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abandonment Term used by *existentialists to dramatize the sense of loss that comes from realizing that there is no external source of moral authority, such as a God.

Abbagnano, Nicola (1901–90) Leading Italian *existentialist. Born in Salerno, Abbagnano studied in Naples and taught at Turin. His 'philosophy of the possible' condemned other existentialists for either denying human possibility (because all our efforts are futile in a hostile and meaningless universe) or exaggerating it, imagining us capable of things which actually lie outside our potential. In his later work he tended to adopt a more naturalistic and scientific approach to philosophy, although still condemning the 'myth of security' implicit in a complacent scientific world view. His major works include the monumental three-volume *Storia della filosofia* ('History of Philosophy', 1946–50) and *Possibilità e libertà* ('Possibility and Liberty', 1956).

Aberdrites Term for the two earliest *atomists, *Democritus and *Leucippus, both of whom came from Abdera in northern Greece.

abduction Term introduced by *Peirce for the process of using evidence to reach a wider conclusion, as in inference to the best *explanation. Peirce described abduction as a creative process, but stressed that the results are subject to rational evaluation. However he anticipated later pessimism about the prospects of *confirmation theory, denying that we can assess the results of abduction in terms of probability.

Abduh, Muhammad (1849–1905) Egyptian philosophical theologian, notable for attempting to reconcile Islam with elements in the modern world. His work *The Theology of Unity* was translated into English in 1966.

Abelard, Peter (Abaelard, Abailard) (1079–1142) French scholastic philosopher. Born near Nantes, Abelard lived a hectic life, quite apart from the misfortune he incurred as a result of his romance of 1118 (for the details of which, see HÉLOÏSE). He was educated at Chartres and Paris, and lived as monk and abbot at a succession of monasteries. He survived an attempt on his life at a Breton monastery in 1132. A controversial fig-

ure, he found his work condemned in 1121, and his scepticism about the legends of St Dionysius forced him to leave the Abbey of St Denis. In 1125 he became Abbot of St Gildas, and later returned to Paris. His work was denounced by *Bernard of Clairvaux, who described him as having sweated to prove that Plato was a Christian, but only proved himself a heretic. He was again censured in 1140, but he died in one of the daughter monasteries of the Abbey of Cluny.

Abelard wrote extensively on the problem of *universals, probably adopting a moderate *realism, although he has sometimes been claimed as a *nominalist. He wrote commentaries on *Porphyry and other authorities. His *Scito te Ipsum* ('Know Thyself') is a treatise on ethics holding that sin consists entirely in contempt for the wishes of God; action is therefore less important than states of mind such as intention. Consistently with this, his theory of the *atonement is that it is simply a supreme example for us to follow. Abelard lived at a time when a new sense of the clash of classical authorities was becoming evident; translations revealed discrepant opinions and generated the disputatious atmosphere in which Abelard flourished. His *Sic et Non* ('For and Against') is a collection of contradictions from scripture and early writings, coupled with his own rules for resolving disputes. It provided the initial programme for the scholastic method. Abelard's contributions to logic have been the object of recent admiration, while his hymns include *O quanta qualia* ('Oh how great and glorious are those sabbaths').

ab esse ad posse valet consequentia

From the fact that something exists, it follows that it is possible.

abhidharma Books containing the key categories of *Buddhist philosophy.

abnivesha Sanskrit term for self-love, or the desire for self-preservation. Since this is a form of bondage it stands in the way of spiritual freedom, and has a generally negative overtone.

abortion Termination of the life of a foetus, after conception but before birth. The event may be intentionally induced or natural, although it is

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intentionally induced abortion that is the topic of moral philosophy. The issues divide conservatives or 'pro-life' supporters, who regard deliberately induced abortion as impermissible, and liberals or 'pro-choice' supporters, who regard the action as permissible in a variety of cases. The liberal attitude may extend to almost any case in which a mother wishes an abortion, or may involve a variety of restrictions, including the age of the foetus. Moderates restrict the permissible cases, but the debate has not been notable for moderation. Issues arising include the nature of personhood, and its beginning; the extent of the right to life; the fragile notion of the sanctity of life; the way in which conflicting rights should be treated; and the political and social issues of who has the right to decide moral and legal policy and to enforce it.

 **SEE WEB LINKS**

- An archive of related religious, medical, and legal debates
- A UN review of abortion policies around the world

Abrabanel, Isaac (1437–1508/9) Spanish Jewish philosopher and commentator on *Maimonides.

Abrabanel, Judah (c.1463–c.1523) Son of Isaac Abrabanel, and also known as Leone Ebreo. His *Dialoghi d'amore* (*Dialogues of Love*) explore the mystical relation of love and desire, and the way in which love infuses and maintains the cosmic order. They were influential in Italian Platonist and Neoplatonist circles in the Renaissance.

Absolute, the See ABSOLUTE IDEALISM.

absolute idealism 19th-century version of *idealism in which the world is equated with objective or absolute thought, rather than with the personal flux of experience, as in subjective idealism. The doctrine is the descendant of several ancestors, including the *Parmenidean One, the theological tradition of an unconditioned and unchanging *necessary being responsible for the contingent changing world, *Spinoza's pregnant belief that there is just one world with the characteristics of facts and things on the one hand and of ideas on the other, the *transcendental idealism of *Kant, and the emergence of activity and the will as the main determinants of history. Other influences include a dynamic conception of nature as an organic unity tending towards a goal of perfection, a belief that this process is mirrored in the spiritual education of the individual, and the belief shared by many German thinkers at the end of the 18th century that ordinary thought imposes categories and differences that are absent from the original, innocent immersion of humankind

in nature, and due to be transcended when this ideal unity is recaptured.

Talk of the Absolute first appears in *Schelling's *System des transzendentalen Idealismus* of 1800. The idea of a Spirit sweeping through all things was by then an integral part of the *Romantic movement, deeply influencing such metaphysically-minded poets as *Shelley and *Coleridge. *Hegel complained that Schelling's Absolute was, like Kant's *noumenon, unknowable, and in his hands the Absolute became that being which is progressively manifested in the progress of human history, a definition that has been taken to fit many things, including ordinary human self-consciousness. The idealist elevation of self-consciousness, first seen in *Fichte, undoubtedly encourages this equation. But human self-consciousness cannot be the only ingredient in the Absolute, since Hegel also held the doctrine that the merely finite is not real. Apart from Fichte few have been satisfied that human consciousness is the spirit that is responsible for the entire cosmos. *Green wrote of Wordsworth looking to 'the open scroll of the world, of the world, however, as written within and without by a self-conscious and self-determining spirit' (*Works*, iii, 119), and such a spirit transcends the human mind. In any event, the culminating point of history is one at which 'mind knows mind', or final self-conscious freedom is grasped. Hegel also insists on *holism, implying that a mind capable of knowing any truth must have the capacity to know all truth, since partial and divided truth is dead or non-existent.

The most influential exponent of absolute idealism in Britain was *Bradley, who actually eschewed the label of idealism, but whose *Appearance and Reality* argued that ordinary appearances were contradictory, and that to reconcile the contradiction we must transcend them, appealing to a superior level of reality, where harmony, freedom, truth and knowledge are all characteristics of the one Absolute. An essential part of Bradley's case was a preference, voiced much earlier by *Leibniz, for categorical, *monadic properties over relations. He was particularly troubled by the relation between that which is known and the mind that knows it. The consolations of progress and unity with the universe prompted the not wholly hostile verdict by *James that the Absolute was the banisher of cosmic fear, and the giver of moral holidays. Absolute idealism was a major target of *realists, *pragmatists, and of *Russell and *Moore in much of their writing at the beginning of the 20th century, although it continued to be influential for another twenty years.

absolute theory of space Theory that space is itself a kind of container, so that objects have a position or motion or acceleration in relation to space itself rather than purely in relation to each other. In his famous 'bucket' *thought experiment

*Newton noted that water spinning in a stationary bucket would creep up the sides, while the water stays flat if it is stationary, and the bucket is spinning. Newton concluded that to explain this asymmetry we must assume not just relative motion between objects but absolute motion with respect to space. The strongest such notion involves the idea of space as an existing thing with points which persist through time. Absolute motion is then change of place with respect to these points. However, to explain inertial effects such as the bucket experiment, one needs only a weaker notion of absolute space, relative to which there is absolute acceleration, but for which different inertial motions are all relative.

absolutism In political theory, the view that there are no restrictions on the rights and powers of the government. In moral theory, the view that there are inviolable moral standards or absolutes, which cannot, therefore, be the result of potentially variable human desires or policies or pre-conditions. *See also* CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE.

abstract/concrete Many philosophies are nervous of a realm of abstract entities, such as numbers and *universals, as opposed to empirical objects and stuff located at places and times. *Nominalism is the general programme of showing that mention of abstract objects is not what it appears to be, but a misleading way of talking about more ordinary objects. Friends of abstract objects say that there is nothing wrong with referring to them, but we must not make the mistake of imagining them to be especially large or spread-out kinds of concrete object. Another dispute concerns whether, when we do such things as see an edition of the morning paper, or admire a computer program, or hear a word, we literally see or hear abstract objects, which are therefore elements of our experience. *See also* PLATONISM, UNIVERSALS.

abstract ideas Concept that was the focus of dispute between *Locke and *Berkeley. Locke had highlighted the problem of the way in which a particular idea, as it might be of a person or a cow, comes to stand for just the right class of things: persons or cows in general. His solution was to postulate an *abstraction of the general kind away from the particular qualities of examples, until eventually we have an idea of the right degree of generality: one that encompasses all and only persons, or cows. Berkeley took the greatest exception to this account, arguing instead that all ideas are perfectly particular, and only become general in the use we make of them. His animosity arose partly because he believed that the doctrine of abstraction enabled Locke to deceive himself that we can make sense of things that

are actually unintelligible: objects with no colour, inanimate causes, and qualities of things dissociated from the sensory effects they have on us.

abstraction Supposed process of forming an idea by abstracting out what is common to a variety of instances: a process stressed, for example, by *Aquinas in his moderate solution to the problem of *universals (*abstrahentium non est mendacium*: abstraction is not lying). The problem is that unrestricted abstraction leads one to suppose that qualities such as substance, causation, change, and number may apply not only to the sensible bodies that give rise to our ideas of them, but also in a spiritual realm or other domain quite outside the reach of experience. *Locke is vehemently attacked by *Berkeley for this and related errors. *See also* ABSTRACT IDEAS.

absurd Any belief that is obviously untenable (*see also* REDUCTIO AD ABSURDUM). In *existentialism, a term for the pointless or meaningless nature of human life and action.

Abunaser *See* FARABI.

Academy of Athens Teaching college founded by *Plato, around 387 BC. Although knowledge of its organization is fragmentary, it appears to have favoured a teaching method based on discussion and seminars. The fundamental studies were mathematics and dialectic. It is customary to distinguish the Old Academy (Plato and his immediate successors) and the New Academy (beginning with *Arcesilaus). The distinction is first made by *Antiochus of Ascalon. The Old Academy included *Aristotle, *Speusippus, *Eudoxus, *Xenocrates, and *Theaetetus of Athens. It was largely preoccupied with mathematical and cosmological themes arising from the late work of Plato, although at some point ethical interests also emerged. There is a sharp break with Arcesilaus, who produced the sceptical New Academy which maintained a running battle with the teaching of the *Stoics. The last head of the sceptical Academy was *Philo of Larissa, who went to Rome c.87 BC when Mithridates VI of Persia threatened Athens, thereby ending the Academy as an institution. The rehabilitation of dogmatic Platonic themes after Antiochus of Ascalon (c.79 BC: *see also* MIDDLE PLATONISM) was not properly the doing of the Academy, but paved the way for the emergence of *Neoplatonism.

 **SEE WEB LINKS**

- A brief history of the Academy
- An introduction to the Academy and its site

Academy of Florence Circle gathered around *Ficino between 1462 and 1494, in a villa at Careggi put at their disposal by Cosimo de' Medici.

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It was a central intellectual influence in the Italian Renaissance, its main activities being the translation, study, and reinterpretation of Platonic and Neoplatonic writings.

 **SEE WEB LINKS**

- A biography of Marsilio Ficino, including his role in the Academy

acatalepsy Incomprehensibility. The impossibility of things being grasped by us, supposedly demonstrated by *sceptical arguments.

acceptance Is accepting a proposition the same thing as believing it? Whilst there is no general distinction signalled by the words, philosophers have been led to distinguish acceptance from belief for various reasons. The *lottery paradox may be approached by saying that whilst one accepts that an arbitrary ticket will not win, one cannot be said to believe that it will not, thereby avoiding the pitfall of having an inconsistent set of beliefs. In the philosophy of science a variety of anti-*realist positions may counsel one to accept a scientific theory, for instance in order to predict and control nature, or in the spirit of open-minded conjecture, without going so far as to believe it. The central difficulty in such recommendations is defining exactly what one is supposed not to do; in other words, saying what is distinctive about belief as opposed to the supposedly lesser and legitimate acceptance. See CONSTRUCTIVE EMPIRICISM.

access See PRIVILEGED ACCESS.

accessibility relation See MODAL LOGIC, POSSIBLE WORLDS.

accident In Aristotelian metaphysics an accident is a property of a thing which is no part of the *essence of the thing: something it could lose or have added without ceasing to be the same thing or the same substance. The accidents divide into *categories: quantity, action (i.e. place in the causal order, or ability to affect things or be affected by them), quality, space, time, and relation.

accident, fallacy of the See A DICTO SIMPLICITER AD DICTUM SECUNDUM QUID.

accidentalism Theory that the flow of events is unpredictable, or for *Epicureans, that mental events are specifically unpredictable. See also CHAOS, DETERMINISM, LIBERTARIANISM, TYCHISM.

accidie State that inhibits pleasure and prompts the rejection of life; one of the *Seven Deadly Sins. *Aquinas associates it with turning one's back on things, through depression or self-hatred, and nicely defines it as a torpor of spirit which prevents one from getting down to anything good

(*Summa Theologiae*, IIa 35.1). Often it is translated as sloth, which is actually quite different. See also APATHY.

Achilles and the Tortoise See ZENO'S PARADOXES.

acosmism Denial of the reality of the material world. The term was originally applied or misapplied to *Spinoza, but in the nineteenth century was also used to characterize the other-worldliness of Christianity.

acquaintance and description Distinction in our ways of knowing things, highlighted by *Russell and forming a central element in his philosophy after the discovery of the theory of *definite descriptions. A thing is known by acquaintance when there is direct experience of it. It is known by description if it can only be described as a thing with such-and-such properties. In everyday parlance, I might know my spouse and children by acquaintance, but know someone as 'the first person born at sea' only by description. However, for a variety of reasons Russell shrinks the area of things that can be known by acquaintance until eventually only current experiences, perhaps my own self, and certain universals or meanings qualify. Anything else is known only as the thing that has such-and-such qualities. See also LOGICAL ATOMISM.

acrasia See AKRASIA.

action What an agent does, as opposed to what happens to an agent (or even what happens inside an agent's head). Describing events that happen does not of itself permit us to talk of rationality and intention, which are the categories we may apply if we conceive of them as actions. We think of ourselves not only passively, as creatures within which things happen, but actively, as creatures that make things happen. Understanding this distinction gives rise to major problems concerning the nature of agency, of the *causation of bodily events by mental events, and of understanding the *will and *free will. Other problems in the theory of action include drawing the distinction between an action and its consequences, and describing the structures involved when we do one thing 'by' doing another thing. Even the placing and dating of action can give rise to puzzles, as in cases where someone shoots someone on one day and in one place, and the victim then dies on another day and in another place. Where and when did the murder take place?

action at a distance Contested concept in the history of physics. Aristotelian physics holds that every motion requires a conjoined mover. Action can therefore never occur at a distance, but needs

a medium enveloping the body, and which parts before its motion and pushes it from behind (*antiperistasis). Although natural motions like free fall and magnetic attraction (quaintly called 'coition') were recognized in the post-Aristotelian period, the rise of the *corpuscularian philosophy again banned 'attractions', or unmediated actions at a distance: the classic argument is that 'matter cannot act where it is not'. Cartesian physical theory also postulated 'subtle matter' to fill space and provide the medium for force and motion. Its successor, the aether, was postulated in order to provide a medium for transmitting forces and causal influences between objects that are not in direct contact. Even *Newton, whose treatment of gravity might seem to leave it conceived of as action at a distance, supposed that an intermediary must be postulated, although he could make no hypothesis as to its nature. *Locke, having originally said that bodies act on each other 'manifestly by impulse and nothing else' (*Essay*, 1st edn., ii. viii. 11), changes his mind by the 4th edition, and strikes out the words 'and nothing else', although impulse remains 'the only way which we can conceive bodies operate in'. In the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* *Kant clearly sets out the view that the way in which bodies repulse each other is no more natural, or intelligible, than the way in which they act at a distance; in particular he repeats the point half-understood by Locke, that any conception of solid, massy atoms requires understanding the force that makes them cohere as a single unity, which cannot itself be understood in terms of elastic collisions. In many cases contemporary *field theories admit of alternative equivalent formulations, one with action at a distance, one with local action only.

active euthanasia See EUTHANASIA, ACTIVE/PASSIVE.

activism The doctrine that action rather than theory is needed at some political juncture; an activist is therefore one who works to make change happen.

act-object ambiguity Ambiguity between an actual action, and the upshot of an action. This ambiguity is visible in words like 'observation': an observation may be a process that takes time and is performed by someone, or it may be the piece of information that is the upshot of such a process. Many philosophers of mind believe that a similar ambiguity distorts thinking about experience, and especially perception. Perception should be thought of in terms of an active process of engagement with the world, rather than the presence of an object (a display) in the theatre of the mind.

act-object psychology An approach to the mind that distinguishes between the experienced mental nature of a state of mind and its intended object, or what it is directed towards. It was felt by *Meinong and others that the distinction had been ignored by *Brentano. See also INTENTIONALITY.

acts, mental Things that agents do, but within their own minds, or not by means of bodily movements. Notably these include trying, willing, and perhaps even private thinking. They seem to be things that do not just happen, perhaps inside our brains, but of which we are the authors. The problem is to understand what this means. See also ACTION, VOLITION.

acts/omissions doctrine The doctrine that it makes an ethical difference whether an agent actively intervenes to bring about a result, or omits to act in circumstances in which it is foreseen that as a result of the omission the same result occurs. Thus suppose I wish you dead. If I act to bring about your death I am a murderer, but if I happily discover you in danger of death, and fail to act to save you, I am not acting, and therefore according to the doctrine not a murderer. Critics reply that omissions can be as deliberate and immoral as commissions: if I am responsible for your food and fail to feed you, my omission is surely a killing. 'Doing nothing' can be a way of doing something, or in other words, absence of bodily movement can also constitute acting negligently, or deliberately, and depending on the context may be a way of deceiving, betraying, or killing. Nevertheless, criminal law often finds it convenient to distinguish discontinuing an intervention, which is permissible, from bringing about a result, which may not be, if, for instance, the result is death of a patient. The question is whether the difference, if there is one, between acting and omitting to act can be described or defined in a way that bears general moral weight. See also DOUBLE EFFECT, TROLLEY PROBLEM.

 SEE WEB LINKS

- Notes on the doctrine and related ethical issues, with a bibliography

actual In *modal logic the actual world is the world as it is, contrasted with other *possible worlds, representing ways it might have been. The central problem is to understand how the actual state of the world is to be characterized, except in terms that themselves make reference to alternative possibilities.

actualism Sometimes known as actual idealism. For one usage see GENTILE. The term also applies in contemporary works to the view that only the actual world is real, with other *possible worlds regarded as not themselves existing, but as wrongly thought to exist because *modal idioms are useful instruments of thought about the real world. See also FICTIONALISM, MODAL REALISM.

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actuality and potentiality The contrast between what is actually, or really, the case, and what could have been or could come to be the case. One of the major problems of *scholastic thought is understanding what reason God might have for actualizing a particular possibility rather than none at all, or some alternative. Questions that arise include why there is something and not nothing, and whether this is the best of all possible worlds. *See also* POTENTIALITY; SUFFICIENT REASON, PRINCIPLE OF.

actualization For something to be actualized is for it to be made real, or made part of the actual world. In theology it may be important that God has no potential that is not actualized, since this would imply a change away from present perfection to something different and worse, or away from present imperfection to something better, neither of which is acceptable.

act utilitarianism Version of *utilitarianism associated especially with *Bentham, according to which the measure of the value of an act is the amount by which it increases general *utility or happiness. An act is to be preferred to its alternatives according to the extent of the increase it achieves, compared to the extent the alternatives would achieve. An action is thus good or bad in proportion to the amount it increases (or diminishes) general happiness, compared to the amount that could have been achieved by acting differently. Act utilitarianism is distinctive not only in the stress on utility, but in the fact that each individual action is the primary object of ethical evaluation. This contrasts it with varieties of indirect utilitarianism, as well as with ethical systems that accord priority to duty or personal virtue.

Adams's thesis Hypothesis due to Ernest Adams (*The Logic of Conditionals*, 1975, p. 3) that the probability of an indicative conditional of the form 'if p is the case then q is' is a conditional probability; that is, the probability of 'if p then q ' should equal the ratio of the probability of ($p \& q$) to the probability of p .

adaptation In biology, a characteristic of an organism that arose through its being naturally selected for its current use (*see* DARWINISM). This is contrasted with an exaptation or feature that is co-opted for a use: an exaptation is a feature that will have arisen by natural selection, but for another use than the one that it currently has. A nonadaptation is a feature that exists without promoting fitness for survival at all.

Adelard of Bath (c.1070–c.1145) English Benedictine remembered as a conduit for the introduction of Arabic astronomy and philosophy to the West.

ad hoc hypothesis Hypothesis adopted purely for the purpose of saving a theory from difficulty or refutation, but without any independent rationale.

ad hominem argument *See* ARGUMENTUM AD.

adhyatman (Sanskrit, related to the self) Hindu writings, doctrines, or exercises relating to the self. *See* ADVAITA, ATMAN.

adiaphora (Greek, indifferent) In *Stoic philosophy things such as knowledge, power, pleasure, and health, in which value may be found but not quite in the way it is found in *virtue, which alone is good or 'chosen'. The distinction bears some relationship to Kant's distinction between the overriding and necessary value of a morally good will, and the genuine but lesser attractions of other things.

a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter (Latin, from the qualified statement to the unqualified) The fallacy of taking out a needed qualification: 'If it is always permissible to kill in war, then it is always permissible to kill.' Also known as the converse fallacy of the accident.

a dicto simpliciter ad dictum secundum quid (Latin, from the statement unqualified to the statement qualified) The (alleged) fallacy of arguing from a general to a particular case, without recognizing qualifying factors: 'If people shouldn't park here, they shouldn't park here to help put out the fire.' With forms of proposition other than generalizations, more evidently invalid arguments might bear this name: 'If some snakes are harmless, then some snakes in this bag are harmless.' Also known as the fallacy of the accident.

ad infinitum Latin, to infinity.

Adorno, Theodor Wiesengrund (1903–69) German sociologist and political thinker. Adorno was a leading member of the *Frankfurt school, whose general stance he shared. His work belonged mainly to sociology, and was especially concerned with the contradictions and distortions imposed upon people by the post-Enlightenment world, with its sacrifice of life to instrumental, technological reasoning. Perhaps his best-known general work is *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950), describing the rigid, conformist personality-type, submissive to higher authority and bullying

towards inferiors. Adorno's celebration of paradox and ambiguity, as well as his pessimistic take on the *Enlightenment, have been influential in post-modernist literary and cultural criticism. Other works include *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1941) and *Negative Dialectics* (1966).

advaita (Sanskrit, non-duality) The doctrine of the Vedantic school associated with *Shankara, that asserts the identity of *brahman and *atman; the empirical world is one of *phenomena bene fundata and, like the self, is entirely a manifestation of God.

adverbial theory An adverbial theory of perception takes the *act-object ambiguity of experience to warrant thinking of perception in terms of action. The object of perception then becomes not a true object, but an adverb describing how the action is performed. Thus instead of 'I see a blue patch' we would have 'I see blue-ly', describing how the process or activity of seeing is taking place. It is often objected that the adverbs required become too complex, and obviously gerrymandered: 'I see a blue patch to the right of a red patch' becomes something like 'I see red-right-blue-ly' and without surreptitiously mentioning the patches it is hard to see how we could give meaning to the complex adverb involved.

adverbs If John swam fast, then it follows that John swam. But how do we understand this inference? In *first-order logic, the natural suggestion is that there is an individual, an event which was a swimming by John, and was fast. But now suppose John's swimming was also a crossing, and although John swam fast his crossing was not fast (most people cross by much faster means). Then the one event was a swimming and a crossing, and fast and not fast, which sounds like a contradiction. The question for logic and semantic theory is whether adverbs are to be regarded as predicates of special individuals such as events, or as predicate modifiers.

Aenesidemus of Cnossos (1st c. BC) Sceptical philosopher and defender of *Pyrrhonism, for the most part known through his influence on *Sextus Empiricus, and through the account of his teaching in *Diogenes Laertius. A radical, he broke away from the *Academy to return to the purer scepticism of Pyrrho. He is principally known for the ten tropes (*tropoi*) whereby we set up inconsistent but equally defensible claims about matters of fact. These tropes were canonized by Sextus Empiricus as the foundation of late Hellenic *scepticism. They include (i) the different ways different animals perceive things; (ii) the differing perceptions of different peoples; (iii) the way the different senses give differing judgements; (iv) the ways in which circumstances

such as drunkenness or sobriety affect perception; (v) the differences brought in by distance and perspective; (vi) the way in which the intervening medium (air, or the constitution of the eyeball) affects perception; (vii) the way in which substances may look one way when combined and a different way when scattered or combined differently; (viii) the pervasive influence of the specific relationship between the perceiver and that which is perceived; (ix) the different importance and capacity for surprise that the same events assume for different perceivers; and (x) the way in which differences between people prevent us from thinking of ourselves as perceiving universal moral laws. A different set of eight *tropoi* put similar sceptical obstacles in front of knowledge of causal relationships. Almost all versions of scepticism and *relativism rely upon some version of one or more of the ten tropes.

Aesop (6th c. BC) Greek teller of fables, or stories with a satirical and moral twist. The life of Aesop is itself a fable: he is traditionally supposed to have been hunchbacked and ugly (which may be a symbol of racial stereotyping), to have been the slave of a philosopher, Xanthus of Samos, and to have gained his freedom only to fall foul of the citizens of Delphi, who were anxious to protect the reputation of their oracle against him and threw him off a cliff. Xanthus and his wife are represented as particularly prone to losing their dignity in the presence of Aesop, who is therefore a symbol of the subversive role of low, popular, folk wisdom in contrast to so-called high culture and philosophy. His fables were particularly popular in the late Renaissance, attracting commentaries from philosophers including *Valla and *Erasmus, and later on *Lessing.

aesthetic (Greek, sense perception) *Kant keeps the ancient Greek usage, in which anything treating of sense perception may be called an aesthetic. The word had earlier been restricted by *Baumgarten to the perception of *aesthetic properties or values in particular.

aesthetic attitude The attitude of detached and disinterested, but engaged, contemplation often supposed to be appropriate to understanding the aesthetic value of a work of art. The centrality of an aesthetic attitude is stressed in *Kant's *Critique of Judgement*.

aesthetic detachment See AESTHETIC ATTITUDE.

aestheticism Doctrine associated with late 19th-century writers and artists, including Walter Pater, James McNeill Whistler, and especially Oscar Wilde. It holds that the appreciation of art and beauty is the highest aim of human life, and

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especially that the pursuit of such experience is not constrained by ordinary moral or political purposes. Art itself serves no ulterior moral or political purpose. The 'Aesthetic Movement' was a useful reaction against the didactic religious and moral art of the time and helped artists and critics to concentrate upon the formal and internal qualities of works of art. The movement had its exaggerated side, parodied by Gilbert and Sullivan in the opera *Patience* (1881).

aesthetic properties See AESTHETIC VALUES.

aesthetics The study of the feelings, concepts, and judgements arising from our appreciation of the arts or of the wider class of objects considered moving, or beautiful, or sublime. Aesthetic theory concerns itself with questions such as: what is a work of art? What makes a work of art successful? Can art be a vehicle of truth? Does art work by expressing the feelings of the artist, communicating feeling, arousing feeling, purging or symbolizing feeling? What is the difference between understanding a work of art, and failing to do so? How is it that we take aesthetic pleasure in surprising things: tragedies, or terrifying natural scenes? Why can things of very different categories equally seem beautiful? Does the perception of *beauty have connections with moral virtue, and with seeing something universal or essential, and is the importance of aesthetic education and practice associated with this? What is the role of the imagination in the production or appreciation of art? Are aesthetic judgements capable of improvement and training, and thence of some kind of objectivity? The classical origin of many of these questions is found in *Plato. The dialogues *Ion*, *Symposium*, and *Phaedrus* are centrally concerned with the place of beauty in the order of things, and the preoccupation surfaces in many other places, including in the context of Plato's famous dismissal of artists from the ideal Republic (see MIMESIS). *Aristotle's discussion in the *Poetics* centres on the nature of tragedy, and engendered the idea of *catharsis, or the purging of emotion as the deep effect of witnessing tragic drama. In the modern period aesthetics emerged as a separate topic in the work of *Baumgarten, *Lessing, *Hutcheson, *Hume, and especially *Kant. In the *Critique of Judgement* Kant addresses the question of how judgements of beauty are possible, when they are incapable of proof or of any reduction to rule, and are so intimately concerned to express the pleasure of the subject. His solution lies in the consciousness of the harmony of understanding and imagination, and, since this harmony can be felt by any rational being, judgements of taste can be demanded of others. They thereby achieve their necessary objectivity.

 SEE WEB LINKS

- A list of internet resources on aesthetics, including bibliographies
- An audio discussion with three philosophers about the nature of art

aesthetic values Those features of a work that contribute to its success and importance as a work of art: the features upon which its significance or beauty *supervene. They include the form, content, integrity, harmony, purity, or fittingness of works. In philosophical aesthetics it has proved hard to define these features in usefully specific, objective, terms; they are in any event qualities whose apprehension pleases and satisfies us.

aether The 'luminiferous' aether was the medium that pervaded all space, and in which electromagnetic waves existed, postulated by 19th-century physics. See ACTION AT A DISTANCE.

aetiology (Greek, description of a cause) The assigning of causes. Hence, the chain of causes leading up to an event, particularly in medical science.

aeviternity *Eternity, thought of as an infinite past and future totality, in which events are contained in a matrix, like flies in amber.

affective Its affective quality is the feature of an experience which renders it pleasurable or desirable, or the reverse, or which gives it a distinctive emotional tone.

affirmative action Action designed to give special support to disadvantaged members of a community, for example by allowing them easier access than others enjoy to benefits such as education, jobs, or housing. This may be thought of as rectifying past injustice, or as instrumental in smoothing out historically entrenched inequalities. It is controversial since it involves what may appear to be procedural injustices of its own.

affirmative and negative propositions Intuitively there may be a difference between asserting that something is the case and 'merely' denying that something is the case. But there is no good logical or philosophical way of making the distinction. Modern logic allows that there is frequently an equivalence between positive-looking and negative-looking statements. Whether an assertion comes out positive or negative will depend on the way things are put and upon the menu of terms available: x is not married can be said as x is single; x is not guilty can be said as x is innocent, and so on. Not (p & not- q) (negative?) is equivalent to $p \rightarrow q$ (positive?) and not-not- p (negative?) is equivalent to p (positive?).

affirming the antecedent Arguing, validly, that from p , and if p then q , it follows that q . See MODUS PONENS.

affirming the consequent Arguing invalidly that from if p then q and q , it follows that p ; e.g. arguing from 'if she is studying mathematics then she is not studying English' and 'she is not studying English' to 'she is studying mathematics'.

a fortiori (Latin, from the stronger) Phrase used for 'all the more' or 'even more so': if all donkeys bray, then *a fortiori* all young donkeys bray.

after-image Image seen after the cessation of a prolonged or intense stimulation of the eye. After-images are frequently cited as examples of purely 'mental' things which are yet coloured, disproving the claim that only real expanses of space can be coloured. Caused by the temporary decrease of sensitivity of the receptors that have been stimulated, they have the complementary colour to the original light.

agapē Greek term used particularly by Christian writers to signify fraternal and filial *love, as opposed to *eros* or sexual love. In the early Church the *agapē* was a feast at which fellow religionists celebrated their sense of solidarity.

agathon (Greek, the good) In *Aristotle, a life that involves the exercise of the highest faculties, fulfilling a person's *telos or end. In other philosophies the good is identified with pleasure, or virtue, or the absence of desire, or conformity to duty. See also ETHICS, EUDAIMONIA, SUMMUM BONUM.

agent One who acts. The central problem of agency is to understand the difference between events happening in me or to me, and my taking control of events, or doing things. See ACTION, DETERMINISM, FREE WILL, WILL.

agent-causation A presumed special category of causation whereby agents initiate sequences of events when they act, without the initiation being itself causally determined. See DETERMINISM, FREE WILL, LIBERTARIANISM (METAPHYSICAL).

agent-centred morality In ethics, the view that the personal situation of agents, together with their personal desires and projects, gives rise to genuine moral restrictions and goals. The view opposes the impartial, impersonal, or public aspect of traditional moral thinking, including *utilitarianism, which seeks to minimize the agent's perspective in favour of that of a general point of view, an ideal observer, or an objective sum of all affected utilities. See also AGENT-NEUTRAL/AGENT-RELATIVE, STOICISM, UNIVERSALIZABILITY.

agent-neutral/agent-relative Agent-neutral reasons are those that apply to anyone in a situation, regardless of any special relationship to the individuals or other elements involved. By contrast an agent-relative reason would apply to a person only because of such a relation. So, for example, anyone should have a reason of general benevolence to help others in distress, but I would have a special reason to help if it is my children who are in distress. A good deal of moral theory concerns the nature of the balance between these two sorts of reasons.

age of reason See ENLIGHTENMENT.

agglomeration Principle of *deontic logic, named by Bernard *Williams. It states that if one ought to do A and ought to do B, then one ought to do both A and B. If it is accepted, it puts pressure on the principle that 'ought implies can', since arguably there may arise occasions on which, for instance, I ought to repay A, and ought to repay B, but cannot repay both A and B.

agnoiology (Greek, ignorance) The study of ignorance. An increasingly important branch of *epistemology.

agnosticism The view that some proposition is not known, and perhaps cannot be known to be true or false. The term is particularly applied to theological doctrines.

agreement, method of See MILL'S METHODS.

Agricola, Rudolph (1444–85) Renaissance humanist. His major work was *De inventione dialectica*, on rhetoric and dialectic in classical literature.

Agrippa (1st/2nd c. AD) Shadowy Roman sceptic. His legacy is the five 'tropes', partly a variation on the ten tropes of *Aenesidemus, but adding a stress on the implicit infinite regress in every proof, arising because the premises have to be proved in turn, and further insisting that all attempts to halt the regress will involve either blatant circularity, or arbitrary dogmatism. The uncomfortable three options are known as Agrippa's trilemma.

Agrippa of Nettesheim (Henricus Cornelius) (1486–1535) Occultist, humanist, and heterodox writer who contributed to revival of scepticism, criticized the subjection of women and witch-crazes, and contributed to the legend of Dr Faustus.

ahamkara (Sanskrit, 'I-maker') In Hindu philosophy, the faculty responsible for the unfolding or manifestation of a 'self'.

a

ahanta (Sanskrit, unchangeable, eternal) The indestructible nature of the divine or the truly real.

ahimsa (Sanskrit, non-injury) The ethical principle forbidding injury to all living creatures, subscribed to by many Hindus and Buddhists. It enjoins vegetarianism, pacifism, and in a pure form requires taking extraordinary precautions, such as sweeping the path before one walks on it, or straining liquid one drinks in case one inadvertently injures a living thing. Politically its most famous expression was Mahatma *Gandhi's non-violent movement of passive resistance to British rule in India.

AI See ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE.

aitia (Greek, cause) Explanatory factors; reasons contributing to things being as they are. See CAUSES: MATERIAL, FORMAL, EFFICIENT, FINAL.

Ajdukiewicz, Kazimierz (1890–1963) Formal philosopher and logician, who held posts in Lvov, Warsaw, and Poznan. Ajdukiewicz was one of the leaders of the Polish school of *analytical philosophy, whose interests included the formal representation of language, translatability, and *convention.

akolasia (Greek, uncorrected) The vice of excess, when desires are not corrected by reason. In *Aristotle, the temperate person avoids this vice, indulging desires only to the correct extent.

akoluthic (Greek, following after) Term applied to a sense experience which supposedly carries as part of its content the fact that it follows later than some previous event. The existence of such experiences would explain why we can now see an event as the ending of a process whose earlier phases are not given to us in perception any more. In grammar an *anacoluthon* (Greek, not following after) is a sentence split so that one part does not follow from another (e.g. 'The fact is, let's go').

akrasia (Greek, incontinence) The condition in which while knowing what it would be best to do, one does something else. The phenomenon intrigued *Plato and *Aristotle, because if we accept the Socratic equation between knowing a thing to be good and desiring it, then it becomes difficult to see how *akrasia* is possible. Yet the phenomenon evidently exists. Less optimistic philosophies find it equally hard to see how strength of will is possible. *Akrasia* is commonly translated as weakness of will, although that properly includes general irresolution or infirmity of purpose, which is rather different.

alaya-vijnana (Sanskrit, storehouse-consciousness) In Buddhist thought, the continua-

tion of consciousness as the development of potential, even during periods of apparent unconsciousness.

Albert of Saxony (1360–90) Medieval logician and founder of the University of Vienna.

Albert the Great (Albertus Magnus) (c.1200–80) The dominant scholastic of the 13th century, and teacher of *Aquinas. An encyclopaedic figure, known as the *Doctor Universalis*, Albert was prominent in the attempt to synthesize newly discovered Aristotelian and Platonic learning with the Christian tradition. He wrote commentaries on *Aristotle and many others, and showed an especial sympathy with the empirical approach to nature. His works include the *Summa de Creaturis* (trs. as *Handbook of Doctrine concerning Creatures*) and the *Summa Theologiae* or handbook of theology.

 SEE WEB LINKS

- A biography of Albertus Magnus

alchemy The medieval combination of chemistry, philosophy, and secret lore aimed at transmuting base metals into gold (by means of the philosopher's stone), and discovering the universal cure for disease and mortality.

Alcinous (c.2nd c. AD) Author of a 'handbook of Platonism' which is a useful source for the history of Platonism in its time.

Alcmaeon of Croton (5th c. BC) A younger contemporary of *Pythagoras, and known as a physician. He is supposed to have recognized the brain as the seat of consciousness, a view accepted by *Plato on the grounds that the highest faculty should be seated in the highest part of the body, i.e. the head, but rejected by *Aristotle, who thought that the brain functioned as a refrigerator.

Alemanno, Yohanan ben Isaac (1433/4–after 1503/4) Synthesizing figure of the Italian Renaissance and the principal Jewish influence on the *Academy of Florence.

aleph The first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, used with subscripts to designate the sequence of transfinite numbers, \aleph_0 , \aleph_1 , \aleph_2 . See CANTOR'S THEOREM, DENUMERABLE/NON-DENUMERABLE.

alethic (Greek, *alētheia*, truth) The alethic modes or modalities are the necessity, contingency, or impossibility of something being true.

Alexander, Samuel (1859–1938) Australian philosopher who studied philosophy at Oxford and experimental psychology at Freiburg. He was professor of philosophy at Manchester from 1893 to