

Physics and psychology from 1900 to 1939 on the society essay sample

[Psychology](#)



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New theories in physics and psychology in the period from 1900-1939 challenged existing ideas about the individual and society. Many new philosophies and scientific discoveries challenged the teachings of the Catholic Church. Other scientific theories and discoveries challenged the way people thought of how the world worked. Realism and modernism frowned upon the hypocrisy, brutality, and dullness[1] of the bourgeois life and appealed to the aesthetic. Behavioral Sciences rejected the way most people thought the mind worked.

Many new philosophies and scientific discoveries challenged the teachings of the Catholic Church. At this time in the early 1900's the Catholic Church was the most powerful institution in Europe, then scientists and psychologists came along and rejected many of the Church's teachings. Charles Darwin denied creationism with his theory of natural selection, in which species evolve through a series of traits that make them better than the other species. In its rawest form: Survival of the Fittest.[2] The species that is better lives longer and has more offspring. This completely opposed the Church's teaching of creationism, in which God created a man, Adam, and from his rib created a woman, Eve. These two humans had children and populated the entire earth. Julius Wellhausen, Ernst Renan, and William Robertson[3] believed that human authors had written the Bible.

These men believe that the Bible had been written as a sort of political warfare. Friedrich Nietzsche argued that Christianity glorified weakness and demanded sacrifice rather than heroic living.[4] Nietzsche believed in a type of "superman" and thought that elimination of the Catholic Church would allow for the creation of such a being. Charles Lyell said that the Earth was <https://assignbuster.com/physics-and-psychology-from-1900-to-1939-on-the-society-essay-sample/>

much older than the Bible had told. The Bible proclaimed the Earth as being only a few thousand years old, but science proved that the Earth had actually been around for billions of years. David Friedrich Strauss told in *The Life of Jesus* that the Bible provides no evidence that Jesus actually lived. Instead he proposed that Jesus could have just been a character created to show people how they should live their lives. At this time the Catholic Church was under siege of scientific and psychological principles.

Other scientific theories and products challenged the way people thought of how the world worked. Physics was taking major leaps in the 20th Century. Wilhelm Roentgen discovered x-rays. Henri Becquerel discovered that Uranium emitted a form of energy similar to that of x-rays. J. J. Thomson formulated the theory of the electron. Ernest Rutherford conducted his famous Gold-Foil experiment in which he discovered the nucleus and the proton. Marie and Pierre Curie discovered Radium. Max Planck created his Quantum Theory of Energy in which he explained energy as a series of packets. Albert Einstein came up with his Theory of Relativity, in which he explained energy as being irregular radiation, atoms as the building blocks of the material world, and announced that the world was not as orderly as Newtonian Physics had suggested. Werner Heisenberg made his Uncertainty Principle, in which he described the behavior of subatomic particles with a statistical probability. All of these new theories and discoveries challenged the older ideas of Newtonian Physics.

Realism and modernism frowned upon the hypocrisy, brutality, and dullness[5] of the bourgeois life and appealed to the aesthetic. The realist

movement criticized the bourgeois way of life. Charles Dickens and Honoré de Balzac portrayed the cruelty of industrial life and a society based on money.[6] Gustave Flaubert's *Madam Bovary* tells the story of a woman's hopeless search for love in the bourgeois society. Emile Zola explored alcoholism, prostitution, adultery, and labor strife in his writings.[7] Henrik Ibsen dealt with sentimentality, the female "Angel of the House", and the responsibility that burdened the middle-class family.[8] George Bernard Shaw wrote about prostitution, love and war, and Christianity.[9] The new ideas of society also brought forth a new form of art: Impressionism. Impressionism was based on modern, social activities with a strong emphasis put on lighting, color, and representing the artist's impression of the scene.

Some famous impressionist artists include Edward Manet, Claude Monet, Camille Pissarro, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, and Edgar Degas.[10] Edward Manet's *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* depicts a troubled, middle-class woman, working as a bar tender with an expression of nothingness on her face. This powerful image is used to portray the monotony and dullness of the working-class citizen. Impressionism was later extended to post-impressionism, whose most famous artists include Georges Seurat, Paul Cézanne, Vincent Van Gogh, and Paul Gauguin.[12] Georges Seurat introduced the technique of pointillism, using small dots of color to paint, allowing the human eye to mix colors. After post-impressionism came cubism. Cubism is known for its unique use of geometric shapes and strange figures that don't seem to have any real meaning. At this point in art, the message is all about an artist's impression of the scene depicted. Art and literature played a key role in criticizing and shaping the society.

Behavioral Sciences rejected the way most people thought the mind worked. Sigmund Freud developed his Theory of Repression in which he stated his theory of psychoanalysis, the analysis of dreams to determine one's true feelings and desires, that human behavior was influenced by former experiences, and that repressing feelings undermines the optimism about rationality of the human mind.[13] Carl Jung, a student of Freud, said that sexual drives form one's personality and contribute to mental disorders. Gustave LeBon, Georeges Sorel, Emile Durheim, and Graham Wallace all described the actions of people when they are acting as a crowd. LeBon described the irrationality of crowds. Sorel explained that people act because of shared ideas. Durheim and Wallace said that shared values and activities bind people together. The 20th Century psychologists looked into the minds of human beings to describe how the mind worked.

During the 1900's the Catholic Church was under attack from scientists, scientific theories and discoveries challenged the former explanation of the way the world works, new forms of literature and art portrayed real emotion rather than just trying to depict a scene, and behavioral psychologists described the mind in ways people had never hear of. It was truly a time for change in the society and the individual.

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