

SPECIAL REPORT

Destructive Trends In Mental Health: The Well-Intentioned Path To Harm

(Edited by Rogers H. Wright and Nicholas A. Cummings, 2005. New York: Routledge)

Book reviewed by A. Dean Byrd, Ph.D., MBA, MPH

*"Psychology, psychiatry, and social work
have been captured by an ultra-liberal agenda."*

*"Misguided political correctness tethers our
intellects."*

*"If psychology is to soar like an eagle,
it needs both a left wing and a right wing."*

The above statements do not emerge from the pen of a radical, right-wing, fanatical conservative. Rather, they are the conclusions of a new book written by two self-identified "lifelong liberal activists" and influential leaders of the American Psychological Association (APA), who vigorously oppose the illiberalism of their fellow psychologists.

Authors Rogers H. Wright and Nicholas A. Cummings have been visible presences in the APA in the following roles:

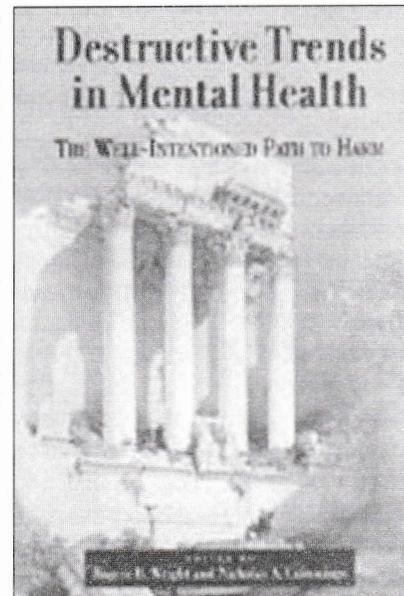
o Wright is a past president of Division 12, founding president of Division 31, founding president of the Council for the Advancement of the Psychological Professions and Sciences (CAPPS), Fellow of the APA, a Diplomate in Clinical Psychology, the recipient of an honorary doctorate and a distinguished practitioner of the National Academies of Practice.

o Cummings is currently distinguished professor, University of Nevada, president of the Cummings Foundation for Behavioral Health, chairs the boards of both the Nicholas and Dorothy Cummings Foundation and CareIntegra. He is past president of the APA Division 12 and Division 29 as well as the recipient of five honorary doctorates for contributions to psychology, education, and the Greek Classics. He is the recipient of psychology's Gold Medal for lifetime contributions to practice.

Wright and Cummings' new book is supported by an Academy Award roster of endorsers, including APA past-president Robert Perloff, Arnold Lazarus, Martin Kalb, Michael Hoyt, Fred Baughman, APA past-president Jack G. Wiggins, Robyn Dawes and David Stein.

The editors of this volume provide compelling arguments for many destructive trends in the mental health professions – most particularly, psychology, but also psychiatry and social work. They demonstrate from an insider's perspective how activism masquerades as science in the APA, and how "diversity" has been redefined into a kind of narrow politicism, where differing worldviews are not only summarily dismissed, but the holders of such views actually punished.

The authors condemn the APA for providing forums only for their preferred worldviews. They particularly note how psychology is undermined when APA makes resolutions and public policy statements on issues for which there is little or inadequate science. Such prostitution of psychology by activist groups within APA is contributing, they say, to the profession's demise as a scientific organization. "Psychology and mental health," Cummings says, "have veered away from scientific integrity and open inquiry, as well as from compassionate practice in which the welfare of the patient is paramount" (p. xiii).



Psychology's Lack Of Diversity

Cummings and Wright note that "psychology, psychiatry, and social work have been captured by an ultra-liberal agenda" (p. xiii) with which they personally agree regarding quite a few aspects, *as private citizens*. However, they express alarm at the damage that such an agenda is wreaking on psychology as a science and a practice, and the damage that is being done to the credibility of psychologists as professionals.

They reference a principle enunciated by former APA president Leona Tyler, where the advocacy of APA as an organization should be based upon "scientific data and demonstrable professional experience," (p. xiv) leaving individual psychologists or groups of psychologists to advocate as concerned, private citizens. But they decry the "agenda-driven ideologues" in APA who erode psychology as a science. As they note, "The APA has chosen ideology over science, and thus has diminished its influence on the decision-makers in our society" (p. xiv).

They add that "Within psychology today, there are topics that are deemed politically incorrect, and they are neither published nor funded. Journal editors control what is accepted for publication through those chosen to conduct peer reviews... censorship exists... The *Monitor on Psychology* detests managed care but "it

loves managed news” (p. xiv).

Wright and Cummings express alarm from the “ever-proliferating therapies that are not only without validation but are irresponsible, and often later shown to be harmful” (p. xv). For example, “society spent a number of years sentencing fathers to prison based on false memories, followed by years of releasing them with the court’s apology, as accusers became aware of the implanted memories,” (p. xv) with practitioners losing their licenses and plagued with lawsuits.

Conservative Worldviews Disrespected

Cummings notes that though he and his co-editor lived through the “abominable” McCarthy era and the Hollywood witch hunts; still, there was “not the insidious sense of intellectual intimidation that currently exists under political correctness” (p. xv). “Now misguided political correctness tethers our intellects. Those viewed as conservative are looked down upon as lacking intelligence” (p. xv).

The pervasiveness of this intimidation was not appreciated by the editors until they began to talk with potential contributors to this book – “many of whom declined to be included, fearing loss of tenure or stature, and citing previous ridicule and even vicious attacks...” (p. xv). They conclude that “Political diversity is so absent in mental health circles that most psychologists and social workers live in a bubble. So seldom does anyone express ideological disagreement with colleagues that they believe all intelligent people think as they do. They are aware that conservatives exist, but regard the term ‘intelligent conservative’ as an oxymoron” (p. xvi).

Cummings notes that the intellectual bubble was “so encapsulating that psychologists were shocked” when the House of Representatives and the Senate censured APA for publishing a “meta-analysis and interview study of college students who had been molested as children” (p. xvii) (Though radio talk-show host Dr. Laura was blamed for the outcry, original responsibility for the publicity should have been given to NARTH, which first surfaced the study and gave it to Dr. Laura). “The condemnation [of APA] was unanimous in both the House and the Senate...even the two psychologist-members of the House abstained rather than vote nay” (p.xvii). Thus, “the humiliation was complete” (p. xvii).

Even more inept was APA’s testimony before Congress, where they focused heavily on the “side of academic freedom and uncensored scientific research,” rather than focusing on the harm of pedophilia.

Sociopolitical diversity is so badly needed in APA, that “If psychology is to soar like an eagle, it needs both a left wing and a right wing ... We must broaden the debate by reducing the ridicule and intimidation of ideas contrary to the thinking of the establishment in the field of psychology” (p. xiviii).

Once there was a time in the history of psychology, Wright

reminds us, where the discipline was enamored with *parapsychology* and mind-reading, a misadventure to which federal dollars actually flowed. Though that era has faded, two aspects of that era still persist:

(1) The federal government and private institutions continue to waste millions of dollars on hobby psychological research and politically correct research while neglecting to fund more basic, meaningful areas of study; and

(2) society continues to believe that mental health practitioners “possess some kind of omniscience when it comes to human affairs” (p. xxiii).

Wright exposes the “proliferation of philosophies, practices and procedures that, at best are self-serving, and, at worst, destructive to the integrity of psychology and contrary to the concept of helping patients become mentally healthy and independent” (p. xxiv). He attributes these changes to the cultural preoccupation with political correctness, sensitivity, and diversity.

Wright notes that the damage done by the obsession with political correctness prevents important research from being conducted, and contributes to personal attacks on the researchers themselves (p. xxvii). Accusations of bias, racism and bigotry have a chilling effect not only upon the research and the researchers, but upon the training of mental-health professionals and the delivery of services (p.xxviii).

Gay Activism In APA

The issue of homosexuality is illustrative of how political correctness and a narrow definition of “diversity” have dominated APA. Wright notes,

In the current climate, it is inevitable that conflict arises among the various subgroups in the marketplace. For example, gay groups within the APA have repeatedly tried to persuade the association to adopt ethical standards that prohibit therapists from offering psychotherapeutic services designed to ameliorate “gayness,” on the basis that such efforts are unsuccessful and harmful to the consumer. Psychologists who do not agree with this premise are termed homophobic.

Such efforts are especially troubling because they abrogate the patient’s right to choose the therapist and determine the therapeutic goals. They also deny the reality of data demonstrating that psychotherapy can be effective in changing sexual preferences in patients who have a desire to do so (pp. xxx).

Many Therapies Are Unproven

Wright says there are many treatments advocated by psychology with little or no evidence of efficacy – for example, grief and trauma counseling, treatment of repressed memories regarding sexual abuse, as well as the extensive use (or abuse) of medications for questionable diagnoses of depression and ADD/ADHD.

He is equally as harsh on Continuing Education (CE) requirements, which he views as the “endless creativity in expanding personal income” and “exploiting state licensing laws mandating continuing education...No matter that CE offerings often tend to be of poor quality, dubious value, poorly taught, frequently misinformative, and contributors to the rising costs of all professional services” (p. xxxii).

Political Correctness, Sensitivity, And Diversity

Cummings and O'Donohue conclude that psychology has surrendered its professionalism and its science to political correctness. They offer the following examples: APA's support for absolving responsibility for aberrant behavior when it is “hard-wired”; the broadening of the concept of victimology where “everyone is a victim, but no one is crazy”; and the reformulation of psychiatric diagnosis because of pressure from activists (p. 8).

The authors' view of the 1973 and 1974 decisions reclassifying homosexuality is worthy of quoting here:

The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* of the American Psychiatric Association yielded suddenly and completely to political pressure when in 1973 it removed homosexuality as a treatable aberrant condition. A political firestorm had been created by gay activists within psychiatry, with intense opposition to normalizing homosexuality coming from a few outspoken psychiatrists who were demonized and even threatened, rather than scientifically refuted.

Psychiatry's House of Delegates sidestepped the conflict by putting the matter to a vote of the membership, marking the first time in the history of healthcare that a diagnosis or lack of diagnosis was decided by popular vote rather than scientific evidence (p. 9).

The authors do not complain about what was done, but rather, how it was done. The co-author (Cummings) of the chapter not only agrees with the outcome, but in 1974 introduced the successful resolution declaring that homosexuality was not a psychiatric condition. However, the resolution carried with it a “proscription that appropriate and needed research would be conducted to substantiate these decisions.” Cummings “watched with dismay as there was no effort on the part of APA to promote or even encourage such required research” (p. 9).

Unfortunately, both the American Psychiatric Association and the American Psychological Association had established precedents “forever that medical and psychological diagnoses are subject to political fiat” (p. 9). As a result, the authors note, “Diagnosis today in psychology and psychiatry is cluttered with politically correct verbiage, which seemingly has taken precedence over sound professional experience and scientific validation” (p. 9).

The book provides numerous examples where political correctness has influenced the treatment process, sometimes in positive, and other times in negative ways. They describe ways in which crisis counseling can actually impair recovery (p. 14), how psy-

chology has underestimated the human capacity for resilience by messages of victimhood, and how the best practice issues (which emerged from the recovered-memories fiasco) simply do not exist in organized psychology. They note with dismay that political correctness actually interferes with research efforts: “Within the concept of letting a thousand flowers bloom, psychology has rendered itself incapable of addressing the issue of best practices” (p. 16), while sometimes permitting harmful practices such as rebirthing (in which some children have died).

Activists Push To Label Treatment Of Unwanted SSA “Unethical”

Though APA is either unwilling or unable to evaluate its treatment practices, the authors note that:

... this did not prevent its Council of Representatives in 2002 from stampeding into a motion to declare the treatment of homosexuality unethical. This was done with the intent of perpetuating homosexuality, even when the homosexual patient willingly and even eagerly seeks treatment. The argument was that because homosexuality is not an illness, its treatment is unnecessary and unethical.

Curiously, and rightly so, there was no counterargument against psychological interventions conducted by gay therapists to help patients be gay...Vigorously pushed by the gay lobby, it was eventually seen by a sufficient number of Council members as runaway political correctness and was defeated by the narrowest of margins.

In a series of courageous letters to the various components of APA, former president Robert Perloff referred to the willingness of many psychologists to trample patients' rights to treatment in the interest of political correctness. He pointed out that making such treatment unethical would deprive a patient of a treatment choice because the threat of sanctions would eliminate any psychologist who engaged in such treatment. Although the resolution was narrowly defeated, this has not stopped its proponents from deriding colleagues who provide such treatment to patients seeking it (p. 18).

Cummings and O'Donohue enumerate particular problems associated with the practice of political correctness, especially in regards to beliefs and speech. They include the following:

... proscriptions and prescriptions associated with political correctness are generated by fiat rather than reasoned argument...political correctness frequently rests on the notion that a speech or belief is “offensive” to someone...by focusing exclusively on “offensiveness,” political correctness misses more overriding considerations such as legal rights to free speech...the remedies and punishments for real or apparent transgressions of the PC rules tend to be overly severe...” (p. 19).

Understanding Political Correctness

The authors note that there is no empirical data on political cor-

correctness" (p. 22). They pose two questions regarding political correctness, and offer a number of hypotheses for potential testing. The questions are: "What psychological functions does political correctness fulfill for the individual?" and "What is the attraction of political correctness to certain personalities?" The hypotheses offered to understand these behavioral phenomena and their motivations include:

Political Correctness Harbors Hostility

- Reflects Narcissism
- Masks Histrionics
- Functions as Instant Morality
- Wields Power
- Serves as Distraction
- Involves Intimidation
- Lacks Alternatives

The empirical study of the above questions may offer valuable data on the phenomenon of political correctness. Meanwhile, the authors note how this understudied phenomenon is hostile to science by allowing the dismissal of any finding not consistent with a particular ideology or agenda: "Thus, political correctness and the postmodernism that currently pervades academic psychology go hand in hand" (p. 24).

The authors assert that political correctness is hostile to certain research questions that may be unpopular, and can have a chilling effect on science. Further, political correctness can view certain questions as settled moral issues rather than empirical questions requiring scientific investigations. The authors note, for example, "...the status of homosexuality is a settled moral question in the PC movement," citing, for example, that the National Endowment for the Arts would likely view those who object to the painting *Piss Christ* as infringing on freedom of expression, while they would find a similar painting titled *Piss Gay* as offensive and morally wrong (p. 24).

Finally, they note that the political correctness is so ingrained in many of the institutions of science, academia and government agencies, that priorities and policies are influenced such as those affecting AIDS funding as opposed to funding for breast cancer, or the practice of evaluating grants by federally determined categories of minority inclusion (p. 25).

O'Donohue offers a critical examination of cultural sensitivity, noting that though the need for cultural sensitivity is repeatedly cited in the mainstream literature, the definition of that term remain elusive. He points out the difficulty in defining culture, and how race and ethnicity create problems with group membership, citing the benefits and costs of using ethnic groups as variables. He concludes that:

Given the complications, culture as a global construct may not prove particularly useful to our activities as scientist-practitioners in psychology. It may also be premature to make ethical prescriptions based on this construct, given the state of our knowledge at this time. We counsel a cautious stance. Before we rush to be accepted as culturally sensi-

...ive, we need to define the appropriate...
psychology and assess its potential contributions to the field. These benefits must be weighed against the real pitfall of allowing cultural considerations to weaken our ability to provide efficient therapy and effective research (pp. 42-43).

In the book, one writer, Ofer Zur, provides a politically incorrect treatise of the psychology of victimhood. Zur approaches victimization by moving away from blame, instead examining how culture perpetuates violence systems. Using a systems approach, he avoids blaming and focuses on healing. He concludes that:

Understanding types, origins, and mode of operations of victims will allow therapists and non-therapists alike to recognize, prevent, and intervene in violent systems, enabling all participants to live better lives. For this to occur, victims must be helped to overcome their feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, and low self-esteem. They must not focus on blame, and they must avoid self-righteousness. Victims have to believe that they have a say in what happens to them and learn to overcome their victim patterns. The healing process should empower them to become conscious contributors to the unfolding of their lives, which can become dignified and meaningful (p. 62).

The last chapter in this section is titled, "Homophobia: Conceptual, Definitional and Value Issues." The authors of this section, O'Donohue and Caselles, note that "homophobia is a potentially important construct, given the significant amount of violence and other violations of rights that homosexuals experience, and the reactions that the relatively recent complexities of AIDS have evoked toward homosexuals and homosexuality" (p. 65).

O'Donohue and Caselles offer a brief history of homosexuality relative to psychiatric nomenclature, highlighting how the issue became politicized and how activism against the backdrop of the social climate of the '60s ushered in a reclassification. Activists selectively used the writings of the renegade psychiatrist Dr. Thomas Szasz, who viewed much of psychiatry as fraudulent and believed that it functioned to oppress and suppress those who held unacceptable ideas. Gay activists translated Szasz's views selectively to support them in their efforts to attack the psychiatric profession for using the language of science to condemn value positions, essentially their valuing of homosexuality. Ironically, Szasz's views of homosexuality were similar to the prevailing views at the time:

Ever since the Freudian revolution, and especially since the Second World War, it has become intellectually fashionable to hold that homosexuality is neither a sin nor a crime, but a disease. This claim means either that homosexuality is a condition somewhat similar to ordinary organic maladies, perhaps caused by some genetic error or endocrine imbalance, or that it is an expression of psychosexual immaturity, probably caused by certain kinds of personal and social circumstances in early life.

I believe it is very likely that homosexuality is, indeed a dis-

ease in the second sense and perhaps sometimes even in the stricter sense. Nevertheless, if we believe that, by categorizing homosexuality as a disease, we have succeeded in removing it from the realm of moral judgment, we are in error (p. 67).

Thus a selective use or misinterpretation of Szasz provided the impetus for activists to pursue their agenda.

Ethical Arguments Against Homosexual Acts Are Not "Obviously Unsound"

Subsequent to the nosological revision, attention was turned away from the etiology and treatment of homosexuality and to the negative attitude toward homosexuals. Thus the birth of the term "homophobia," coined by Weinberg in 1972, suggesting those who held negative attitudes toward homosexuality should not be considered mentally healthy (p. 68).

Though "research" on homophobia is plentiful in the literature, there are many unanswered questions about the adequacy of the measurements used. The authors conclude that existing psychometric measures of homophobia do not meet the standards of science to any degree that would make them useful (pp. 70-71). They also note that there are value issues inherent in the idea of "homophobia." Ironically, they cite the very points made by Szasz and often embraced by gay activists to consider the moral value of homosexual acts. Specifically, they reference the position that "certain value, moral, aesthetic, and political questions and positions in a free society should not be closed and suppressed by mental-health professionals and behavioral science research. The moral status of homosexuality is one of them" (p. 79).

Noting that there are readily available arguments for the moral impermissibility of homosexual acts, and that they are not obviously unsound, they cite the vast number of religions whose view is based on revelation from God, and invoke the Szaszian point that it is not the purview of mental health professionals and behavioral scientists to judge as abnormal or irrational a belief in God, or specific beliefs regarding what God has revealed. They note that these are "properly open issues that citizens of a free society should debate and decide upon, free of the interference of the mental health profession's attempt to make either ethical position a mental health issue" (p. 79).

In addition, there are secular arguments that make the case for the immorality of homosexuality; for example, Kant thought that homosexual acts violate the categorical imperative:

A second *crimen carnis contra naturam* (immoral acts against our animal nature) is intercourse between *sexus homogenii*, in which the object of sexual impulse is a human being but there is homogeneity instead heterogeneity of sex, as when a woman satisfies her desire on a woman, or a man on a man. This practice too is contrary to the ends of humanity; for the end of humanity in respect of sexuality is to preserve the species without debasing the person; but in this instance the species is not being preserved (as it can be by a *crimen*

carnis secundum naturam), but the person is set aside, the self is degraded below the level of animals, and humanity is dishonored (p. 79).

Similar arguments concerning the immorality of homosexuality, based on the philosophical concept of natural law, are given by Plato and Aquinas and more modern ethicists such as Ruddick (p. 79). There are also more utilitarian arguments. The authors are clear that these arguments have not been "proven true," but rather are open possibilities. They conclude that "ethical arguments exist that take homosexuality to be morally wrong and that they are not obviously unsound" (p. 80). Thus the authors not only open the debate on the legitimacy of "homophobia" as a construct, but also allow for the discussion of the immorality of homosexuality based on natural law.

This latter debate is long overdue, and is rightly not the purview of APA, but rather the purview of the citizens of a free society. Interestingly enough, this view has been articulated by a self-identified lesbian activist, Anne Fausto-Sterling, the developmental biologist from Brown University, who noted that the way we "consider homosexuality in our culture is an ethical and a moral question" (Dreifus, C. 2001, "Exploring What Makes Us Male or Female." *New York Times*, Science Section, January 2).

Mental Health Care Economics

The second section of the book focuses on Mental Healthcare Economics with an opening article by Nicholas Cummings entitled, "Expanding A Shrinking Economic Base: The Right Way, The Wrong Way, and the Mental Health Way." Subsequent to providing a brief history of reimbursement for mental health services, Cummings noted how managed care eroded psychology's economic base, causing psychologists to experience a kind of economic illiteracy, not knowing how to create a viable, clinically-driven system. Consequences of this economic illiteracy combined with the industrialization of healthcare ushered in the inventions of syndromes as a way of expanding the economic base, such as the Dissociative Identity Disorder, Reverse Seasonal Affective Disorder, Compassion Fatigue Syndrome, and the Battered Woman Syndrome. Such inventiveness has extended to ADD/ADHD as well as depression in a way that included persons that would not historically have been included.

Cummings notes that psychology seems devoted to the creation of such disorders with no semblance of scientific validation of clinical effectiveness or efficacy, but with the potential for expanding a shrinking economic psychotherapy base. He advises, "Following carefully thought-out economic principles, backed by solid science, not only will increase psychology's patient base but will go a long way toward restoring the field's fading reputation" (p. 109).

William Glasser's chapter on psychiatry is ominous: "Warning: Psychiatry Can Be Hazardous to Your Mental Health." Glasser decries labeling people as mentally ill and accuses psychiatry of maintaining the fiction of mental illness and disregarding mental health. He advocates helping people to help themselves, suggesting that unsatisfying relationships are the main causes of

unhappiness. Though the chapter seemed to somewhat out of place, the message seems to be that encouraging individuals to help themselves, perhaps in such groups as AA, would substantially reduce costs associated with improving mental health.

Perhaps the most explosive chapter in this section concerns "Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder" authored by Rogers H. Wright. Noting that fads will occur in the "diagnosis" and treatment of aberrant behaviors, Wright argues that in the case of deficiencies of attention and hyperactivity that such behavioral aberrancies are frequently indicative of a transitory state within the organism, not of a disorder. He deems that it is a major disservice to elevate symptoms such as anxiety and hyperactivity to the level of a syndrome, diagnosing ADD/ADHD, combining individuals with very different needs and very different problems together.

Wright cites the Cummings and Wiggins (2001) research, which used behavioral interventions as well as firm male therapists and positive role models to treat children who were taking psychotropic medications. "After an average of nearly eleven treatments with the parent and approximately six with the child, the percentage of boys on medication was reduced from sixty-one percent to eleven percent, and the percentage of girls on medication went from twenty-three percent to two percent. These dramatic results occurred despite very strict requirements for discontinuing the medication, which seems to point to an alarming overdiagnosis and overmedication of ADD/ADHD and greater efficacy on behavioral interventions than is generally believed to be the case by the mental health community" (p. 135).

Finally in this section, Wright addresses "The Myth of Continuing Education: A Look at Some Intended and (Maybe) Unintended Consequences." He questions whether CE programs are effective, noting that there has been little attempt in evaluating the content quality. He surmises, "Consequently, and bluntly stated, CE is one hell of a big business with a great many vested interests (state regulatory agencies, national and state professional associations, and continuing education vendors including colleges and universities). These entities rake in really big bucks, adding staggering and incalculable costs to the price of delivered professional services" (p. 147). Wright chronicles the various CE courses, suggesting that this evolving enterprise approximates the "proportions of a scam" (p. 149). He is particularly critical of plethora of CE courses in human sexuality suggesting "the hidden motive...is to assure that the latest in political correctness has been imparted to the ignorant practitioner" (p. 149). Finally, Wright notes that no amount of "weekend training" can provide competence needed in critical areas. He notes, "In fact, in my experience, all too frequent consequence of CE training is that it encourages the impulsive and headstrong provider to venture into new areas best left to others" (p. 151).

Political Influence On Science And Practice

The final section of the book focuses on the political influence on science and practice. The first chapter in this section focuses on the suppression of unpopular or politically incorrect research. Central to this chapter was ill-treatment of Arthur Jensen

(researcher on intelligence), one of the fifty most "eminent psychologists of the twentieth century" (p. 156). The ferocity of the attacks on Jensen were chronicled and attributed to "self-serving censorship" (p. 156) with accusations of Jensen being as "barbaric as Hitler" (p. 161). An ethics investigation proved the charges were spurious, finding no ethical violations with his research.

Yet such mean-spiritedness continues. The potential consequences may be horrific: "In the meantime, inadequate learning and reasoning abilities put many people at risk for taking medications in health-damaging ways, failing to grasp the merits of preventive precautions against chronic disease and accidents, and failing to properly implement potentially more effective but complex new treatment regimens for heart disease, hypertension, and other killers. To intentionally ignore differences in mental competence is unconscionable. It is social science malpractice against the very people whom the 'untruth' is supposedly meant to protect" (p. 182).

Harmful Or Untested Treatments

In the chapter on "Pseudoscience, Nonscience, and Nonsense in Clinical Psychology," Lilienfeld *et al* conclude that there is persuasive evidence that some forms of psychotherapy can be harmful" (p. 187). They note the burgeoning industry of pseudoscientific and unscientific psychotherapies (p. 187). They are particularly skeptical of the pervasiveness of postmodernism, noting a lack of outcome studies associated with postmodern therapies (p. 194).

They are equally as critical of self-help books which promise simplistic solutions to complex problems, noting that the overwhelming majority of such efforts have not been subjected to empirical scrutiny (p. 195). The authors cite research that supports potentially harmful effects of a number of therapies including attachment therapies, critical incident debriefing, peer group interventions for conduct problems, scared straight programs for conduct problems, recovered memories interventions, DID-oriented therapy and facilitated communication. In each case, the authors provide compelling evidence for potential harm (pp. 196-204).

A chapter devoted to children called "The Diseaseing of America's Children" addresses the myth that childhood behavior disorders are caused by genes, noting that there is no good scientific evidence. Rosemond concludes, "The perpetrators of the disease model of behavior disorders engage in disingenuous misleading arguments" (p. 223). He notes that psychologists have confused biological conditions with developmental ones, citing the DSM criteria for a pathological antisocial condition which he says "perfectly describes the terrible twos!" (p. 226).

Subsequent to the exit from the '60's culture, a fully postmodern society emerged and "the rise of clinical psychology coincided with the paradigm shift, and psychologists (and other mental health professionals) did more than any other professional group to demonize the traditional marriage (supposedly bad for women), the traditional family (supposedly inherently pathological, and traditional child rearing (supposedly bad for children))"

ical, and traditional child rearing (supposedly bad for children)" (p. 226). The negative consequences of postmodernism included the dangerous shift in pediatrics: "...the tendency to isolate a child's behavior from its context and judge the behavior, rather than the parent's management of it, as the problem" (p. 233).

The chapter on "Abortion, Boxing, and Zionism: Politics and the APA" examines the number of resolutions issued by APA usually via its Public Interest Directorate including topics such as limiting the access to abortion, television violence and children, AIDS education, academic freedom and the legality of boxing. They note that such positions are taken with little supporting evidence.

APA's Pro-Abortion Activism

The authors caution that the possibility of harm exists when there is not supporting evidence. For example, in the case of abortion, the author suggests that "Unless the APA has extremely compelling data to show the utter illegitimacy of the anti-abortion stance, it might be prudent not to take a position on this divisive issue, both out of respect for the diversity of opinion surrounding this issue, and to avoid placing member-psychologists in an unnecessarily difficult situation" (pp. 242-243). The authors recommend that the "APA constrain its political activity to issues in which psychologists have legitimate expertise" (p. 250)

In the chapter on "The Dumbing Down of Psychology: Faulty Beliefs About Boundary Crossings and Dual Relationships," Ofer Zur focuses on non-sexual relationships in psychotherapy, suggesting that multiple roles do exist between a therapist and client and noting that such relationships can be normal and healthy. Not advocating a blanket endorsement to dismantling therapeutic boundaries or promoting indiscriminant employment of dual relationships in therapy, Zur emphasizes that the "goal of the therapist should be the client's care, healing, dignity, and well-being rather than the avoidance of risk, or blind adherence to a certain treatment dogma" (p. 255).

In the chapter on "Social Justice in Community Psychology," the authors noted that though "social justice plays a critical role in defining community psychology, yet this construct has evaded explication and critical analysis" (p. 283). The authors observe that the mainstream political left has influenced community psychology to the extent of excluding the diversity of opinion and to defining "political conservatism as abnormal" (p. 284). Finally, Richard E. Redding addresses "Sociopolitical Diversity in Psychology: The Case for Pluralism." The evidence is clear, he says – "most psychologists are politically liberal" and "conservatives are vastly underrepresented in the profession." He says that "there is a struggle about what is sayable within our discipline, and about what need not be said, about what can be assumed and what requires explanation, about what questions can be asked and what constitutes legitimate answers" (p. 303). He concludes:

This lack of political diversity has unintended negative consequences and is detrimental to psychology in ways that

conflict with the profession's core values and ethical principles. It biases research on social policy issues, damages psychology's credibility with policy makers and the public, impedes serving conservative clients, results in *de facto* discrimination against conservative students and scholars, and has a chilling effect on liberal education.

Redding notes the problematic consequences of liberal hegemony, including biases in policy research where "psychologists who research social issues often have values invested in those issues" (p. 306). He noted the conflicting liberal bias in adolescent competence where adolescents should make medical decisions, such as in the case of abortion, but should not be tried and punished as adults because they are immature (p. 307). He cites liberal bias influencing research and interpretation in gay and lesbian parenting:

Much of the extant research that finds no negative effects of gay parenting on children has serious limitations, for example, small sample size, nonrepresentative and self-selected samples, reliance on self-reporting subject to social desirability biases, and lacking longitudinal data. These limitations are often downplayed by advocates, who also frequently fail to consider fully the potential importance of having both male and female nurturance and role models for children (p. 308).

Bias Revealed Against Conservative Graduate School Applicants

Redding references the famous Gartner study, which empirically demonstrated the discrimination against those with conservative views in graduate school admissions. Professors in APA-approved clinical psychology departments were provided with graduate school applications including grade-point-averages, GRE scores and personal statements that differed only in whether the applicant volunteered that he was a conservative Christian. "Professors rated the nonconservative applicants significantly higher in all areas, had fewer doubts about their abilities, felt more positively about their abilities to be good psychologists and rated them more likely to be admitted to their graduate program. The findings suggest an admission bias against religious conservatives, which violates the APA's ethical principles and antidiscrimination laws" (p. 312). Redding concludes that the lack of political diversity limits the scope of a liberal education and that "We should encourage conservatives to join our ranks and foster a true sociopolitical dialogue in our research, practice, and teaching. It is in our self-interest to do so. Otherwise, we pay a terrible price that is a consequence of partisan narrow-mindedness. Political narrowness and insularity limit and deaden a discipline" (p. 318).

Conclusion

This new book provides a window into the American Psychological Association and into psychology in way hitherto only suspected. The courage demonstrated by Wright and Cummings is unparalleled. Their professional and scientific accomplishments and their positions of prominence in the

American Psychological Association, along with their reasoned, evidence-based arguments, make their work essentially unassailable. Though the authors of the various chapters are critical in their judgments, their judgments are supported by evidence and their informed opinions. The book offers a clear message to APA: your survival will depend on *real diversity* – the inclusion of those with different worldviews, on psychology maintaining its integrity as a scientific organization, on research and practice that is devoid of activism and political correctness, and on resolutions grounded in science. APA would do well to heed the wisdom of its own prominent members who have not only identified the destructive trends in mental health, but offer compelling arguments for re-evaluation of the policies and practices of APA.

The book's cover depicts "the image of overgrown ruins" which symbolize "the desolate future of the mental health field if they are left to continue on their current paths to destruction."

Destructive Trends in Mental Health deserves the distinction of being the most important book of the decade, perhaps of the last several decades, in mental health. Its authors have re-instilled faith in psychology—faith that there remain honorable men and women whose passion for the profession will no longer allow them to stay silent in the midst of abuses of power, acts of discrimination and worldview intolerance, and the repeated misrepresentation of activism as science. Perhaps if APA does not begin to regulate itself, the legislatures, the public and the courts will.

