

牛津英语百科分类词典系列



# Oxford

DICTIONARY OF

# PHILOSOPHY

# 牛津哲学词典



上海外语教育出版社

SHANGHAI FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION PRESS



外教社

牛津英语百科分类词典系列

Oxford Dictionary of

# Philosophy

## 牛津哲学词典

Simon Blackburn



上海外语教育出版社

SHANGHAI FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION PRESS

Oxford Dictionary of  
**Philosophy**

---

Simon Blackburn

Oxford New York  
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

## 图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

牛津哲学词典: 英文 / (英) 布莱克波恩 (Blackburn, S. )

编. —上海: 上海外语教育出版社, 2000

(牛津英语百科分类词典系列)

书名原文: Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy

ISBN 7-81080-009-4

I. 牛… II. 布… III. 哲学-词典-英文 IV. B-61

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字 (2000) 第74397号

图字: 09-1999-311号

出版发行: **上海外语教育出版社**

(上海外国语大学内) 邮编: 200083

电 话: 021-65425300 (总机), 65422031 (发行部)

电子邮箱: bookinfo@slep.com.cn

网 址: <http://www.slep.com.cn> <http://www.slep.com>

责任编辑: 钱明丹

---

印 刷: 常熟市印刷八厂  
经 销: 新华书店上海发行所  
开 本: 850×1092 1/32 印张 13.5 字数 678 千字  
版 次: 2000年12月第1版 2000年12月第1次印刷  
印 数: 2 000 册

---

书 号: ISBN 7-81080-009-4 / H · 009

定 价: 18.00 元

本版图书如有印装质量问题, 可向本社调换

Oxford University Press, Walton Street, Oxford OX2 6DP  
Oxford New York

Oxford is a trade mark of Oxford University Press

© Oxford University Press 1994, 1996

First published 1994

First issued as an Oxford University Press paperback (with a new Chronology) 1996

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press. Within the UK, exceptions are allowed in respect of any fair dealing for the purpose of research or private study, or criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, or in the case of reprographic reproduction in accordance with the terms of the licences issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency. Enquiries concerning reproduction outside these terms and in other countries should be sent to the Rights Department, Oxford University Press, at the address above.

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data  
Data available

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data  
Blackburn, Simon.

The Oxford dictionary of philosophy / Simon Blackburn.  
p. cm.

1. Philosophy—Dictionaries. I. Title.

B41.B53 1996 103—dc20 95-33025

ISBN 0-19-283134-8

Published by permission of the Oxford University Press

Licensed for sale in the People's Republic of China only,  
not for sale elsewhere.

本词典(重印本)由牛津大学出版社授权出版,

仅供在中华人民共和国境内销售。

†

## 出版说明

随着改革开放的不断深入以及国际交流的日趋广泛,外语学习已经不仅仅局限于语言技能的培养。通过英语获取专业知识、提高专业水平、跟踪学科的最新发展已经成为时代的要求。因此,目前国内急需一批用英语编纂的专业词典。

牛津英语百科分类词典系列是由牛津大学出版社组织编纂的一套工具书。该系列涉及语言学、文学、文化、艺术、社会学、数学、物理学、化学、生物学、医学、食品与营养、计算机等社会科学和自然科学门类近百种,均由造诣很深、经验丰富的专家撰写。作为第一批,我们从中精选了52本,以满足国内读者的需要。词典用浅显的英语,精确地解释了常用的专业词汇,充分体现了牛津大学出版社在出版工具书方面严谨的传统。

该系列词典可作为大专院校各专业的学生以及专业技术人员学习专业知识、提高专业英语能力的参考书。

本社编辑部

# Preface

Philosophy is human thought become self-conscious. Its topics are life, the universe, and everything; it can include all the categories of religious, artistic, scientific, mathematical, and logical thought. This dictionary of philosophy is a record of some of the terms that excite such reflection, and some that have been found helpful in conducting it.

Johnson writes in the Preface to his great *Dictionary of the English Language* that:

when the nature of things is unknown, or the notion unsettled and indefinite, and various in various minds, the words by which such notions are conveyed, or such things denoted, will be ambiguous and perplexed.

Philosophy by its nature inhabits such areas of ambiguity and perplexity, places where, in Russell's phrase, we meet only uncertain patches of meaning. Philosophers make their reputations by contesting meanings: success often consists in showing that predecessors misunderstood the categories of experience, reason, proof, perception, consciousness, virtue, or law. Such discussions are intricate and lengthy. Philosophies, like movements of thought in general, demand lengthy statement and resist swift definition. Thus the distinguished historian of ideas A. O. Lovejoy records that, in 1824, two citizens of the French village of La Ferté-sous-Jourre, MM. Dupuis and Cotonet, began the enterprise of discovering what Romanticism is, by collecting the definitions given by eminent authorities. The endeavour, they recorded, cost them twelve years of suffering and ended in disillusion.<sup>1</sup> In the same paper, Lovejoy confidently tells us that over sixty senses of the word 'nature' can clearly be distinguished. With such dismal examples before us, brevity may seem impossible, and any attempt at an overview an insult to the abundant complexities.

No dictionary-sized explanation of these terms can substitute for the full explorations. A dictionary entry on virtue or quantum mechanics cannot substitute for an education in ethics or physics. What I have attempted to do is to indicate where the central explorations are headed, and the points of dispute that have attracted reflection. Naturally, this means that my own interests and assessments are not always disguised. Other topics are not themselves subject to such disputes. It is not, for example, seriously contested what Newcomb's paradox is, or the axiom of choice. Here a more magisterial treatment is possible, and this I have given.

A. O. Lovejoy, *Proceedings of the Modern Language Association of America*, 34 (1924), 229.

Any acquaintance with the history of philosophy shows how closely its concerns fuse with those of subjects that go under different academic headings: literature, physics, psychology, sociology, and theology. Indeed, the separation of philosophy as a discipline can seem to be an artefact of academic administration, rather than a reflection of a clear division between using a concept and thinking about it. I have therefore been free in introducing terminology from other sciences where such terminology is heavily embedded in philosophical discussion. For example, in the contemporary literature, someone thinking about the ethics of abortion may come across casual mention of zygotes and meiosis, just as surely as they may come across the doctrine of double effect or the acts/omissions doctrine. Someone interested in physical reality may need to know the content of Bell's theorem or the Einstein–Podolsky–Rosen thought experiment, and in such matters I have attempted to help. Similarly I have tried to be generous with thinkers from neighbouring subjects and traditions, although inevitably there is a certain amount of arbitrariness. Addison, Blake, and Pope were as probably as significant philosophical thinkers as many people included here, but they fell just outside the range; Carlyle, Coleridge, and Dante get in. I have been particularly concerned to include the great scientists whose work infused major changes in philosophy: Boyle and Faraday, as well as Galileo, Newton, Darwin, and Einstein.

However, I have been moderately sparing with contemporaries. My criterion was, in effect, whether the name might occur as a point of reference without explanation, as in a Quinean theory of meaning, a Davidsonian view of interpretation, or Lewis's view of possible worlds. This may mean that persons associated with particular doctrines gain entries, when equally distinguished, or even better, philosophers remain less well-exposed, and I trust that this sugars the pill for anyone disappointed at not being included. We must all reflect that new stars appear in the intellectual firmament, and old ones disappear.

Most of the conventions used in the work are self-explanatory. I have tried to design it as a playground for browsers and a resource for anyone interested in general intellectual movements, as well as a simple work of reference. Hence there is extensive cross-referencing; indeed the tracing of influences and predecessors, often across apparent divisions within the subject, is my principal excuse for undertaking the enterprise myself, rather than relying on self-contained, 'packaged', entries from experts in different areas. The first mention of a useful cross-reference in an entry is asterisked, and related topics picked up by 'see' and 'see also'. I have used standard simplifications for the transliterations of Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Parsi, and Sanskrit, believing that all transliteration schemes are artificial, and that more readers are put off by the proliferation of accents and diacriticals than are helped by them. I have, however, kept the macron for long vowels in Greek words, as in *epoche* or *arete*, since this is a well-established convention in contemporary philosophical literature. Alphabetization is surprisingly tricky, and the rule is that where there are complications, entries are ordered by



what occurs before the first comma. Thus we have self-intimating; selfish gene; self-refuting . . . ; and fact, facticity, factive, fact/value. . . 'St' and 'Mc' are alphabetized as Saint and Mac. For modern European languages other than English, original titles are given, and the titles of published translations, with dates of translation where it was felt that this information was useful (for example, in signalling how quickly or how slowly a work was disseminated in English).

I owe thanks to many people who have saved me from error: Benjamin Arnold, Julia Annas, George Boolos, Andreas Edmüller, Roderick Long, Keith Simmons, and Paul Teller gave me extensive advice, and I have also received assistance from Bernard Boxill, Ned Block, Edward Craig, Daniel Dennett, Luciano Floridi, Allan Gibbard, Rosalind Hursthouse, Jay Rosenberg, Galen Strawson, and Ralph Walker. Ruth Opochniky, Robert Michels, and Andrew Mills provided invaluable research assistance. The huge editing job was undertaken by my wife, Angela Blackburn, whose patience has been beyond praise. I owe thanks to MIT Press for permission to reproduce the diagram on p. 76 which is adapted from Paul Churchland's *Matter and Consciousness* (1984). In this reprint a number of minor errors in the original edition have been corrected. I am very grateful to colleagues and students for help in identifying these. Any errors that remain are of course my own responsibility. Here, again, I can only echo Johnson:

It is the fate of those who toil at the lower employments of life, to be rather driven by the fear of evil, than attracted by the prospect of good; to be exposed to censure, without hope of praise; to be disgraced by miscarriage, or punished for neglect, where success would have been without applause, and diligence without reward.

Among these unhappy mortals is the writer of dictionaries . . .

SIMON BLACKBURN

Chapel Hill 1994

---

## Contents

<i>Preface</i>	vii
<b>Dictionary</b>	1
Appendix: Logical Symbols	406
Chronology	409

**Abbagnano, Nicola** (1901– ) 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).

**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.

**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 figure, 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 the 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. Consistent 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 hymns include *O quanta qualia* ('Oh how great and glorious are those sabbaths').

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

**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.

**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.

**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 (*abstractionem 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 title for the pointless or meaningless nature of human life and action.

**Abunaser** See Al-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.

**Academy of Florence** Circle gathered around \*Ficino between 1462 and 1494, in a villa at Careggi put at their disposal by Cosimo de' Medici. It was a central intellectual influence in the Italian Renaissance, its main activities being the translation, study, and reinterpretation of Platonic and Neoplatonic writings.

**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.

**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.

**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 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. Understanding this distinction gives rise to major problems concerning the nature of mental \*causation, and of understanding the \*will and \*free will.

**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. Experience 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.

**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 murder. 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.

**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 modal realism.

**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.

**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*.

**adiaphora** (Gk., 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** (Lat., 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** (Lat., 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** Lat., to infinity.

**Adorno, Theodor W.** (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 society. 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 has also been influential in post-modernist literary and cultural criticism.

**advaita** (Skt., 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 ad-

verb 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.

**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.