

Chapter 2

The Classical World: Greece and Rome

Chapter 2: Overview

- Bronze Age (3000 –1200 BCE)
 - Ruled by warrior-kings
- The Dark Age (1200 – 700 BCE)
 - Homer: *Iliad* and *Odyssey* 850 BCE or later
 - Greek alphabet developed
- Ancient Greece: The Archaic Period (700 – 500 BCE)
 - Development of polis & *phalanx*
- Ancient Greece: The Classical Period (500 – 323 BCE)
- The Great Classical Philosophies
 - Socrates, Plato and Aristotle

Ancient Greece

- **The Bronze Age (3000 – 1200 and the Dark Age (1200 - 700 BCE)**
- kings were great warriors
- warrior values – physical strength, male bonding, individual glory, immortality won through battle
- Despised self interest
- *Arete* (virtue) = living honourably by warrior code, not available to women, lower classes, cripples etc.
- Later: achieve fame through debate
- Fear of *Tyche* (fate)

Ancient Greece – Bronze Age cont' d

- soul distinguished living and dead things
- *psuche* - breath of life
- *Psuche logos* – discourse on or study of the soul
→ psychology
- “mini-souls” - governed behaviour, perception, cognition (mental faculties) – did not live after death of body
- *Psuche* of virtuous warrior could have afterlife if proper burial rites were used

The Archaic Period (700 - 500 BCE)

- Rise of the *polis* (pl. poleis) - city state ruled by citizens (male aristocrats)
- *Iliad* & *Odyssey* written by Homer
- Bronze Age warriors fought as individuals – successful warriors gained riches & had chariots
- **Phalanx**: lightly armoured soldiers (*hoplites*) fought as unit. Soldiers fought on foot, not from chariots
- Soldiers were ordinary people, not aristocrats

The Archaic Period - 2

- In phalanx, teamwork was essential, not individual bravery – all soldiers equal
- Emphasis on economic & political equality (all warriors served the *polis*), uniformity of clothing, attitudes etc.
- Virtue (*sophrosyne*) = self control from wisdom & self discipline
- *arete* (virtue) - attained by serving the *polis* as a warrior, or as a citizen who engaged in public debate
 - Individual glory avoided

Beginnings of Philosophy, Physics & Psychology

- Closed vs. open systems of thought
- Thales of Miletus (around 585 BCE) – encouraged systematic criticism of ideas, discussion lead to improvement
- Separate quality of ideas from quality of person. All citizens equal.
- Leahey: Founding a critical tradition of thought was the major achievement of the Greek inventors of philosophy. (p. 41)
- Citizens participated in public affairs, extensive discussion, laws agreed upon by citizens (not imposed by kings)
- Open system essential for science & philosophy

Beginnings of Physics

- Thales of Miletus (585 BCE) - *phusis* (basic element of all matter) was water
 - World understandable – made of ordinary matter not affected by actions of gods or other supernatural beings or forces
 - Thale' s student, Aniximander, proposed that phusis was not a recognizable substance, but was something different that could take on many forms
- movement towards naturalistic explanations not supernatural

Beginnings of Physics - 2

- Naturalism : scientific laws can account for all phenomenon. No appeal to the supernatural allowed. Fundamental tenet of science.
 - Scientific explanations do not refer to gods, actions of the soul, magical powers, devils or spirits controlling humans etc.
- Pythagoras of Samos (530 BCE)
- Mathematician - notion of proof based on reason, not divine revelation or authority
- Pythagoras – dualist, founded a cult
 - Soul could exist without body. Body was prison which held the soul. Punish the body to help soul attain truth.

Being and Becoming: Parmenides & Heraclitus

- Parmenides of Elea (475 BCE): reality = unchanging substance (water), change was illusion
 - Plato: there exist universal truths and values which go beyond changing beliefs and opinions
 - Truth exists apart from the physical world.
- Way of Seeming (appearances, Becoming) vs. Way of Truth (reality, Being)
- Heraclitus of Ephesus: only constant is change.
 - *phusis* was fire, not water
 - moral values change with society
 - useful truths, no eternal Truth
 - change regulated by universal harmony that maintains equilibrium

Parmenides & Heraclitus

- If reality & appearance not the same, how could we know reality?
 - promoted epistemology (study of nature and basis of knowledge)
 - promoted inquiry into how we have knowledge of the world, sensation, perception, memory etc.
 - rationalism: must rely on reason, can't trust senses vs. empiricism: knowledge comes from experience in the world

Alcmaeon & Empedocles

- Physician-philosophers who inquired into perception & thought (protopsychologists)
 - physiological basis for mental activity (not the immaterial soul)
 - Alcmaeon of Croton (500 BC) - dissected the eye, traced optic nerve to brain, thought occurred in brain
 - Empedocles of Acragas - theory of perception – effluences: modality specific copies of objects which enter the body through the sense organs
 - Thought occurred in the heart
- purely physical basis for perception & cognition

The Last Physicists

- Leucippus of Miletus (430 BCE) & Democritus of Abdera (420 BCE)
- Atomists: proposed notion of atoms: all objects composed of infinitesimally small atoms. Between atoms was “the void”
- Argued that there was no God and no soul
→ *Materialism* → *hedonism*
 - Moral values reduced to physical pleasure & pain

The Last Physicists - 2

- Free will is an illusion; everything happens out of necessity. Natural laws govern the world.
- *Tyche* (fate) → determinism
- Democritus: objects emit *eidola* (copies) which we perceive through our senses (see Descartes)
 - Perception of the world is indirect

The Classical Period (500 - 323 BCE)

Social Context:

- Independent city states (chief were Athens & Sparta)
- Peloponnesian wars (431 – 404 BC): Athens + allies vs. Sparta + allies, including Persia (now Iran)
- *Hubris* - excessive pride. Athens was wealthy, centre of culture. Had empire.
- Sparta allied with Persia & defeated Athens
- Greece conquered by Philip of Macedon & Alexander the Great

The Sophists

- Greek citizens participated in political discussions, argued lawsuits, served on juries etc.
- *Sophists* = teachers of rhetoric
- humanists: interested in human nature & “best way to live”
 - Compare to naturalists – interested in world around us
- *Humanism* – philosophy that stresses value & dignity of individual & human fulfillment through reason

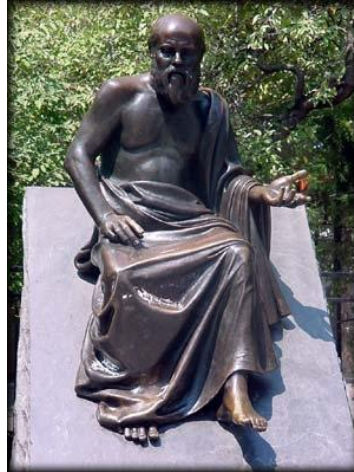
The Sophists

- Relevant reality lies in appearance (not in underlying true Reality)
- Athenians saw human nature as fixed & Greek values as the only correct way.
- Sophists challenged Greek values - argued cultural relativism
- No divine truths (god-given laws), but could have good laws by which to live (*nomos*)
- human nature flexible & adaptive, many possible ways to live well.

The Sophists - 2

- Should focus on useful practical information, not speculation about Truth, ultimate reality
- Differentiated *physis* (natural laws) & *nomos* (human laws)
- Greeks assumed human nature was fixed & Athenian way best
- Sophists – human beings flexible & adaptable. Human laws could be different for different societies.
- Note: assumptions about human nature determine political views

Socrates

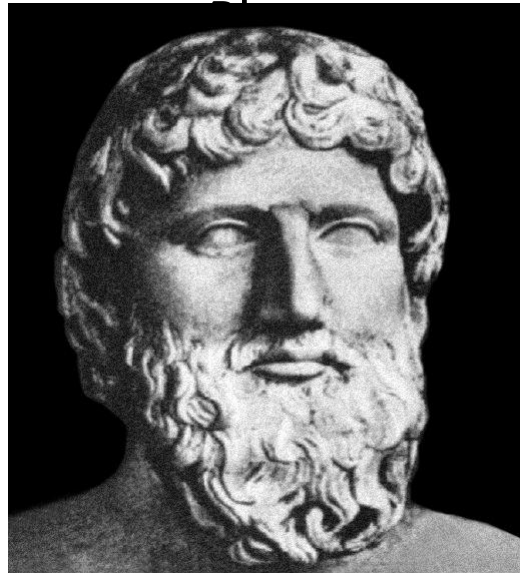


Socrates

- Modest background, son of stone-mason
- Moral philosopher: sought true nature of virtue, sought to understand abstract concepts (justice, beauty etc.)
- goal: challenge Athenian hubris & values
- *elenchus*: questioning technique, counter examples
- Everyone possesses moral truth (nativism) Questioning brings out truth.
- *aporia* - enlightened ignorance

Socrates - 2

- True Knowledge not intuitive, must justify & give reasons
- Open system. Compare authoritarian regimes (Chairman Mao, North Korea) & religions based on divine revelation which cannot be questioned
- → questioning attitude essential for science
- *Eudamonia* - living well. Virtue & happiness linked.
- Believed in innate moral sense which needed development
- Immoral behaviour - result of ignorance, poor teaching, false beliefs, improper upbringing
 - human motivation



Plato: The Quest for Perfect Knowledge

- Born between 429 & 423 BCE
- Peloponnesian Wars: 431 – 404 BC
- student of Socrates, Aristocrat
- Some aristocrats rebelled unsuccessfully against the democratic government of Athens
 - Socrates questioned Athenian values & was seen by aristocrats as being dangerous
- Disenchanted with politics & war; disillusioned after execution of Socrates

Plato - 2

- Devoted to study of justice and moral good
 - Doing good for the sake of it, not for personal gain
- First to inquire into knowledge; epistemology = theory of knowledge, how acquired & how justified
- Sought to explain abstract knowledge - beyond here and now, beyond specific instances
 - Abstract knowledge distinguished animals & humans
- notion of universal truths - true in all times & in all places

Plato - 3

- Like Socrates, Plato believed that knowledge must be justified
- Believed that true knowledge was possible, but...
- Sense perception not the path to knowledge, world in Heraclitean state of becoming.
 - *Phusis* was fire (always changing)
- True knowledge not to be found in material world but in realm of Being
- Studied mathematics with Pythagorians → logic & reason led to Truth
 - ascetism

Plato - 4

- Geometric proof (e.g. Pythagoras' theorem) was universal truth
 - Knowledge from reason
 - Adopted Pythagoras' ascetic notions (self denial)
- Pythagoras' theorem true for *The Form of the Right-Angled Triangle*
- Forms belong to realm of Being (not material world of Becoming)
- True Knowledge was knowledge of the Forms
- Metaphysical Realism: Forms really exist, but are not material. Forms belong to World of Being
- Parallel to material world (World of Becoming)
 - Dualism

Metaphors for the Forms

Simile of the Sun

- In vision, eye needed to see object, but sun also needed; sun = 3rd thing
- In knowledge, reason can understand Forms; need 3rd thing: divine illumination or Form of the Good

Metaphor of the Line

- Line divided into unequal segments: (1) smaller section: world of appearances - images & perceptions; (2) larger section: world of true knowledge - mathematics, moral truths, Form of the Good

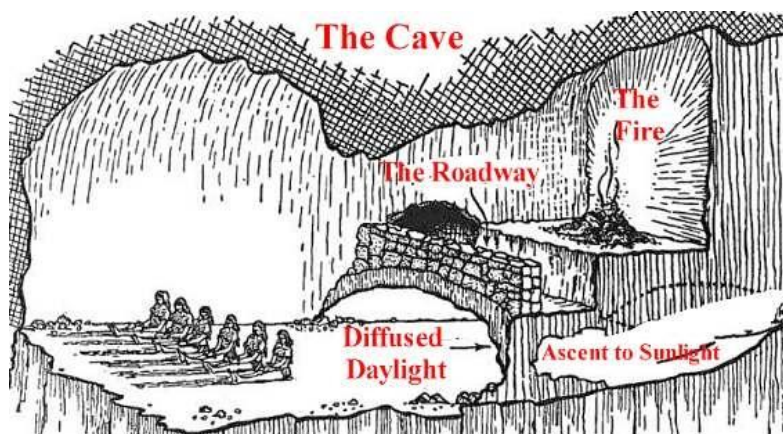
Metaphor of the Line

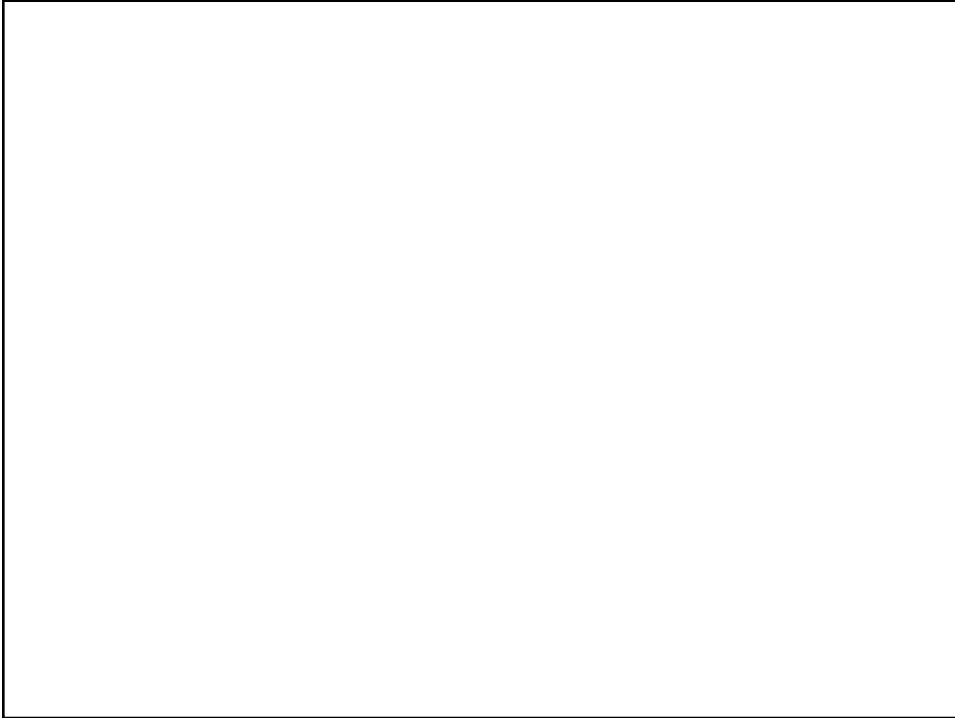
Faculty (within the soul)		Object (out there)	
KNOWLEDGE	Reason (Dialectic)	Higher Forms (Beauty, Justice, Truth, etc.)	Intelligible World Lit by the Form of the Good
	Understanding (based on assumptions)	Forms of Math and Science	
OPINION	Perception, Belief	Particular Things - Living and Artificial	Visible or Sensible World Lit by the Sun
	Conjecture, Imagining	Shadows, Images, Reflections, Copies	

Allegory of the Cave: Prison of Culture

- Prisoners look at back of cave. Fire behind prisoners casts shadows of objects onto wall of cave. Reality = shadows on wall
- Soul imprisoned in body, perceives imperfect images of objects through senses (= shadows)
- Cave is culture – restricts beliefs & perceptions
- Seek Truth (understanding of Forms), overcome ignorance & illusion, culturally accepted but false values & beliefs
 - Path to true knowledge through education, *elenchus* (questioning) - difficult
- True Knowledge only for the privileged few, the elite who have the strength of character

Allegory of the Cave





Ladder of Love

- *Eros* – god of sexual love (often homosexual), heterosexual love for procreation. Men had close relationships: mentor - protege.
 - Women also had homosexual relationships
- Love of women inferior to love of men, women seen as temptresses distracting men from higher pursuits (war, politics & philosophy)
 - cf. Christianity & Islam
 - Socrates condemned sexual liaisons.
- The Ladder of Love comes from Diotima, a woman & teacher of Socrates.

Ladder of Love

- Appreciation of beautiful bodies (lust) → love of one person → love of all beautiful bodies & souls (male citizens) → beautiful soul → abstract beauty (mathematics, philosophy)
 - Lust must be abandoned by learning philosophy
- *The Republic*: education described. Elite souls, including women & people of “low” birth, were selected.
- Exposed to the best literature, music, athletics & philosophy
 - became Guardians who served the Republic

Learning as Remembering

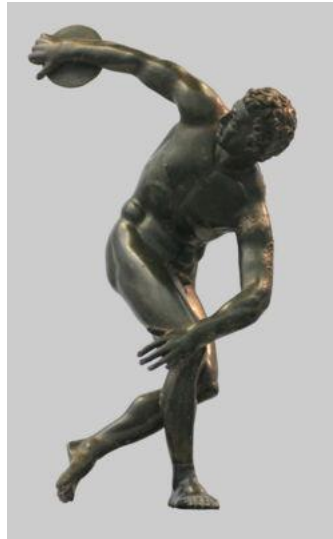
- Reincarnation - souls born in heaven & see Forms.
 - knowledge of forms innate, but forgotten when soul entered body
- *Nativism* - innate knowledge of virtue, but education needed to develop knowledge.
- Knowledge of Forms recoverable through reason.
- Athletics to train the body, music & literature to train the soul. Exposure to beauty, justice etc. important
- Philosophy → for the future Guardians (rulers)

Learning & Remembering -

2

- Only noblest souls (including women!) received education
 - Plato was elitist
- Fate of a soul depends on how virtuous a life it led
- Souls brought to judgement at death & come back as beasts. Philosophers escape reincarnation after 3rd incarnation)

The Discus Thrower



Motivation

- Three classes of citizens: Guardians, Auxiliaries (soldiers, magistrates, like civil servants), & Productive class (tradesmen)
- Three types of soul in each person:
 - (1) Rational - immortal soul,
 - Dominates in the Guardians
 - Located in the head
 - (2) Spirited - motivated by glory & fame, feels shame & guilt – located in the chest
 - Dominates in Auxiliaries
 - (3) Desiring – governed by self interest, unfit to rule because put self-interest first
 - dominates in productive class

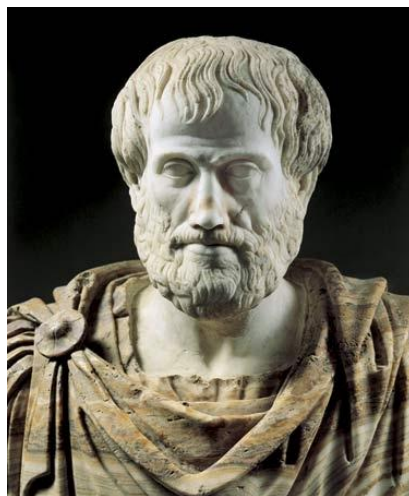
Motivation - 2

- Analogy to charioteer with two horses, one upright & manageable, the other barely so
- Compare Freud's super ego, ego, & id
- Bad behaviour stems from insufficient mastery by rational souls of spirited and desiring souls (Charioteer not in control.)
- Separation of reason from emotion (spirited & desiring souls)
 - Compare Enlightenment, romanticism
- All three types of souls must have some reason (in order to achieve goals), & rational soul motivated by love of Beauty, Justice, the Good, etc.

Plato and Western Thought

- Dualism: distinction between material world and spiritual world (Forms, soul, heaven). Socrates' *eudaemonia* was a virtuous life on earth.
Elitism - education only for the elite (rational souls)
- Nativism - knowledge innate, quality of soul determined before birth
- Reason vs. emotion
 - Romantics trusted intuition & emotion
- *Theoria vs metis*:
 - *Theoria*: contemplation of the abstract (math & philosophy)
 - *Metis*: development of practical knowledge or technology.

Aristotle



Aristotle (384 -322 BCE)

- Father was physician to Philip of Macedon, who conquered Greece 338 BCE
- Plato's student, then did zoological research, tutored Alexander the Great
- Observer of nature, natural philosopher (scientist), not metaphysical like Plato
 - Did not do experiments
- No division between *phusis* and *nomos*
 - Human laws (*nomos*) should be based on human nature
- Unlike Socrates & Plato, Aristotle developed a systematic philosophy

Matter and Form

- Matter = sheer undifferentiated physical existence (the universe just after the Big Bang & before elements formed)
 - matter unknowable unless joined to form
- Form: the defining quality of something which makes it knowable to us
- e.g. statue: matter = material from which statue is made (e.g. bronze, iron, wood, clay etc)
- Form = the person or object represented by the statue (e.g. statue of king)
- In perception mind receives form of object, not matter

Aristotle, cont' d

- Aristotle rejected Separability of the Forms (Dualism)
 - could have n statues, don't need (n + 1)th statue which is immaterial, heavenly, idealized statue.
 - Forms don't explain anything.
 - No "heavenly" or spiritual world of Forms
 - Not a complete materialist – believed in existence of soul
 - Four Fashions of Explanation
 - 1) Essential Cause = definition, essence
 - 2) Efficient Cause = how things come to be or are made
 - 3) Final Cause = purpose for which thing was created
 - 4) What makes it knowable to us.
- All 4 constitute "form".

Aristotle: Potentiality and Actuality

- All things possess both potentiality & actuality except *prime mover* (pure actuality) and pure matter (pure potentiality – the universe just after the big bang)
 - *prime mover* cannot change, later identified by Christians with God.
- Great Chain of Being (or *Scala Natura*): grand hierarchy among all things according to actuality.
 - Things naturally move closer to *prime mover*, becoming more actualized
 - Note similarity with Darwin's ideas about evolution

Aristotle: Potentiality and Actuality - 2

- How explain why acorn becomes an oak – *final cause*.
Acorn strives towards actuality of being an oak.
- *Final cause* explains development
 - Today we understand genetics which determine physical structure of living things
 - Greeks understood that development was determined (acorn becomes oak tree, not something else) but didn't understand why

Aristotle and the Soul

Soul and Body

- Soul = breath of life
= the form of a natural body having life potentially within it
- Soul is essential cause – what defines a living thing
- Soul is efficient cause (genesis)
 - Actuality which animates body, causes movement & thought
 - Without soul, the body dies
- Soul is final cause (purpose)
 - Body serves soul; soul guides body's development & activity
- Aristotle rejected dualism of Plato: body & soul not separable. Body & soul united in living organism

Aristotle and the Soul - 2

- Soul = set of capacities of living thing, capacity of the body to act
- Aristotle not a materialist, does not deny existence of soul
- Aristotle not a dualist.

Types of Souls

- Different forms of living things have different souls
- differing in actualization (level of evolution???)

Aristotle and the Soul - 3

- 1) Nutritive - in plants,
 - functions: nutrition, reproduction & growth
- 2) Sensitive - in animals
 - Nutritive soul + senses
 - Seeks pleasure, avoids pain → movement
 - Imagination & memory for sensations
 - Desire (from imagining or remembering sensations) → movement

Aristotle and the Soul - 4

3) Rational Soul - in humans

- Highest level of actualization
- Has reason (mind) in addition to powers of sensitive soul
- Acquires knowledge
- Soul and body not separable
- Body serves the soul & soul guides purposive development & activity

Aristotle: Sensory Perception

- Acquiring knowledge begins with perception & ends with knowledge of universals
- Perception = mind receiving form of object, but not matter
- 5 special(ized) senses: vision, hearing, touch, taste, smell
- Senses passive & unerring; e.g. eye jelly turned green when perceiving green object
- Perceptual realist:
 - senses detected real properties (special sensibles) of objects
 - No distinction between primary and secondary properties
- Allowed for cognitive errors in misinterpreting sensations

Interior Senses

- Common sense - solved *binding problem*
 - unifies perception, we perceive objects not sensations
- identifying *common sensible* (object to be perceived) required judgement which required internal senses
 - Fallible: e.g. could see a person & misperceive
- Imagination (retrieval of memory trace?) = ability to represent form of object in its absence
 - Involved in judging what an object is (retrieval?)
 - involved in pleasure & pain, evaluating an object → behaviour
 - Fallible – I think I see a ladybug

Interior Senses - 2

- Memory = storehouse of images created by common sense & imagination (episodic memory)
- based on association of ideas: laws of similarity, contiguity, contrast & causality
 - Separated memory from knowledge (semantic memory)
 - Knowledge – function of the soul

Aristotle: Mind

- Mind (*nous*) – unique to humans
- acquired knowledge about abstract universals (concepts, semantic memory)
 - Abstract universals were images formed by combining images of individual objects
 - First theory of concepts
- Active mind acts on contents of passive mind to achieve rational knowledge. Same in all humans (not “essence” of the person)

Aristotle: Mind - 2

- Active mind = pure thought (processor)
 - acts on contents of passive mind to achieve rational knowledge of universals
 - Unchangeable, pure actuality (no potentiality) - survived death
- Active mind >< personality, essence of the individual
 - Same in all people
- Passive mind = abstract knowledge, pure potentiality LTM storage ???)

Aristotle: Motivation

- Animal motivation – immediate wants & needs
- Human motivation – same + desire to do “the right thing”
- Natural proper goal of human life → *eudaemonia* (flourishing)
- Human soul rational & capable of virtue
- Human = social & political animals, *eudaemonia* depends on ordered society (*nomos* = man-made laws)

Aristotle: Ethics

- Humans are naturally social; *eudaemonia* requires properly run state.
- Ideal state = ‘aristocratic’ democracy, wealthy citizens who didn’t need to work should rule
 - Guardians - independently wealthy who could spend time on politics & not need to make living. Disinterested (but not uninterested).
- Leisure necessary for development of virtue & performance of political duties.



- End of Lecture

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

Therapeutic Philosophies - 2

Cynicism

- 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 - 3

Stoicism (Zeno of Citium: 333 – 362 BCE)

- Became philosophy of Roman ruling class
- Universal, not limited to aristocracy or warriors
- 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
- 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.
- No personal immortality

Religion

- Turned to divine revelation rather than use of 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 20th century (Da Vinci Code mentions these)
- Hermeticism - writings of Hermes Trismegitus, shortly after Christ

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
- Physical world is poor copy of divine world (Dualism)
- 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

Neoplatonism - 2

- Ascetic, pleasures of body to be renounced
- Hypatia (355 – 415 CE) - philosopher, wrote on math & astronomy, teacher
 - 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”
- Bishop Cyril of Alexandria - resented her & had her named as “witch” & murdered

Mystery Cults

- 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

Early Christian Thought

- St. Augustine (345 – 430 CE) - combined Neoplatonism, Stoicism & teachings of Jesus Christ (See Chapter 3)
- 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.”

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.

Quiz

1. What are the four metaphors for the Forms?
2. Describe Plato's view of human soul?
3. What ideas and contrasts did Plato introduce that are still with us?

Quiz

- 1. Explain Aristotle's concept of form and how it related to the soul.
- 2. Describe Aristotle's theory of the soul (mind).

