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

<u>Cynicism: Diogenes</u>
- 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.)

<u>Skepticism</u>
- Distrusted sense perception
- Truth not knowable. Goal is *aporia* (enlightened ignorance)

Therapeutic Philosophies - 4

<u>Stoicism (Zeno of Citium: 333 – 362 BCE)</u>
- 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 20th 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
- 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" 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

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."

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
- After 476 CD, 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)
- 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

- <u>Augustine</u> (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 & Plato
- 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
- 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)

- <u>Vegetative soul</u> (all living things): reproduction, growth, nourishment
- <u>Sensitive soul (animals & human beings)</u>: 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 form estimations

Ibn Sina - 2

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: <u>appetite</u> - seek pleasure; avoid pain

Ibn Sina (or Avicenna) cont'd

- <u>Rational soul</u>: knows general laws, abstract concepts, unique to human soul
- <u>Practical intellect</u> - maintains body, controls behaviour, protects contemplative intellect
- <u>Contemplative intellect</u> – (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 developed in High Middle Ages (1100 – 1350) - portraits, biographies - mirrors
- Interest in individual differences in Psych. Developed in 19th C (Galton)

- End of Lecture