

# **A BRIEF HISTORY OF EVERYTHING**

**Or, at least everything that happened  
between 1300 and 1660**

**(more or less)**

**Catholicism → Anglicanism/Protestantism**

**Latinate → English**

**absolute monarchy → constitutional monarchy**

**Court-centred → City-centred power base**

**Agrarianism → capitalism**

**land-based economy → money-based economy**

**rural → urban**

**Ptolemy (geocentric) → Copernican (heliocentric)**

**(spiritual) deductive epistemology → (secular)  
inductive epistemology**

# A BRIEF HISTORY OF EVERYTHING cont'd

## Cultural Effects of Printing:

- increased accuracy and proofreading; impetus for STANDARDIZATION OF SPELLING AND GRAMMAR
- decreasing expense of texts → increasing availability → increasing literacy
- historical record: more printed texts to fill in the gaps of history
- increased communication and debate through wider circulation of pamphlet literature
- wider dissemination of the English language as legitimate language of literature
- wider dissemination of Classical texts in English translation, and in printed form in original Latin
- comparison and standardization of literary texts and translations; scholarly community

# **A BRIEF HISTORY OF EVERYTHING cont'd**

## **HUMANISM**

### **HUMANIST CURRICULUM**

#### **TRIVIUM:**

Grammar  
(later includes history and literature)

Rhetoric

Dialectic (Logic)

#### **QUADRIVIUM:**

Geometry

Arithmetic

Astronomy

Music

# **A BRIEF HISTORY OF EVERYTHING cont'd**

## **Basic Tenets of Humanism:**

- 1) attention to language/education
- 2) increased attention to public life
- 3) historical awareness
- 4) emph. on human possibility and potential

# A BRIEF HISTORY OF EVERYTHING cont'd

## REFORMATION

### Doctrinal Reformation

- **Individual conscience**
- **sacraments, transubstantiation:** baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, penance, extreme unction, holy orders and matrimony
- **English Bible**
  - **William Tyndale:** 1526

"I had perceaved by experyence, how that it was impossible to stablysh the laye people in any truth , excepte the scripture were playnly layed before their eyes in their mother tonge, that they might se the processe, ordre and meaninge of the texte. . ." (CE 59).

- **dispensations, indulgences**
- **puritan critique of luxury**

# **A BRIEF HISTORY OF EVERYTHING cont'd**

## **REVOLUTION AND CIVIL WAR**

### **PURITANISM:**

**English language**

**Presbyterian**

#### **Sects**

**Levellers**

**Diggers**

**Quakers**

**Ranters**

**Republicanism**

## **A BRIEF HISTORY OF EVERYTHING cont'd**

**Royal Balancing Acts:** oscillation between Catholic and Protestant (and ambiguous) monarchies

**Defender of the Faith:** Henry VIII, 1520

**Act of Supremacy:** Henry VIII

**Destruction of the Monasteries:** 1535-9

**Edward VI** 1547 (Protestant)

**Bloody Mary** 1553 (Catholic)

**Elizabeth I** 1558 (Protestant)

**The Act of Uniformity:** Elizabeth I, 1559

**James I** 1603 (Protestant... sort of)

**Charles I** 1625 (Protestant... sort of)

# **A BRIEF HISTORY OF EVERYTHING cont'd**

## **REVOLUTION AND CIVIL WAR**

### **Absolute Monarchy v Parliament**

#### **The Long Parliament: 1640**

#### **Closing of the Theatres: 1642**

**Regicide: 1649** Charles I executed as a "traitor"

**Interregnum and Commonwealth:** Oliver Cromwell

**Restoration: 1660** Charles II = constitutional monarch



## A BRIEF HISTORY OF EVERYTHING cont'd

### UPSHOT:

- "the people" have become a political voice
- advancement of English
- pragmatic reforms: education, infrastructure, economics
- advancement of science: Royal Society etc.
  - dissenters excluded from universities and office, so tended toward sciences, engineering etc.
- roots of "liberal humanism"

## A DAY IN THE LIFE

### 3 ESTATES:

PEASANTRY  
CHURCH  
NOBILITY

PRE-(Norman)CONQUEST (410-1066)

Let's say, oh, 950s common era

POST-(Norman)CONQUEST (1066-1475)

Let's say, oh, 1380s common era

For EACH ESTATE ASK (for both men and women):

What language do I speak?

Where do I get my news?

What do I know about the past?

Which God(s) do I talk to, and how?

How much do I travel?

What books do I read?

What do I do all day?

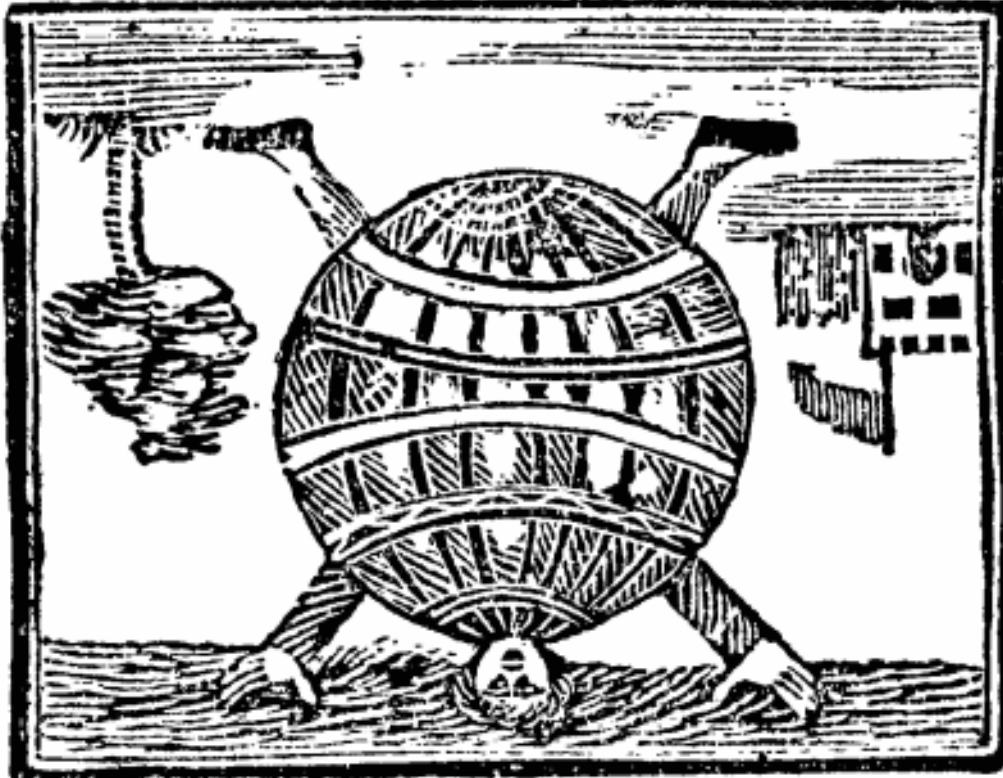


Figure 1: World Turned Upside-Down: from Project Gutenberg



Figure 2: The Wife Leads the Husband in Traces: from Project Gutenberg

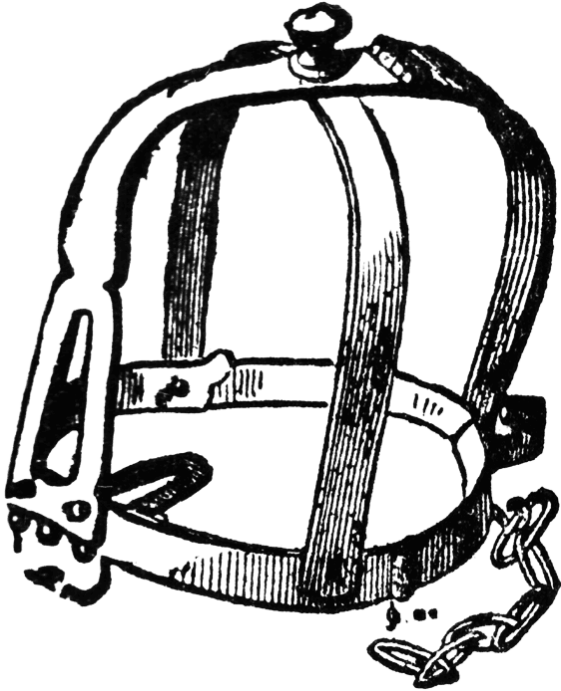
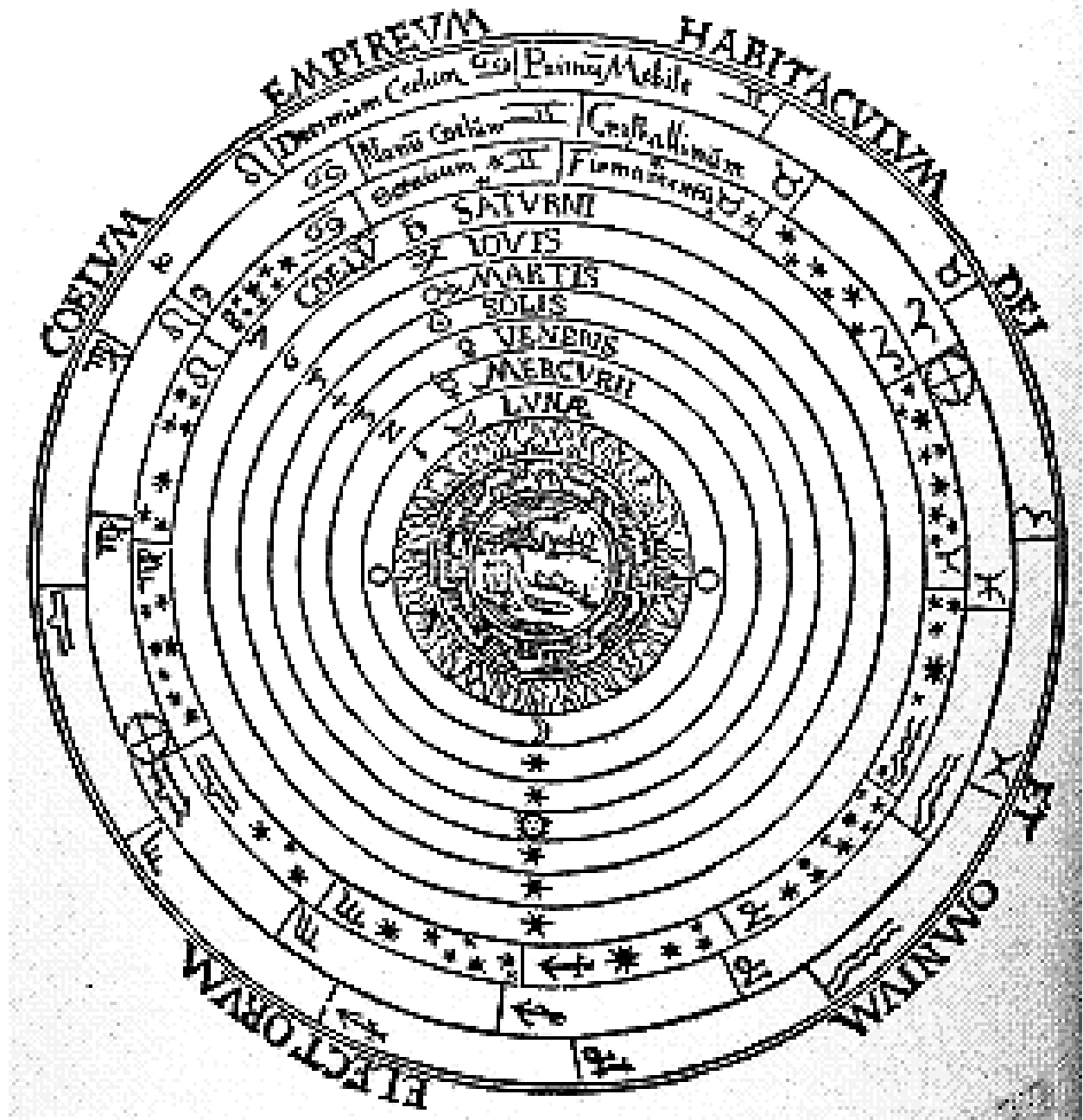


Figure 3: The Brank or Scold's Bridle



Figure 4: Charivari



CELESTIAL SPHERES

## DRAMATIC LYRIC VS DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE

(cage-match!)

(No, not really. Sorry)

(Still, though, it's awfully exciting\*)

### DRAMATIC LYRIC

Speaker/indirectly indicated listener

+

Specific occasion or crisis

+

Emphasis on IDEAS

### DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE

Speaker/indirectly indicated listener

+

Specific occasion or crisis

+

Emphasis on CHARACTER

\*exciting = wow, my brain is now bigger than it was five minutes ago

## **METAPHYSICAL POETRY**

Some basic elements of the "school" are:

- REJECTION OF ELIZABETHAN AESTHETIC
- ARGUMENTATIVE STYLE
- METAPHYSICAL CONCEIT
- WIT
- AUSTERE AND INTELLECTUAL TONE
- TENDENCY TO DRAW ON WIDE-RANGING THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL SCIENTIFIC CONTEXTS

## **METAPHYSICS**

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*,

METAPHYSICS refers to "the underlying concepts or first principles on which a particular branch of knowledge is based." It is "the branch of philosophy that deals with the first principles of things or reality, including questions about being, substance, time and space, causation, change, and identity" and is "[b]ased on abstract general reasoning."

META='above' or 'beyond'



## **THE "ENLIGHTENMENT"**

- EMPIRICIST science
- RATIONALITY
- STANDARIZATION of the language
- TAXONOMY
- CIVILITY: social refinement
- INDIVIDUALISM
- SATIRE

## MODELS OF "HUMAN NATURE"

### *HOBBSIAN SELF-INTEREST*

- Humans are neither "good" nor "bad" but merely self-interested
- "goodness" or "badness" is determined by LAW
- Humans bind together in social groupings for protection and stability

### *ROUSSEAUUVIAN OPTIMISM*

- Humans are born "innocent" and "naturally" noble
- Society corrupts by imposing "artificiality"

### *METHODIST "ORIGINAL SIN"*

- Humans are born "fallen" due to Original Sin
- cultural institutions such as RELIGION and GOVERNMENT are necessary to contain essential sinfulness

## PERSPICUITY

PERSPICUITY refers to the perfect relationship between words and the things they describe; that is, the belief in the TRANSPARENCY of language. This notion assumes that language is like a perfectly clear "window" on the world, and that, if correctly used, language can *accurately* and *clearly* describe the world and thereby the underlying truths that govern it. Perspicuous language is CLEAR, DIRECT, and APPROPRIATE.

## HOBBS ON PERSPICUITY

The Light of Human minds is Perspicuous Words, but by exact Definition first snuffed and purged from ambiguity, *Reason* is the *pace*; *Encrease of Science* is the *way*; and the Benefit of man-kind, the *end*. And on the contrary, Metaphors and senseless ambiguous words, are like *ignes fatui* [false fire]; and reasoning upon them, is wandering among innumerable absurdities; and their end, contention, sedition, or contempt. (*Leviathan*)

## AUGUSTANISM/NEO-CLASSICISM

- suspicious of INNOVATION
- emphasis on SKILL, PRACTICE, REGULATION
- dedication to literary TRADITION
- construed artistic PROGRESS as IMITATION and ADAPTATION of traditional forms
- dedication to POETIC ORDER (such as the 4 UNITIES)
- *DULCE ET UTILE*: art should be BEAUTIFUL and MORAL

ALEXANDER POPE: *AN ESSAY ON MAN*  
SOME BASIC TERMS OF REFERENCE

SYSTEMIZATION:

INDIVIDUAL  $\leftrightarrow$  SOCIAL  $\leftrightarrow$  MORAL/COSMIC

*1<sup>ST</sup> EPISTLE*: COSMIC HARMONY: humanity's place in the universe

*2<sup>ND</sup> EPISTLE*: PSYCHOLOGICAL HARMONY: balance between self-love (pride) and REASON

*3<sup>RD</sup> EPISTLE*: SOCIAL HARMONY: balance between self-love and SOCIAL LOVE (BENEVOLENCE)

*4<sup>TH</sup> EPISTLE*: SPIRITUAL HARMONY: balance between self-love and LOVE OF GOD (MORALITY)

ALEXANDER POPE: *AN ESSAY ON MAN*  
SOME BASIC TERMS OF REFERENCE

**THE GREAT CHAIN OF BEING**

1) GRADATION/HIERARCHY:

- every being ranked from God down to insects and bacteria
- INFINITE → NOTHING
- Each being is APPROPRIATE TO ITS PLACE

2) PLENITUDE:

- every single space in the hierarchy is OCCUPIED
- all beings are EQUAL in their APPROPRIATENESS

**Any break or gap in the chain destroys the cosmic ORDER**

ALEXANDER POPE: *AN ESSAY ON MAN*  
SOME BASIC TERMS OF REFERENCE

**DEISM**

Deism is the belief that by rational methods alone men [sic] can know all the true propositions of theology which it is possible, necessary, or desirable for men to know.

*(Dictionary of the History of Ideas)*

- GOD is displayed in the operation of NATURAL LAWS
- PRINCIPLES OF ORDER: MORAL  $\leftrightarrow$  NATURAL
- REASON  $\rightarrow$  a MORAL life that conforms to these NATURAL LAWS.