

# **Toward New Views of Man and the Universe**

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## **Introduction**

- **Amid the Search for New Authorities was an attempt to Define New Views of Man and the Universe**
- **Main change was away from collective authority to Individual-individualism is a positive good.**
- **One path was the claim that individual had right to immediate contact with God.**
- **Another path was Renaissance Humanism.**
- **Alongside grew a new attitude toward the world.**

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## Questions

- **1. Is Individualism both productive and destructive. How?**
- **2. Should we have less emphasis on individualism and more on collectivism?**

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## **II. The Search for Direct Communion with God**

- **Johannes Eckhart, Meister Eckhart (1260-1327)**
  - ▶ **Sought mystical union with God. God is ultimately unknowable except in direct intuitive experience.**
  - ▶ **Truths are metaphors: the Kingdom of Heaven is the spiritual realm here and now.**
  - ▶ **This mystical experience is not leaving the body. It is a grounding for living in the here and now.**
  
- **Eckhart's influence on Friends of God, Brethren of the Common Life, and other mystics.**

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## The Search for Direct Communion with God

- **Imitation of Christ** grew out of Eckhart and mystical movement. Thomas a Kempis (1379-1471).
- **New Views of the World** also grew up alongside new views of individual.
  - ▶ **Why did scientific view not occur earlier?**
    - Necessary precondition was value placed on world as good.
    - Men also needed motive to seek scientific knowledge. Thinkers need new non-religious view of world.
- **Motive for seeking knowledge was power over nature.**
  - ▶ **Even from 900-1350 innovations helped encourage view that man could gain control by experimentation**

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## III. Toward a New World View

- **New world view began with rejection of realism and adoption of extreme nominalism.**
  - ▶ **Nominalism supported view that universe complex and indeed infinite.**
  - ▶ **This conflicted with traditional religious conceptions of world.**
- **William of Occam (1300-1348)**
  - ▶ **Asserted right to pursue knowledge without regard to spiritual implications.**
  - ▶ **“Occam’s razor”**: only one cause is necessary if sufficient.

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## Toward a New World View

- Occam rejected Aristotelian concept of multiple causation.
- Planetary motion might be caused by distant attraction and repulsion. The earth might move. Same laws govern all matter and motion. Universe might be infinite.
- Also advocated radical social and political ideas.
- Marsilio of Padua (1270-1342) developed ideas.

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## Toward a New World View

- **Marsilio put forward idea of popular sovereignty in Defensor Pacis.**
- **Occam's ideas led others in new directions.**
  - ▶ **Nicholas of Cusa (1400-1464). Suggested life on other planets. Finally, one comes back to unknowable mystery: transcend science by mystical union with God. But Nicholas leaves us with a mathematical universe and a God obeying mathematics.**

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## Toward a New World View

- With Nicholas Copernicus, Johannes Kepler, and Galileo Galilei new view of infinite universe comes to fruition.
- Copernicus in 1543 publishes On the Revolution of Heavenly Bodies. Earth a minor planet. Sun-centered system makes better sense.
- Kepler's work supported his theory. Kepler's 3 laws of planetary motion.
- Galileo's perfected telescope and confirmed

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## Toward a New World View

- Copernicus' theory. Formulated laws of mechanics.
- Isaac Newton finished process with Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy.

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## Questions

- **The Church wound up on the other side from Galileo and the astronomers proposing a new view of the world. Should the Church be taking a position about scientific theories? Is it really religious business?**

# **A New Doctrine of Personality: The Dignity of Man**

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## **IV. Renaissance Humanism as a New View of Man**

- **Humanism arose in Italian cities such as Florence, Milan, Venice, Naples and Rome.**
- **Basic assumption: “man is a rational being possessing unlimited potential for goodness and excellence.”**
- **Humanism also a cultural and literary movement.**
- **Leading figures: Italian--Lorenzo Valla (1407-1457); Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472); Baldasar Castiglione (1478-1529);**

# **A New Doctrine of Personality: The Dignity of Man**

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## **Question**

- **What do you think about the humanist view of man?  
Has man unlimited potential to develop?**

# **A New Doctrine of Personality: The Dignity of Man**

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## **Renaissance Humanism as a New View of Man**

- **and Giovanni, Count Pico della Mirandola. Northern Europe--Desiderius Erasmus (c.1466-1536) and Thomas More (1478-1535).**
- **Humanism as an attitude toward man. Mirandola's Oration on the Dignity of Man. In his life Pico embodied essence of humanist view of man.**
- **Oration a defense of his offer to debate 900 propositions.**

# **A New Doctrine of Personality: The Dignity of Man**

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## **Renaissance Humanism as a New View of Man**

- **A Reading from the Oration.**
- **Why did Humanism first appear in Italy?**
- **Many cities dominated by despots. Despotism fostered individuality of certain people in cities.**
- **Even the life of republican cities fostered individualism.**
- **Cosmopolitan spirit among elite.**
- **Model for new individuals was “all-sided man”.**

# **A New Doctrine of Personality: The Dignity of Man**

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## **Renaissance Humanism as a New View of Man**

- **“L’uomo Universale” Leonardo da Vinci. Leon Battista Alberti. Latter truly universal in interests and abilities. Wrote on architecture. On Painting. First treatise on geography since ancient times. Painted first self-portrait. Wrote a work taken for a Roman comedy.**
- **Alberti’s varied education. Classics. Law. Much self-acquired. Learned architecture on his own. Began reconstruction of St. Peter’s Basilica.**

# **A New Doctrine of Personality: The Dignity of Man**

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## **Renaissance Humanism as a New View of Man**

- **Many-sided men. Humanist training for businessmen.**
- **Life was to be lived to the fullest.**
- **The new moral ideal was desire for glory and fame.**
- **Cities sought to honor famous sons.**
- **Humanists knew their power to make or unmake reputations.**
- **Sometimes took frightful turn. “The fame of infamous deeds.”**

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## **Question**

- **We have seen some modern examples of the search for fame through infamous deeds. Name some instances.**