

# Chapter 4

Constructing the Modern World

# The High Middle Ages (1100 - 1350)

- First cities - independent of Church & feudal lords
- Growth of technology & business → companies, credit
- Artisans & trades people developed better machines (looms for weaving, clocks, eyeglasses, mills for grinding grain etc.)
- Sailing ships → trade, new ideas
- View of world as machine → we can understand it
- Greek & Roman texts rediscovered
- New political forms; e.g. Magna Carta (1215) limiting royal power

## Late Middle Ages & Renaissance (1350 – 1600)

- Bubonic plague (Black Death), killed 1/3 of population
- Literary works: Dante, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Cervantes
- Luther's (1483 – 1546) reformation – Oct. 31, 1517 - challenged Catholic Church
- Conflict between secular & religious authority, authority of Catholic church challenged
- Gutenberg printing press – around 1436
  - 40 Monasteries translating & copying earlier manuscripts

# Christian Psychology

- Aristotle's works & Muslim ideas were brought to Europe
- Challenged Christian thought (dualist & Platonic)
- 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries – universities appear linked to cathedrals
- Aristotle - naturalist vs. Plato - metaphysicist
- St. Thomas Aquinas (1225 - 1274) - Aristotelian vs. St. Bonaventure (1221 - 1274) - Neoplatonic

# Christian Psychology - 2

## St. Thomas Aquinas

- Aquinas showed how Aristotle's ideas not incompatible with Christian thought
- Separated philosophy (reason) & theology (revelation)
- Human reason limited to knowledge of world, God known from His work in the world
- Followed St. Anselm – faith seeking reason
- Extended Avicenna's view of the mind

# Christian Psychology - 3

## Aquinas, cont' d

- Two types of Estimation
  - (1) not voluntary, in animals
  - (2) *Cogitava* - under rational control, only in humans
  - Human knows right from wrong, pain & pleasure not only determinants of behaviour
  - Two kinds of appetite:
    - (1) pleasure – pain
    - (2) Intellectual appetite - Search for knowledge, the ‘greater good’

# Christian Psychology - 4

- Knowledge is product of human thinking, (Cogitava) not divine illumination
- Not a dualist. Like Aristotle, he believed soul was inherent part of body.
  - Stressed resurrection of body & reunification of soul and body
- Hierarchical organization of faculties (Platonic)

# Christian Psychology - 5

- St. Bonaventure
- Dualist, Platonic view of body & soul
  - Soul – essence of person
- Soul was immortal, essence of person
- 2 types of knowledge:
  - (1) External world from senses, empiricist (like Aristotle)- no innate knowledge

# Christian Psychology - 6

## St. Bonaventure cont'd.

- (2) Universal concepts abstracted from experience - requires divine illumination from God (Compare Plato's Simile of the Sun)
  - knowledge of spiritual world & God from introspection
- Introduced idea of *will*
- Empiricist like Aristotle - no innate ideas
- Have knowledge of God through meditative introspection. Can "see" image of God in the soul.

# Late Middle Ages: Empiricism

William of Ockham (1290 - 1349)

- Medieval view: abstract ideas metaphysically real – Plato: ideas exist in world of Forms
- For Medieval thinkers, ideas exist in God's mind
- Ockham questioned this assumption
- Sensory experience → intuitive cognition → true knowledge of world
- Mind notes similarities among objects & classifies them → abstract concepts – objects similar in some ways.
- Abstract concepts not metaphysically real; ie. No world of Forms -logical terms applied to some objects
- (Abstract) mental concepts were habits, ideas from experience

# Empiricism - 2

## William of Ockham, cont' d

- Ockham's razor: Explanations must be as simple as possible.
- Mental faculties were not part of soul; names for mental acts (=current view)
  - E.g. will, remembering etc.
- Distinction between faith & reason
- No evidence in experience for immaterial, immortal soul; faith provides such knowledge
  - Separation of faith & reason important for science

# Medieval Skepticism

- Before 1300, philosophers believed that humans could know universal truths, God's truth = philosophical truth (universal laws)
- Truths were real, existed in mind of God (compare Plato's Forms)
- - *nominalists* - universals were merely words, no ultimate reality
- - Peter Abelard (1079 - 1142) (Note: lived before Ockham, Bonaventure & Aquinas)

# Medieval Skepticism - 2

- Universals = concepts, images, or labels - no ultimate existence as Form or idea in Mind of God
- If universal laws don't reflect divine Ideas, how justify knowledge?
- Belief in God's omnipotence → skepticism. If God omnipotent, He can make you believe something (perception) which is untrue.
- → critique of knowledge

# Medieval Skepticism - 3

- Nicholas of Autrecourt (1300 ?) - follower of William of Ockham
- Empiricist - all we can know comes from experience. Forms not needed.
- What appears to be true is. This is most reasonable assumption. Essential to Empiricism.
- Probably true, because alternative assumption (appearances are false) leads nowhere.
- Focus on knowledge arising from observation of material world + reason → growth of science. Religion separated from philosophy & science.

# Before the Middle Ages

- Bronze age in Greece - no concept of individual as object of interest or study
- Egyptians - only Pharaoh had everlasting soul,
- Later expanded to his immediate family, then to anyone who could afford a funeral
- Greeks - famous warriors, leaders, philosophers; Greek plays → strong individuals
  - Plato : different types of souls,
  - Aristotle: different parts of the soul
  - neither focused on individual differences
- Christianity - humans had souls, everlasting life.  
→ Mercy to poor & suffering.

# 'The Individual' in the Middle Ages

- Early Middle Ages: legal status (wife, serf, king etc) determined one's life; social roles stereotyped
- Neoplatonic universe - everything divinely ordered, including social status.
- Philosophers interested in types & parts of soul not differences between human souls.
- No concept of individual as unique,
- Concept of individual - High Middle Ages - portraits, biographies - mirrors
- Interest in individual differences in Psych. Developed in 19th C (Galton)

# Early Middle Ages: The Mind Without

- Popular culture: Passion plays about lives of Christ, martyrs & saints.
- Characters are generally stereotyped personifications of virtues and vices
- Morality plays – about temptations & sin, externalize actions of the mind.
- → *psychomachia* machinery of the mind. Characters played role of virtues or vices, e.g. courage, covetousness, to tempt people into sin.
- - *Iliad* - men manipulated by gods

# High Middle Ages: The Individual in Love

- Early Christian times, women took active part in religion
- Gnostic gospels - Mary Magdalene is shown as Jesus' companion, chief disciple & possibly wife.
- Europe rediscovered classical literature, Christianity influenced by Platonic ideas - asceticism & misogyny
- Sex is sinful. Women seen as temptresses (Eve) - distracted men from spiritual life  
→ cult of the Virgin Mary, ambivalent attitude towards women

# *Fin Amour* or Courtly Love

- *Fin amour* - Emphasis on individual feelings
- Knights dedicated themselves to love of one lady, did great deeds in her honour  
→ tales of knights earning the hand of their true love
- → Appreciation of motivation arising within a person rather than being directed from without
- Minstrels – sang songs about romantic love
  - Songs written by clerics, or minstrels who had hopes of something in return for their songs.

# ***Fin Amour* or Courtly Love - 2**

- Marriages arranged, adultery common
- Some women seen as individuals worthy of love
- Spread of idea of romantic love → idea of personal relationships with individuals → character more important than rank

# Individuality in Religious & Academic Thought

- Before 12th C sin seen as impersonal, (caused by external forces). Penance was mechanical
- Peter Abelard (1079 - 1142) - personal intention - what is right or wrong is the *intention* not the action.
- Catholic confessional - form of psychotherapy  
→ Leahey's theme: psychology as the new religion

# Religious & Academic Thought - 2

- Mystics - sought direct connection with God through solitary contemplation, communing with nature, not Catholic ritual & mediation of priests
- (Recall mystery religions of the Greeks - union with divine through secret rituals)
- St. Francis of Assisi (1182 - 1226) – heretic believed in communing with God through nature
- Mysticism strengthened idea of individualism
- Ascetic religions - focus inward for enlightenment or salvation

# Concept of the Individual

- Abelard & Bonaventure – concept of will & voluntaristic morality
  - Intent of action important
- Mysticism – St. Francis of Assisi sought direct connection with God through contemplation
  - Individual action, not involving church ritual
- *Fin Amour* – love of individual
- Tradesmen concerned about character

# Renaissance (1350 – 1600)

- Renaissance began in Italy & spread to Europe
- Classic writings becoming known
- Dissections were done, (Vesalius)
- Anatomical drawings (Leonardo)
  - Body seen as complex machine
- Sir Francis Bacon (1560 – 1626) – experiments
- Macchiavelli – political theory

# The Renaissance

- Revival of Humanism - focus on ordinary people not status in medieval hierarchy, or life hereafter
  - Study human nature
- Viewed Middle ages as time of ignorance; classical times enlightened
  - art, architecture, government, lifestyle
- Study nature not metaphysical contemplation of cosmos, theology

# The Renaissance: The Mind Within

- Dante Alighieri (1265- 1321): *Divine Comedy*
- Imaginary journey through hell, purgatory & heaven
- Real well-known people personified sins → beginning to see people as individuals
- Hell is arranged hierarchically, hierarchy of sins
- Individuals suffered eternally for their sins but could be saved by repenting

# Geoffrey Chaucer (1343 - 1400)

- Son of wine maker, educated, became squire to nobleman
- First individualistic & realistic characters in English Literature
- *Canterbury Tales* - pilgrims to Canterbury - tell tales to pass the time
- Tales about sex, love, & marriage
- Wife of Bath's tale - about knight who, to save himself from the death penalty, had to answer the question, "What do women want?" (Female version of frog-prince story)
- Early commentary on relationships between men & women, & on social class and virtue
  - Virtue depends not on class but on good behaviour of individual

# William Shakespeare (1564 - 1616)

- Familiar with morality plays
- Probably not well educated
- *Psychomachia* - in Elizabethan psychology
- Wrote for both aristocrats & common people
- *Othello*: Iago – personification of the devil or a vice but more individualistic & believable.
- *Othello* - sin of jealousy, murders his wife & dies by suicide. *Othello*, *Iago*, *Desdemona* (wife) are realistic people.
- Did not achieve understanding of

# Miguel Cervantes (1547 - 1616)

- Novel about poor idealistic knight & his romantic dreams
- Don Quixote - driven mad from reading romances
- Decides to become a knight errant & do good deeds. Takes local barmaid as the woman he honours. Gets bar owner to award him a knighthood
- “ a lady with all the qualities needed to win her fame in in all quarters of the world: ... ageless beauty, dignity without pride, love with modestly , politeness springing from good breeding, and high lineage.”  
(Leahey, p. 110)

# The Reformation

- 1517 - Martin Luther nailed 99 *Theses* to door of Wittenburg Cathedral
- Wanted personal introspective religion that played down ritual, priesthood & hierarchy
- Broke the dominance of the Catholic Church

- End of Lecture

# Renaissance Naturalism

- Rejected supernatural explanations (devils, spells, magical powers etc.)
- *Natural magic* – e.g a magnet has power from “a secret virtue, inbred by nature, and not by any conjuration” (Leahey p 112)  
→ natural science
- Life & mind outcome of natural powers, not divine soul → implied no immortal soul.
- Not science but step towards science
- No explanations for life or magnetism or other natural phenomena
- - “Psychology seeks to give detailed explanations of mind and behaviour without invoking a supernatural soul.” (Page 113)

# Skepticism

- Late Middle Ages & Renaissance - social upheaval
- Feudal order crumbling - growth of cities, some universities
- Black Death (1348 – 1400) - killed 1/3 of people
- Friction between Protestants & Catholics
- Late 16th C - two views of humanity: humanistic emphasis on reason, intelligence, versus actual behaviour (violence, war, executions)
- Copernicus & Galileo (late 1500s – early 1600s)
- Medieval view – world rationally ordered, humans have soul & are close to God who is everywhere

# Plato's *Timaeus*

- World created by *demiurge* as model of Forms,
  - *Demiurge*: subordinate deity who fashions sensible world after the Forms; autonomous creative force or power.
- World is rationally ordered & knowable through human reason not revelation from God → science possible

## Intellectual advances

(1) development of heavy plow & horse harness

(2) philosophy applied to theology - St. Anselm of Canterbury sought rational argument for existence of God

