BODY AND SOUL

Biological Theories of Generation and Theological Theories of Ensoulment
OVERVIEW OF PRESENTATION

- History of Embryological Theories
- Views of the Soul
- Putting Body and Soul Together
  - Ethical Implications
  - Theological Implications
EARLY GREEKS—HIPPOCRATICICS

- Males develop faster than females.
- Process involves three stages:
  - completion of form;
  - first felt movement;
  - birth.
- Development from unformed to formed or undifferentiated to differentiate is **EPIGENESIS**.
ARISTOTLE

- Development begins as a result of a power of the male parent communicated by spirit or breath (pneuma).
- Organs form in a progressive manner (inner before outer, head before feet). Aristotle was an epigeneticist.
- Males develop more quickly than females and the first movement is felt on woman’s right-hand side.
GALEN AND MIDDLE AGES

- Galen borrowed from both Aristotle and the Hippocratics (and so affirmed epigenesis).
- The Middle Ages relied on the Hippocratics, Aristotle, and Galen for their understanding of embryological development (and so affirmed epigenesis).
17\textsuperscript{TH}/18\textsuperscript{TH} CENTURIES: PREFORMATIONISM—1

○ Types
  ● Ovism (preformed embryo in egg)
  ● Animalculism (preformed embryo in sperm)
  ● *Emboîtement* (preformed embryo inside preformed embryo inside preformed embryo; all created in Adam or Eve in the beginning)
PREFORMATIONISM—2

- Basis for theory
  - Experimental and Observational Evidence
  - Philosophical and Theological Theories
    - mechanical philosophy
    - static universe
    - creation “completed” at the beginning

Malpighi
Swammerdam
Wolff
18th Century—Opposition

Pierre-Louis Moreau De Maupertuis (1698 – 1759) and Vénus physique
19th Century—Epigenesis Again

Observational data in 19th century confirmed epigenesis

- still no mechanism
- reliance on “developmental forces” or “vital spirits,” etc.

Pander  Von Baer  Hertwig  Fol
20TH CENTURY

- Embryology essentially descriptive through first part of the period.

- Modern field of “evo-devo” formed in latter part of 20th century.
PLATO AND THE SOUL

- Soul (*psyche*) is immortal, immaterial, and changeless.
- Soul is both “simple” and “tripartite” (with later Platonists identifying “soul” with “mind”).
- Soul becomes related to the body at birth.

Plato
(428/427 – 348/347 BCE)
ARISTOTLE AND THE SOUL—1

- Soul (psyche, anima, pneuma) is better defined as “life-giving force.”
- Soul does not exist apart from matter (or the body).

Aristotle (384 – 322 BCE)
ARISTOTLE AND THE SOUL—2

- All living things have a soul
  - Plant — nutritive soul
  - Animal — nutritive and locomotory souls
  - Human — nutritive, locomotory, and rational souls

- At conception, human has nutritive soul; “humanizing” soul requires 40 days for males and 90 for females and is associated with quickening.
JEWISH VIEWS OF THE SOUL

- Early views similar to Aristotle in that body and soul not separate
- *Nephesh*—possessed by all living animals
  - Translations include “soul,” “life,” “person,” “living being,” “blood,” “desire,” “breath,” ...
  - Issues (and solutions) surrounding the survival of *nephesh*
SUMMARY OF THESE VIEWS

- Plato, Aristotle, and some Jewish views — “delayed ensoulment”
  - Plato and some Jewish views: soul “arrived” at birth (with first breath)
  - Aristotle: soul present by quickening
- Plato—soul independent of body; continues after death; “essence” of person
- Aristotle and most Jewish views—soul does not exist apart from body; not immortal; little to do with identity
15th/16th Centuries—NeoPlatonism

- Pope Leo X (1513)—immortality of the soul a Roman Catholic doctrine
- Calvin—“borrowed” Platonic language (but not Platonic himself)
- Cambridge Platonists, René Descartes, and Preformationists—soul immortal, immaterial, spiritual entity
ORIGIN OF THE SOUL

- **Creationist Position:**
  - Jerome (347 – 420)
  - God creates a new soul for each embryo
  - Dominant view in Middle Ages

- **Traducianism:**
  - Tertullian (ca.160 – ca.220)
  - Each individual’s soul is connected to the soul that Adam received
  - Advocated by Martin Luther
SYNTHESIS AND IMPLICATIONS—1

- From early Greeks through Middle Ages,
  - embryo developed epigenetically;
  - ensoulment “delayed;”
  - soul understood in “baptized” Aristotelian manner.

- Roman Catholic Church’s views held
  - embryo not “human” before quickening;
  - arguments against abortion related to purpose and function of sex and marriage (not to “sanctity” of embryo)
With changes in philosophy in the 16th century,
- “delayed ensoulment” not possible;
- “soul” became more and more identified with “mind.”

Protestants reject all forms of abortion.

Pope Leo XIII (1886) prohibits all abortions, even to save a woman’s life.
19th/20th CENTURIES ISSUES

- Connection between Darwinism and embryology
  - Ernst Haeckel’s “ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny”
- Karl Rahner (1904-1984) argued for a return to Aristotelian “delayed ensoulment.”
20\textsuperscript{TH} CENTURY VIEWS ON SOUL

- Substance Dualism $\rightarrow$ Platonic
- Dual Aspect Theory $\rightarrow$ Aristotelian/Jewish
- Materialism $\rightarrow$ Secular/Anti-Spiritual
20TH CENTURY INFLUENCES

- **Neurosciences**
  - Absence of brain waves $\rightarrow$ death
  - Presence of brain waves $\rightarrow$ hominization
  - Implies “delayed ensoulment” and dual aspect theory

- **Reproductive Medicine**
  - Up to 50% of all conceptions spontaneously aborted before there is knowledge of pregnancy with another 15-20% aborted after implantation
  - Difficult to reconcile with immediate ensoulment
SO...?

- Common societal (church) view primarily Platonic (substance dualism), although some affirm Dual Aspect Theory
- “Soul” and “Imago dei”
- Need to rethink how we formulate ethical arguments
- Need to reaffirm and teach more clearly the doctrine of the resurrection of the body.