

## "Study of the Child: History and Trends"

### I. Historical View of Childhood

- A. Ancient Greece & Rome (600 B.C. to 400 A.D.):
  - 1. Plato (427-347 B.C.): nativist - knowledge is inborn
  - 2. Aristotle (384-322 B.C.): empiricist - knowledge gained through sensory experience.
  - 3. Infanticide - killing of newborns - females especially
  - 4. Slave labor - sexual exploitation
- B. Medieval Period (1400 A.D. fall of Rome): children wore adult fashions and pursued adult passions, but were also seen as fragile and in need of protection.
  - 1. Church Ruled: Christianity - send unwanted children to convents and monasteries. Children seen as born with original sin.
- C. Renaissance (1300 - 1600's):
  - 1. Growing belief that society is partly responsible for care and protection of children. Toy making industry - play was seen as normal and important in the development of the child.
- D. Reformation (1500's): child rearing taken seriously, emphasis on education.
- E. Descartes Dualistic Model (1596-1650): he believed that we shared our biology with animals (this paved the way for studying animals to gain knowledge about humans), but the mind was something humans alone had. The mind contains certain "innate ideas" (e.g., God and self; ideas of space, time, and motion) which are not derivable from experience. Met with little religious opposition "God given" mind.

### II. Early Theories

- A. John Locke (1632-1704): Empiricism - all knowledge comes from experience ("Tabula Rasa" - blank slate).
- B. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778): Nativism - innate processes driving force behind development. Human development unfolds naturally in very positive ways as long as society allows it to do so.
- C. Charles Darwin (1809-1882): competition for survival, natural selection, evolutionary value of behaviors (ethology).
  - 1. The baby biographies: Darwin observed and recorded his eldest son's behavior.

### III. Pioneers of Child Psychology

- A. G. Stanley Hall (1844-1924): Father of child Psychology
  - 1. Questionnaire Method: groups of children
  - 2. Biological view - influenced by Darwin
- B. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939): stage theorist (psychosexual model - drive theory), experience during each stage influences development (fixation).

