
 - iii Prepares the phantasm for abstraction by the Agent intellect to the

C. Intellective Faculties

- a. Agent intellect - abstracts that information and abstracts that image and presents it to the possible intellect
- b. Possible intellect the possible intellect is the power to know and understand truth. It is the ability to act rationally. It has three acts:
 - i Apprehension or understanding - the capacity to penetrate & to grasp the essence of the thing.
 - ii Judgment - produces a proposition. It composes (unites) or divides two things.
 - iii Ratiocination or reason - one goes from judgment to judgment.; the act of reasoning or drawing conclusions from other judgments.

The object of the possible intellect is truth. Truth is defined as the adequation of a thing and the intellect. Truth conforms with natural law

D. The will

- It is the rational appetite which follows upon intellectual cognition, i.e. the good as apprehended by the intellect. It is the immaterial faculty of intellective desire.

II. Mental illness and mental health defined

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- A. Per se – through itself; springs from its essential nature
 - 1. Mental illness per se: a defect or defects in the possible intellect which makes it incapable of rational judgment or reasoning properly; one acts contrary to rational principles. That is, mental illness renders the faculty incapable of acting according to its proper nature.
 - 2. Mental health per se: that quality of the possible intellect itself by which it acts according to its own nature; the faculty performs its act well. It has the capacity to act according to its nature (to exercise its 3 acts- apprehension, judgement, and reasoning)

- B. Per accidens - results from some action without being intended; belongs to a substance more or less fortuitously.
 - 1. Mental illness per accidens: the possible intellect cannot exercise its proper function due to extrinsic cause.
 - 2. Mental health per accidens - The bodily dispositions or virtues and habits in the appetite and interior senses, which make possible the exercise of the acts of the possible intellect according to its nature.
 - o The possible intellect is dependent upon these faculties either directly, as in the case of the imagination and will or indirectly, as in the case of common sense, memory and the cogitative power. There must be virtues and good habits in all of these faculties and the appetites must be governed by virtue

III. Exterior and interior causes of mental illness

- A. Exterior causes - all things that effect the senses
 - 1. Nature
 - 2. Technology
 - 3. Health
 - 4. Human relationships – parents, teachers, clergy, professionals, significant others, peers

- B. Interior Causes of Mental Illness
 - 1. Physiological
 - 2. Interior senses – common sense power, imagination, memory, cogitative power
The cogitative power is a primary focus of mental health issues. If the acts are controlled and directed by right reason and the will, health will follow and grow. If it serves the passion of the appetites, the passion’s vehemence will grow and eventually pull the judgment and reasoning of the possible intellect and the command of the will into the service of the appetite.

IV. Case application:

As we consider the operation of the faculties, we can identify in what area it is not functioning appropriately. That is, we can determine interior causes of mental illness.

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- A. Consider appetites and passions
- B. Consider exterior and interior senses
- C. Consider imagination
- D. Consider memory
- E. Consider the cogitative power
- F. Consider the possible intellect
- G. Consider the will

See attachment – Chart: Faculties, Acts, Causes, Remedies

Notes

Review of Classes 1 – 6, *Thomistic Perspectives-the Nature of Man*

Chart: Mental Health and Illness-Faculties, Acts, Causes, Remedies; Dr. Patrick DiVietri, “Philosophy/Theology Applied to Psychology”, Course, 2015

References

Patrick DiVietri, PhD. "Philosophy/Theology Applied to Psychology." *Course*. Manasses, 2015.

Ripperger, Fr. Chad. *Introduction to the Science of Mental Health*. Sensus Traditionis Press, 2013.

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Faculty	Acts	Causes Mental Health/Illness	Remedies
Possible Intellect	<p>Apprehension Judgment Reason</p> <p>Object is the truth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Error in judgment • Error deforms the intellect whose object is truth. • mental illness is the lack of judgment of the truth, thus an error in judgment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtue strengthens the intellect through the goodness that it defines • Virtue or strength in the intellect can be learned or transferred by judgment or association, particularly by applying prudence. • Reasoning can restore proper order of the lower faculties • Right judgment about the object one can regain his use of reason • Truth is rectitude of the intellect, knowing the truth aids mental health • Conform one's intellect to reality intellect is perfected <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The good can counter mental illness ◦ Knowing truth, dissipates cause mental illness ◦ One must conform to reality & not expect reality to conform to us • that sometimes mental illness can be corrected through knowledge. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Requires choice of the will To move person to pursue truth, To conform to truth, Logic, Socratic reasoning, First principles • Order to truly good • Bring under command of intellect promptly
Will	<p>Choose the good</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disordered to apparent and not truly good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One can use external senses to bring imagination under control. • Bring the imagination under control of right reason (anxiety & reason) • Good mental health comes from using imagination for images in congruity with: Natural law, Truth, the good
Imagination	<p>Retains impressions made on external senses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imagining wrong things or contrary to human nature, • Improper judgment of possible intellect leads to a disconnection from reality. • Can cause disorder in appetites, cognitive power, judgment, and will. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible intellect's judgment & will's dissociation in the memory of the thing causing trouble, the cognitive power moved to make correct associations. • Fleshing out past memory or discussing it and also experiencing the thing causing problem in a positive way.
Memory	<p>Stores objects of sense perception</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • False or strong memories (Trauma) disorder passions. • Wrong association • Recalls images into imagination • Strong memory recalls the experience repeatedly & disturb faculties. Constant recall leads to disorder to cognitive power (wrong assessment or association) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train the cognitive power to associate properly using proper data to reformulate image • Possible intellect & will can gain indirect control of cognitive power by changing phantasm of the imagination. • One can train the cognitive power not to associate with the bad images. • Break rumination: remove image by displacement: mental or sensible. • Intellect & will alter image by right reason to diffuse the relative passion.
Cognitive Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Composition & Division • Assesses harmfulness, goodness or usefulness of some thing • Prepares the phantasm for abstraction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrong associations disorders appetites, causes fixation • Power of association & assessment can be disordered • Inaccurately prepares the phantasm for abstraction • Habituation in wrong way leads to mental illness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passions: not knowing faculties • One wants appetites object/not intellect's knows truth • Intellect knows reality not the appetites • Following appetite is not following intellect's judgment • Disorder is based on falsity • Passions judge thing to be good when it may not be so. • Appetites draw intellect from judging reality rightly • Will's merge w/appetite may move intellect to ignore reality.
Appetites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appetite is an inclination to or away from a specific object suitable or unsuitable to itself • Passion is its movement 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation or denial • Repression or reformulation • Modification • Pursuit of contrary that will mitigate • Mortification • Move exterior powers in activity