

# Chapter 3

## The Middle Ages and the Renaissance

### Classical Antiquity: Hellenistic (323 - 31 BCE) & Roman (31 BCE - 476 CE) Worlds

- After Alexander died (323 BCE) → Hellenistic period – wars between Alexander's generals & their heirs
- Disturbing social change → governors ruled like kings, people avoided political life & turned inwards
- Fear of *Tyche* (fate)
- Turned away from philosophy & science
- Turned inward to find peace at home & within themselves
- Attracted to mysticism, divine revelation

## Therapeutic Philosophies

- People sought *ataraxia* - freedom from disturbance
  - *Eudamonia* not attainable
- *Tyche* (fate) - unfavorable
- Sought self-control, personal contentment
- Purpose of philosophy → heal the soul
  - Anticipates psychotherapy
    - Leahey's theme of psychology as religion

## Therapeutic Philosophies - 2

- Epicurianism (Epicurus: 341 – 270 BCE)
- No use in philosophy unless it eases suffering of the soul
- Withdraw from world
- Live a quiet simple life of philosophy, friendship, avoidance of strong passions
- No everlasting soul & no life hereafter

## Therapeutic Philosophies - 3

### Cynicism: Diogenes

- Live naturally & simply, reject society & social conventions
  - “hippies of Hellenism”
- Disregard for pleasure or pain, personal possessions etc in pursuit of virtue
- Suffering caused by false values (material goods, fame etc.)

### Skepticism

- Distrusted sense perception
- Truth not knowable. Goal is *aporia* (enlightened ignorance)

## Therapeutic Philosophies - 4

### Stoicism (Zeno of Citium: 333 – 362 BCE)

- Became philosophy of Roman ruling class
- Universal, not limited to aristocracy or warriors
- Defined mental representation in terms of propositions rather than images.
  - Plato & Aristotle proposed images.
  - Propositions either true or false
  - Logic – combining propositions

## Therapeutic Philosophies - 5

- Logic = rules for reasoning
- Deterministic: *Tyche* inescapable. Universe based on rational plan (divine wisdom). One had to accept one's situation.
- Virtue = state of mind, inner mastery of emotions
  - We can control our mental world
  - Strong emotions → over-evaluation of people & things
  - Devalued personal possessions

## Therapeutic Philosophies - 6

- Social upheaval, laws varied from place to place. → Invented the idea of personal conscience, inner voice of reason
- Conscience → individuals could know right from wrong.
  - Adopted by Christians
- No personal immortality

## Religion

- One way of coping with difficult world → turn to transcendental world, e.g. religion.
- Turned to divine revelation rather than reason & observation of nature to obtain Truth
- Gnosticism (Gnostics were Christians)
- *Gnosis* = knowledge of secret teachings & rituals, secret interpretations of sacred texts
- Gnostic Gospels - writings from time of Christ or shortly afterwards
- Gnostic gospels discovered mid 20<sup>th</sup> century (Da Vinci Code mentions these)

## Neoplatonism

Plotinus (204 – 270 CE)

- Universe was hierarchy with supreme unknowable God (The One) at top
- *The One* emanated *Intelligence*, a god who ruled (Plato's) Forms
- From *Intelligence* emanated various creatures including humans
- Hierarchy of divine and worldly creatures
- Humans = divine souls in material bodies
- Physical world is poor copy of divine world (Dualism)

## Neoplatonism - 2

- Tried to turn people's eyes away from physical to spiritual
- Soul seen as imprisoned in body
- World of Forms: eternal & immutable, in state of bliss
- Ascetic, pleasures of body to be renounced

## Neoplatonism - 3

- Hypatia (355 – 415 CE) - philosopher, wrote on math & astronomy
  - Taught neoplatonism
  - seen as divine and sacred, virgin, renounced sexual pleasure
- Like Gnostics, kept divine secrets to a few initiates
- Rituals → feeling of “one with universe”
- Sought “inner eye” of reason leading to unity with “The One”
- Bishop Cyril of Alexandria - resented her & had her named as “witch” & murdered

## Mystery Cults

- Many mystery cults arose in Near East
- Involved special secret rites (mysteries)→ feeling of unity with 'god', revelation of divine truth
- Many ideas incorporated into Christianity
- Mithras - born of a virgin Dec 25, devotees baptized in water, ate meal of bread & wine
- Christianity adopted ideas from many different religions & philosophies
  - Including the notion of open discussion and importance of reason

## Early Christian Thought

- St. Augustine (345 – 430 CE) - combined Neoplatonism, Stoicism & teachings of Jesus Christ
- Discouraged philosophy & inquiry into the nature of things; faith was sufficient
  - Curiosity = “lust of the eyes”
- “It is not necessary to probe into the nature of things.... It is enough for the Christian to believe that the only cause of all created things ... is the One True God.”

## Early Middle Ages (Dark Ages) 476 - 1000

- Fall of Roman Empire 476 CE but was breaking down before this
- Barbarian invasions from the east & north from early 400s until around 1000 CE
- 395 CE –Roman Empire split in two
- After 476 CE, rise of feudalism, farmers tied to land, people much poorer, less literacy & culture.
- Rise of Eastern Empire (Turkey)

## Early Middle Ages - 2

- Loss of access to Greek & Roman literature except for *Timeaus*
- Greek & Roman economy based on slavery
- Lots of slaves available from military conquests
- Greeks valued *theoria* (philosophy) and denigrated *metis* (practical work of e.g. tradespeople)
- No need to develop better technologies to do work
- Did have millitary technologies, good engineering skills, & good government

## Early Middle Ages - 3

- Later part of early middle ages – some technical advances
  - Heavy plow & horse harness meant that previously unusable land could be farmed.
  - Intellectual advance: application of philosophy(reason) to theology.
  - St. Anselm of Canterbury (1033 – 1109)
    - Rationale argument for existence of God

## Medieval Psychology

- Augustine (354 - 430)
- Combined stoicism, neoplatonism, Christian faith
- Know God by knowing one's own soul
- Negative attitudes towards sex, ascetism, in Christian thought - traced to Augustine, Plotinus, Plato & Pythagoras
- Neoplatonism: humans between God & material world
  - Senses tied to material world; reason tied to God

## Medieval Psychology - 2

- Islamic world - Aristotle's ideas developed + Islamic medical traditions
- Physicians sought brain structures corresponding to internal senses, but didn't do dissections
- Interior senses – correspond to Aristotle's faculties:
  - where body & soul meet
- Islamic medicine attempted to relate body structures to mind (or soul)

## Ibn Sina (or Avicenna) (980 - 1037)

- Vegetative soul (all living things): reproduction, growth, nourishment
- Sensitive soul (animals & human beings): 5 Exterior Senses, 7 Interior Senses (Mental faculties) & Appetite, + Rational Soul
  - Compare to Aristotle's 3 interior senses
  - Common Sense (as in Aristotle)
  - Retentive imagination – retains images of objects

## Ibn Sina - 2

### Interior Senses, cont'd

- Compositive animal imagination – combines images (Think associations between mental images)
- Compositive human imagination – creative imagination (Think unicorns)
- Estimation – intuitions about benefit & harm (evaluation & judgments)
- Memory – stores intuitions from estimations

## Ibn Sina - 3

### Sensitive soul , cont'd

- Recollection – recalls intuitions from memory
- Info in memory = abstract ideas, general conclusions from experience, not true universal laws
- Internal senses located in ventricles of brain - Ibn Sina did not do dissections
- motivation: appetite - seek pleasure; avoid pain

## Ibn Sina (or Avicenna) -4

- Rational soul: knows general laws, abstract concepts, unique to human soul
- Practical intellect - maintains body, controls behaviour, protects contemplative intellect
- Contemplative intellect – (Passive Mind) knowledge of generalities learned through experience
- Active Intellect was outside human soul
  - Illuminates contemplative mind → knowledge of (Platonic) Forms

## **The Individual in the Middle Ages**

- Anglo-American tradition - emphasis on individual rights & responsibilities, as opposed to rights of the king or state
- Psychology = science of individual (Leahey) rather than science of roles or stereotypes
- Concept of the individual & his or her role depends on culture
- Idea of “the individual” developed in Middle Ages

## **The Individual in the Middle Ages - 2**

- 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)

## **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
- 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)**

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

- Aristotles' s works & Muslim developments brought to Europe
- Challenged Christian thought (dualist & Platonic)
- Aristotle - naturalist vs. Plato - metaphycsist
- St. Thomas Aquinas (1225 - 1274) -Aristotelian vs. St. Bonaventure (1221 - 1274) -Neoplatonic

## Christian Psychology - 2

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

## Christian Psychology - 3

### St. Thomas Aquinas

- Aquinas showed how Aristotle's ideas not incompatible with Christian thought
- Human reason limited to knowledge of world, God known from His work in the world
- Extended Avicenna's view of the mind
- 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

## Christian Psychology - 3

### Aquinas, cont'd

- Two kinds of appetite:
  - (1) pleasure – pain
  - (2) Intellectual appetite - Search for knowledge, the 'greater good'
- Knowledge is product of human thinking, (*Cogitava*) not divine illumination
- Hierarchical organization of faculties (Platonic)

## Christian Psychology -4

- Rejected dualism of body & soul. Body & soul not separable. Body not seen as prison for the soul.
- Empiricist - no innate ideas; have knowledge of the world through senses; knowledge of God indirect through knowledge of world.
- Introspection won't reveal God; communion or union with God impossible
- Conceptually separated reason and revelation as sources of knowledge

## 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
- (Abstract) 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)
- 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 - 2

- 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.

## Quiz

1. Compare the ideas of St. Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas
2. Describe the contributions of Peter Abelard, William Ockham's, and Nicholas d' Autrecourt to psychology?

## 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
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## 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
  - Dante, (1265 – 1321) Chaucer (1343 - 1400), Shakespeare 1564 – 1616, Cervantes (1547 – 1616)
- 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
- Minstrels – sang songs about romantic love
  - Songs written by clerics, or minstrels who had hopes of something in return for their songs.
- 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

## **The Renaissance: The Mind Within**

- Renaissance began in Italy & spread to Europe
- 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 his sins, not repentant. (Compare Dante's characters)
- → psychological drama
- Anticipates psychotherapy

## 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 favour in all quarters of the world: ... ageless beauty, dignity without pride, love with modesty , politeness springing from good breeding, and high lineage.” (Leahey, p. 110)
- Satire on courtly love literature
- Psychological novel: Novel about hopes, dreams & delusions of one person

## 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

## 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
- Francis Bacon (1561 – 1626) - beginnings of experimental science
- Leonardo da Vinci (1452 – 1519) - anatomical drawings
- Andreas Vesalius (1515 – 1564)- dissections
- Niccolo Machiavelli (1469 – 1427) - political thought (*The Prince*)

## 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)

## 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

## 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

## Conclusion

- Greeks admired athletes, warriors, politicians (Guardians) & philosophers, but denigrated the tradespeople and artisans (*metis* or practical knowledge).
- Practical work seen as vulgar because it was done by slaves (compare English ‘gentleman’)
  - No understanding of economics
- In Greece & Rome existence of slaves made technology unnecessary & demeaning. Citizens did not need to work.
- Roman war machine - made slaves available
- Rome doomed to fall because society could not develop

## Quiz

1. What is the Greek concept of *psyche* and how does it differ from the Christian idea of the soul?
2. How did military life and values influence the political system in ancient Greece?
3. Describe the speculations of the Greek philosophers which anticipated later scientific ideas.

## OVERVIEW

- The Early Middle Ages or Late Antiquity (476 – 1100)
- High Middle Ages (1100 – 1350)
- Late Middle Ages & Renaissance

### Medieval Psychology

- Islamic Psychology
- Christian psychology
- Rebirth of empiricism

NOTE: Some material is in Chapter 4 of 7<sup>th</sup> ed.

## OVERVIEW - 2

### The Individual

- Development of the idea of the 'individual' and individuality in the Middle Ages.

### The Renaissance

- Revival of classical knowledge → humanism
- Renaissance naturalism
- Reformation
- Skepticism

## 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