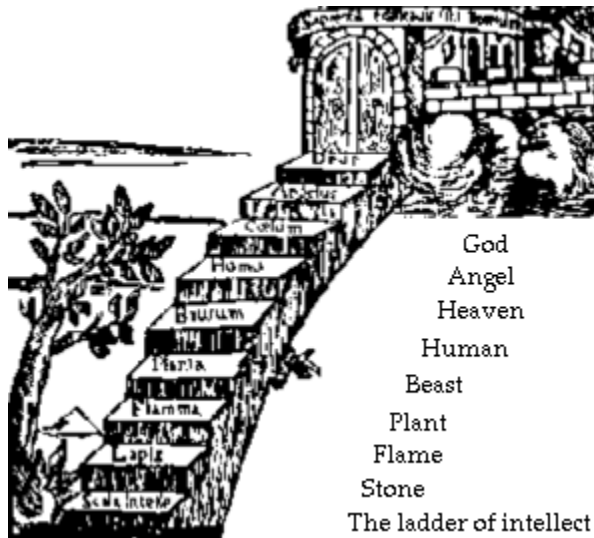


5. His world view

What is the chain of being?



The Elizabethans pictured the cosmic order as a chain where every creature of the Universe is arranged in his proper order. It symbolizes the greatness of god's creation and his irreversible order and can also be seen as a ladder. Although everything was assigned a place, there was the possibility of change. The story of the creation could be seen as a logical progression from light, to the waters, to the earth, to planets, to animals, and finally to humans. In this image there is an orderly progression upwards.

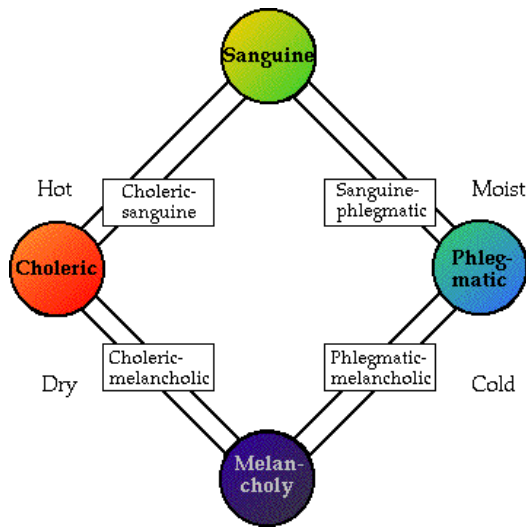
What did the wheel of fortune mean for the common man?

For all practical purposes, he substitutes for the Christian concept of the wheel of fortune (which almost randomly changes the fate of man so that no one will become proud or complacent about their salvation) the concept of an indifferent force named *fortuna*. One's godliness makes one perhaps a little less vulnerable to the spinning of the wheel (on the whole the good should receive less misfortune than do the wicked, though being good does by no means shield one from ill fortune), and argues instead that an individual's ability, combined with a knowledge of historical principles, better prepares them to deal with *fortuna*.

The wheel of fortune represents the need to experience change in life, as Mother Nature undertakes dramatic changes with the seasons we as human beings go through natural changes too: from babyhood to childhood, then adolescence to adulthood and lastly old age.

Change is neutral, but the perception of change can be favourable or not depending on the reaction of people being faced with it. There might be unexpected encounters and twists of fate. Sometimes situations can appear bleak but then an opportunity to progress arises from nowhere and the obstacles are removed.

What is the idea of humours about?



The humours each had associated physical and mental characteristics; the result was a system that was quite subtle in its capacity for describing types of personality.

In addition, different humours could be combined for more complex personality types: choleric-sanguine, phlegmatic-melancholic, and so on.

<i>Humour</i>	<i>Qualities</i>	<i>Element</i>	<i>Personality</i>
Sanguine	hot, moist	air	Optimistic, red-cheeked, corpulent, irresponsible (compare Falstaff).
Choleric	hot, dry	fire	Short-tempered, red-haired, thin, ambitious (compare Hotspur).
Phlegmatic	cold, moist	water	Sluggish, pallid, corpulent, lazy (Are any of Shakespeare's characters phlegmatic?).
Melancholic	cold, dry	earth	Introspective, sallow, thin (compare Richard II, Hamlet).

What was the people's attitude towards supernatural appearances?

The supernatural was a popular element in many of the plays written in Shakespeare's time (including Hamlet) and everyone of Shakespeare's time found the supernatural fascinating. Even King James I took a special interest in supernatural and written a book, Daemonologie, on witchcraft. It must be remembered that, in Shakespeare's day, supernatural referred to things that were "above Nature"; things which existed, but not part of the normal human life and unexplainable.

The play Macbeth involves many supernatural actions that act as a catalyst for suspense and thrill, insight into character, foreshadowing of future events as well as making connections with the theme. Macbeth gets deceived by the ambiguous prophecies of the witches and has to recognize that she has been fooled by a false sense of security. This can already be found at the beginning of the witches' song: "*Fair is foul, and foul is fair*".

