

Approaching Philosophy of Religion

An introduction to key thinkers, concepts, methods and debates

Anthony C. Thiselton

'Undoubtedly one of the most sophisticated and creative minds'
Rowan Williams

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Truth
Underdetermination
Utopia

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Preface

I owe a large debt of gratitude to Mr Philip Law of SPCK for his wise insights in designing this excellent series, and in particular for his suggestions for the structure and content of this book. Although he granted me freedom to modify his proposals, I could not disagree with them, and have largely retained his initiating vision for this book.

I have taught the philosophy of religion since 1963, and in more recent years both at the University of Nottingham (from 1992) and the University of Chester (from 2003). Interaction with often differing students has alerted me to practical didactic or student needs, and interaction with Nottingham's Department of Philosophy has alerted me both to academic developments in philosophy and to further student needs. Our two departments shared a course on God, Freedom and Evil. In 2002 I published *A Concise Encyclopedia of the Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford: Oneworld). A minimal overlap of ideas with this book may occur, but no wording has been replicated.

To my wife, Rosemary, once again I owe grateful thanks for typing the whole MS and for checking proofs and indices. I have actually typed a subsequent book with one finger and oral software, but her support never wavered, in spite of commitments to our church, music and our large garden. Most of all, I am deeply grateful to God for sustaining me through 25 books (three with awards). At least half have been published since a major stroke, and more than half through SPCK in England or Eerdmans in America, many with translations. Finally, I am very grateful to Mrs Sheila Rees and to the Revd Stuart Dyas for the laborious task of reading and correcting proofs.

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Abbreviations

ANF — *Ante-Nicene Fathers*
Aquinas, — Aquinas, Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, 60 vols.
Summa Theologiae — (Lat. and Eng., Blackfriars ed., London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1963)
CUP — Cambridge University Press
Dan. — Danish
Eng. — English
Fr. — French
Ger. — German
Gk — Greek
Heb. — Hebrew
KJV — King James Version
Lat. — Latin
NPNF — *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*
OUP — Oxford University Press

Chronology

from 800 BC — Indian *Vedanta* and *Upanishads*, classics of Indian philosophy
from 800 to 333 BC — Book of Proverbs and other Old Testament wisdom literature
c. 624 – c. 546 BC — Thales of Miletus, earliest pre-Socratic philosopher
c. 563–483 BC — Gautama Buddha, founder-teacher of Buddhism
551–479 BC — Confucius, Chinese philosopher
c. 540 – c. 475 BC — Heraclitus of Ephesus, pre-Socratic Greek philosopher
fl. 540 BC — Xenophanes, Greek philosopher, offering critique of polytheism
c. 515–450 BC — Parmenides, pre-Socratic Greek philosopher
probably c. 500–350 BC — Book of Job, Old Testament wisdom literature
470/469–399 BC — Socrates, classic Greek philosopher
c. 428–348 BC — Plato, classic Greek philosopher
c. 384–322 BC — Aristotle, classic Greek philosopher
341–270 BC — Epicurus of Samos, Greek philosopher
c. 334–262 BC — Zeno of Citium, Greek philosopher
varied dating — Book of Ecclesiastes, Old Testament wisdom literature
c. 190–160 BC — Ben Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), wisdom literature of Judaism
c. 63–40 BC — Wisdom of Solomon, wisdom literature of Judaism
c. 20 BC – AD 50 — Philo of Alexandria, Jewish philosopher
c. 150–200 — Nagārjuna, Buddhist philosopher
c. 185–254 — Origen of Alexandria, biblical and philosophical theologian
203–70 — Plotinus, neoplatonist philosopher
354–430 — Augustine, major Christian philosophical and biblical theologian
c. 480–525 — Boethius, Roman philosopher
c. 788–820 — Sankārā, influential Hindu philosopher
c. 813–71 — al-Kindi, influential Islamic philosopher
980–1037 — Ibn Sina (Avicenna), Islamic philosopher of Being
c. 1017–1137 — Rāmānuja, Hindu philosopher
1033–1109 — Anselm of Canterbury, Christian philosopher and theologian
1058–1111 — al-Ghazali, Islamic philosophical theologian
1079–1142 — Peter Abelard, French theologian and philosopher

1126–98 — Ibn Rushd (Averroes), Islamic philosopher of Spain
1135–1204 — Moses Maimonides, Jewish religious philosopher
1225–74 — Thomas Aquinas, classic philosophical theologian
1237–1349 — William of Ockham, influential English philosopher
1238–1317 — Mādhva, Hindu philosopher and theologian
c. 1266–1308 — Duns Scotus, influential medieval philosopher
1465–1536 — Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, European humanist
1483–1546 — Martin Luther, founder of Reformation
1588–1679 — Thomas Hobbes, English philosopher
1596–1650 — René Descartes, French rationalist philosopher
1623–62 — Blaise Pascal, fideist philosopher
1632–77 — Baruch Spinoza, Dutch monist philosopher
1632–1704 — John Locke, English empiricist philosopher
1646–1716 — Gottfried W. Leibniz, rationalist philosopher and logician
1657–1733 — Matthew Tindal, deist thinker
1685–1753 — George Berkeley, Irish empiricist philosopher
1711–76 — David Hume, Scottish empiricist philosopher
1724–1804 — Immanuel Kant, German transcendental philosopher
1729–81 — Gotthold E. Lessing, publisher of Reimarus
1729–86 — Moses Mendelssohn, German-Jewish philosopher
1743–1805 — William Paley, Christian apologist
1762–1814 — Johann Fichte, German idealist philosopher
1768–1834 — Friedrich D. E. Schleiermacher, German philosophical theologian
1770–1831 — Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, German idealist of historical reason
1775–1854 — Friedrich W. Joseph von Schelling, German subjective idealist
1788–1860 — Arthur Schopenhauer, German philosopher
1798–1858 — Auguste Comte, French positivist philosopher
1804–72 — Ludwig Feuerbach, German atheist with philosophy of human projection
1806–73 — John Stuart Mill, English philosopher and ethicist
1809–82 — Charles Darwin, exponent of evolutionary theory
1813–55 — Søren Kierkegaard, Danish existentialist philosopher
1818–83 — Karl Marx, German political and social theorist
1820–1903 — Herbert Spencer, English philosopher and evolutionary theorist
1833–1911 — Wilhelm Dilthey, German hermeneutics philosopher
1839–1914 — Charles S. Peirce, American philosopher of pragmatism and the

logician
1842–1910 — William James, American philosopher of the will, and psychologist
1844–1900 — Friedrich Nietzsche, German atheist and iconoclastic philosopher
1846–1924 — Francis H. Bradley, British idealist philosopher
1856–1939 — Sigmund Freud, influential psychiatrist and psychologist on the unconscious
1859–1938 — Edmund Husserl, Austrian philosopher and founder of phenomenology
1859–1952 — John Dewey, American philosopher of pragmatism
1872–1970 — Bertrand Russell, positivist philosopher and logician
1875–1961 — C. G. Jung, Swiss psychiatrist and philosopher of symbol
1878–1965 — Martin Buber, Jewish philosopher of personhood
1886–1929 — Frantz Rosenzweig, Jewish philosopher
1886–1957 — Frederick R. Tennant, English philosophical theologian
1886–1965 — Paul Tillich, German-American philosophical theologian
1886–1968 — Karl Barth, major Swiss theologian
1889–1951 — Ludwig Wittgenstein, classic philosopher of language
1889–1973 — Gabriel Marcel, French Roman Catholic philosopher
1889–1976 — Martin Heidegger, German philosopher of human existence
1900–76 — Gilbert Ryle, English philosopher of conceptual analysis
1900–2002 — Hans-Georg Gadamer, major hermeneutical thinker
1904–90 — B. F. Skinner, American psychologist and behaviourist
1905–80 — Jean-Paul Sartre, French existential philosopher
1906–95 — Emmanuel Levinas, Lithuanian-Jewish philosopher of personhood
1911–60 — John L. Austin, British philosopher of language
1911–90 — Norman Malcolm, analytical philosopher and friend of Wittgenstein
1913–2005 — Paul Ricoeur, seminal philosopher of hermeneutics
1915–80 — Roland Barthes, French philosopher of semiotics and postmodernism
1919–2006 — Peter F. Strawson, analytical philosopher of language and logic
1922–2012 — John Hick, British philosopher of religion
1923–2010 — Antony Flew, evidential atheist philosopher, who abandoned atheism c. 2001–7
b. 1926 — Jürgen Moltmann, major Christian theologian
1928–2014 — Wolfhart Pannenberg, major systematic and philosophical theologian

1930–2004 — Jacques Derrida, prolific French philosopher of semiotics and postmodernism
b. 1930 — John Polkinghorne, distinguished scientist, theologian and apologist
1931–2007 — Richard Rorty, radical pragmatist postmodern American philosopher
1931–2015 — William Rowe, analytic philosopher of religion
b. 1932 — Alvin Plantinga, influential American philosopher and Christian apologist
b. 1932 — Nicholas Wolterstorff, influential Christian American philosopher
b. 1932 — John R. Searle, influential American philosopher of speech-act theory
b. 1934 — Richard Swinburne, analytical British philosopher
1935–2005 — Louis P. Pojman, writer on philosophy of religion
b. 1941 — Richard Dawkins, a ‘new’ or aggressive atheist, drawing on genetic theory
b. 1949 — W. L. Craig, analytical philosopher of religion and Christian apologist
b. 1951 — Brian Davies, Catholic philosopher of religion

Introduction:

Landmarks in philosophy of religion

An account of the development of philosophy in general will overlap with, but also differ from, an account of the philosophy *of religion*. A history of philosophy will normally begin with the ancient Greeks, but ignore traditions in Hindu, Chinese and Hebrew thought.[1] A history of philosophy of religion will likewise include Greek thought from Thales (c. 624 – c. 546 BC) and Heraclitus (c. 540–475 BC), but will often include also Zoroaster (perhaps c. 600 BC), Confucius (c. 551–479 BC) and much Jewish wisdom literature (e.g. Job and Ecclesiastes). Philosophy explores an understanding of the world through reason. Philosophy of religion considers an entity or entities *beyond the world*, and how this Being interacts with the human situation. Hence Quinn and Taliaferro begin with Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Judaism and Christianity.[2]

1 The ancient world

(a) The ancient Greeks

(i) Thales of Miletus

Thales is generally regarded as the founder of Greek philosophy. But his main interest lay in the nature of the world. Heraclitus of Ephesus was concerned with the 'order' (Gk, *logos*) of the universe, but regarded all things as changing flux. He declared, 'The ordered universe (Gk, *cosmos*) . . . was not created by any one of the gods.'[3]

(ii) Xenophanes

On the other hand Xenophanes of Colophon (fl. 540 BC) affirmed belief in 'One god, greatest among gods and men, in no way similar to mortals either in body or thought'.[4] He vigorously attacked both the polytheism and over-human-like anthropomorphisms of Homer and Hesiod, whose gods were often depicted as performing immoral acts, and even as wearing human clothes.[5] The supreme

Mind, he claimed, does not travel from place to place. In embryo, he began to formulate a philosophy of the transcendence and omnipresence of God, even though he acknowledged limits to our understanding. The pronouncements of Parmenides of Elea (c. 515–450 BC) are less clear, although he decisively defended changelessness and the unity of all things. Sense-experience (i.e. experience through the senses) conveys mere appearance. On this ground he attacked Zeno. In this context he does refer to 'God' as 'uncreated, imperishable, one, continuous, unchangeable and perfect'.[6] This must surely count (with Xenophanes) as the beginning of a philosophy of religion.

(iii) Socrates

After Parmenides we come to the flowering of Greek philosophy in Socrates (c. 470/469–399 BC), Plato (c. 428–348 BC) and Aristotle (c. 384–322 BC). Socrates of Athens aimed at the discovery of truth, for which he examined and exposed the untried assumptions of his fellow-philosophers, especially the Sophists. The unexamined life, he argued, is not worth living. Although he was accused of 'atheism', in practice he rejected the institutional polytheism of Athens, with its myths of immoral and anthropomorphic deities. The vast majority of Socrates' philosophical sayings remain in oral form, and we depend on Plato for an accurate record of them. At best his philosophy constitutes a *preparation* for a philosophy of religion; for example, he advocated knowledge of oneself, critical enquiry, the positive use of irony and dialogue, and a variety of avenues to the exposure of truth. His quest of seeking definition of concepts and time is reflected in linguistic philosophy today. His contrast between knowledge and mere opinion remains an essential theme in philosophy.

(iv) Plato

Plato in his *Timaeus* portrayed God as a divine craftsman who brings order out of 'formlessness'. 'God' is rational, but not necessarily the Creator.[7] In the *Timaeus*, however, the world-soul is placed in the category of 'Becoming', while the eternal, timeless, God belongs to the category of *Being*. God, who is *Being*, is not within the created world. In this sense, Plato's doctrine of Ideas or Forms implied his *antipathy to materialism*. His ideal world of Being, Forms or Ideas is stable, perfect and without the uncertainties of the material world. The ultimate task of the philosopher, he says, is to explore this world, where truth, knowledge and perfection reside.

This is Plato's ultimate answer to the problem of knowledge, or what

philosophers often call *epistemology*. Examples of such Forms or Ideas (Gk, *eidos*) include Justice, Beauty, Goodness and Truth. *Particular* examples of things in the material world that are beautiful, good or true, cannot match the perfection of Beauty, Goodness and Truth, which are *universals*. In *Phaedo* (one of the works of his middle period), he draws from Socrates the contrast between the physical and the purposive or ideal.[8] Forms are eternal, changeless and immaterial. This constitutes, in effect, a dualism between the material and the immaterial worlds.

This often leads to a fundamental contrast between empirical, *a posteriori*, inferential knowledge, and rational, logical, *a priori*, knowledge. According to Plato, we can have knowledge of Forms or Ideas only through *thought* and the mind, and certainly *not* from everyday experience. Looking back to Socrates, Plato shows that mere *opinions* may change, but that genuine *knowledge* remains permanent. In the 'middle' period of his thought Plato turns from more argumentative discourse to constructive philosophical proposals. He expounds the theory of Forms, first formulated in the *Symposium*, more fully in *Phaedo* and the *Republic*. A useful and illuminating further example of Forms or Ideas arises from trying to draw a circle. In everyday life we may attempt to draw a perfect circle, but however good it is, it will never be as perfect as the Form or *Idea* of circularity. It is merely a good approximation to the ideal in the world of mind or thought. This is the 'nouminal' world (from Gk, *nous*, 'mind').

The status of this nouminal world has been debated throughout the history of philosophy. It influenced the realist–nouminal debate of the medieval era, the empiricism of Locke, Berkeley and Hume, and Kant's notion of the instrumental role of the mind as it shapes reality in accordance with purpose and order.

The theory of Forms also influenced Plato's thought on the immortality of the 'soul'. The *soul* (Gk, *psychē*) appeared to Plato to be timeless, changeless, and belonging to the supra-sensory world of Forms. The *body* (Gk, *sōma*) belonged to the everyday world of change and decay. Hence, he argued, the soul is eternal, not transitory. The immortality of the soul constitutes a key theme, but is never set out strictly as a 'proof' as such. In the conclusion Plato writes, 'Believing the soul to be immortal . . . we shall ever hold fast the upward road.'[9] However, in *Phaedo*, Plato suggests other possible arguments. These have been described as the notion of 'cyclical' life, i.e. being reborn after death; and supposed recollections, which might point to a pre-natal soul.[10]

Plato sets out his theory of language especially in his major work, *Cratylus*. He discusses whether there can be a 'natural' name for a thing, or whether

language is based entirely on convention. He argues in favour of the second, concluding that language is *functional*. Language, he argues, can make distinctions or convey information, and words are crucial to knowledge. In these three respects, Plato, in embryo, partially anticipates Wittgenstein: language is functional; it has varied functions; and it is crucial to knowledge.

Plato shares Socrates' concern for ethics, morals and political or social theory. Virtue is desirable because thereby people can live at peace. But, unlike the apostle Paul, Plato insists that no one does wrong willingly: 'virtue is knowledge'; hence wrongdoing is due to ignorance. Virtue is not only the choice of good, but the choice of bringing it about. The practical content of virtue includes justice (Gk, *dikaiosynē*). Indeed much of the *Republic* is about this concept. Socrates urged virtue in accordance with each part of the soul.[11] He discussed four corresponding virtues: justice, moderation, health and beauty as 'a good habit of the soul'.[12] Most ethical virtues serve the ordering of the state or what Oliver O'Donovan calls 'the political community'. Plato considered rulers, men and women, natural gifts and 'guardians'.[13] In his fuller exposition, the four cardinal virtues are *prudence* (Gk, *phronēsis*, or *wisdom*), *justice* (*dikaiosynē*), *temperance* or *moderation* (*sōphrosynē*) and *courage* or *fortitude* (*andreia*).[14]

Plato's theory of knowledge included his famous example of the cave, in which, in the material world, we have to make sense of shadows cast by the realm of Ideas. Further, I conclude this brief study by noting Plato's enormous influence on theistic religion. In Christianity I need mention only Augustine (354–430), probably the greatest theologian of the Western fathers, and the Cambridge Platonists of the seventeenth century (see Part 3, Platonism).

(v) Aristotle

Aristotle (c. 384–322 BC) alone rivalled Plato in his influence on theism and his eminence as an ancient Greek philosopher. He profoundly influenced Thomas Aquinas (1225–74) in the Christian tradition, and in the Islamic tradition al-Kindi (c. 813–71), al-Farabi (875–950), Ibn Rushd (also known as Averroes, 1126–98) and Ibn Sina (Avicenna, 980–1037). In Judaism he strongly influenced Moses Maimonides (1135–1204). Aristotle's influence on medieval thinkers is not surprising, for the translation of his works led to an Aristotelian revival after many years of neglect.

Aristotle made outstanding contributions to logic, metaphysics or ontology, the theory of knowledge and ethics. He was born in Macedonia, educated in Plato's Academy, and after Plato's death became tutor of Alexander the Great,

travelling with him on part of his journey to India. He returned to Athens in 335 BC to found his own philosophical school. In contrast to Plato's theory of Forms and the rational or *a priori*, Aristotle emphasized the *particular* and the *empirical* of everyday life. He reasoned from *particular objects* or cases, to work by inference or *a posteriori* to a unified understanding of the world. Some have even described him as perhaps the first scientist, and many regard him as formulating the first theory of logic.

Although Aristotle's work was primarily in philosophy in contrast to philosophy of religion, he has also provided many tools which are indispensable for a philosophy of religion. In his *Prior Analytics*, he formulated the *logical syllogism*. A logical syllogism, he argued, must consist of three terms, and three only. These are known as the major premise, the minor premise and the conclusion. A 'middle term' must not change its meaning, or this invalidates the syllogism. One often cited example of this is the syllogism

> Every state of affairs has a cause (major premise);
> every universe is a state of affairs (minor premise);
> therefore the universe has a cause (conclusion).[15]

On the face of it, *cause* retains the same meaning. But on further reflection *cause* in the major premise is *part of a causal chain*; hence it is a *caused cause*. But if the conclusion concerns a causal cause, the syllogism has achieved virtually nothing. But as part of the cosmological argument for the existence of God (see Part 2, Cosmological argument), the conclusion clearly refers to an *uncaused cause*, namely *God*. Hence in terms of strict formal logic, the syllogism breaks down. This example does not come from Aristotle, but clearly illustrates the point.

Syllogism denotes valid argument, and some equate it with deduction or deductive reasoning. The title of Aristotle's work *Analytics* comes from the Greek *analytos*, which means *solvable*. In Aristotle, syllogisms concern the logic of *propositions*. This stands in contrast to contemporary modal logic, which concerns *possible* states of affairs. Aristotle's use of logical symbols comes in *On Interpretation*, where, for example, 'S' can denote the *subject* in symbol, and 'P' the *predicate*. He discusses *assertions* and *assertions-and-denials*. He considers examples of logical variants, in which an assertion and the denial might both be false, with combinations of logical possibilities.

Aristotle's theory of reality, or ontology, includes both an extensive account of the world and nature, and questions about order and purpose, which imply

proposals about God. His explorations of purpose and order lead him to postulate a changeless and immaterial First Cause. This is perfect mind (Gk, *nous*) or Prime Unmoved Mover (*prōton kinoun akineton*). There must be, he argues, something which originates motion, and this 'something' must itself be *unmoved*, eternal and actual, not merely potential. Aristotle declared, 'We say therefore that God is a living being, eternal, most good, so that life and duration . . . belong to God; for this *is* God.'[16] He is also 'unmovable and separate from sensible [i.e. material] things . . . impassive and unalterable'.[17] Nevertheless Russell comments, 'God does not have the attributes of a Christian Providence'.[18] Augustine, al-Farabi and Aquinas discussed critically Aristotle's views about God.

Aristotle's distinction between types of cause remains relevant to philosophies of religion. A cause (Gk, *aitia*) may be material, efficient, formal or final. For example, the 'material cause' of a statue may be the marble or bronze from which it is made; the blows of a hammer or chisel that shaped it are its efficient cause; the plan of the sculptor constitutes its formal cause; the purpose for which it has been produced is its final cause. Such distinctions can be useful, whether we are exploring the cosmological and design arguments, or even miracles.

Aristotle was constructive in the realm of ethics and its social dimension. He expanded Plato's four cardinal virtues into nine, adding e.g. magnanimity, liberality, gentleness and wisdom.[19] 'Good' is intrinsic, not merely instrumental. In his words, 'The chief good is that [at] which all things aim.'[20] He defined virtue as well-being (Gk, *eudaimonia*). Virtue is a habit, 'the habit of choosing the relative mean'.[21] Thus, courage is the mean between cowardice and rashness (see Part 2, Good and evil). This emphasis on balance and moderation has unkindly been called 'the ethics of the respectable middle-aged'.

(b) Philosophies of religion in the Near and Far East

(i) Zoroastrianism

Zarathustra, known also in its Greek form as Zoroaster, probably dates from the early fifth century BC. He was a native of Iran, but challenged traditional Iranian polytheism. Legends about him abound, but from Persian texts we may infer that a central theme for him was the clash between good and evil forces. In Zoroastrianism, dualism can be traced to two opposing spirits: Ahura Mazda or Ormazd, the 'good' spirit, and Ahriman, the 'evil' spirit. The good spirit is the source of life, law, order and truth. This may be regarded as an embryonic philosophy of religion. After the death of Zarathustra, Zoroastrianism became a

more formal *dualistic* religion. It had Scriptures known as *Avesta*.

(ii) Hinduism

Hindu thought goes back to the classical *Vedanta* and the *Upanishads*, which may be dated in the seventh century BC, while the Vedic writings are even earlier. Besides the *Upanishads*, the other two classic texts of Hinduism are *Brahma Sutras* and *Bhagavad Gita*. Vishnu is regarded as the highest or supreme god, or the embodied Brahman. He sustains everything, but is at the same time 'the whole universe', as in classic pantheism.[22] Zoroastrianism and the Hindu *Vedanta* provide respective examples of dualism and pantheism. But a clearer account of deities emerges in the early Middle Ages with Sankara (eighth century AD) and Rāmānuja (tenth and eleventh centuries). Sankara argued that the self attains 'release' (*moksha*) from painful cycles of existence, to become one with Ultimate Reality. Rāmānuja taught a modified monism (*Visista Advaita Vedanta*), allegedly between pantheism and monotheism.

On the one hand, the supreme person is said to be antagonistic to evil; on the other hand, he is undifferentiated consciousness. The *Bhagavad Gita* embodies a more *personal* concept of God. By the tenth century Nyaya formulated a 'proof' for the existence of God (the *Kusumanali* of Udayana). The extent to which Hindu thought may be considered 'theistic' is debated: the *Vedanta* tends towards theism, and some regard polytheistic deities as symbols which point to the One. But Mādhva (1238–1317), the Hindu philosopher, developed *Vedanta* philosophy in the direction of dualism, with multiple deities.[23]

(iii) Chinese and Indo-Chinese thought and Confucius

In the mists of time Chinese philosophy tended to presuppose a notion of heaven (*T'ien*). It also assumed a semi-human-like 'Lord' (*Ti*). As in Plato and Aristotle, most philosophical concern was for a well-ordered society. An ideal person will study 'the Way' (*Tao*). At the same time earliest oral traditions point in several directions, and are often confused. Confucius (551–479 BC) and the Taoist school propagated a system of moral truth. Heaven becomes eternal but indescribable, and was sometimes also known as *tzu-jan*, *self-so*, or possibly, the One. Mo Tzu (c. 468–376 BC) founded a Moist school, which taught a universal ethic of love, and speculated about time, cause and relativity. Later, a school which taught the dualist forces of Yin and Yang emerged.

Confucius was primarily a philosopher, who gathered round him followers or disciples. But Confucianism as a Chinese philosophy became influential only in

the second century BC. Confucius aimed at promoting a good society of harmonious social relations, with polished manners. He stressed a hierarchical social order: a sovereign over the people, a father over a son, a husband over a wife, and so on. Thus his contribution to philosophy of religion was primarily in social relations and social order.

Gautama Buddha (c. 563–483 BC) lived as a beggar and became known as 'the enlightened one'. With five friends he founded an order of monks, who practised asceticism. He taught that suffering is the key to salvation and enlightenment. Suffering is bound up with *karma*, *works*. Like Aristotle, he advocated the avoidance of extremes. The end result is 'enlightenment' or becoming a Buddha. The soul is not an entity, but a *momentary* self. *Nirvana* becomes the extinction of all worldly desires, and absolute bliss.

In the third century BC Buddhism developed into four main schools, under the general heading of Hinayana Buddhism. Suffering remained a dominant element, together with release from the cyclical wheel of rebirth into Nirvana. At the beginning of the Christian era a second general school of Buddhism emerged, namely *Mahayana* Buddhism. This appealed to a stricter interpretation of the Buddha's maxims. It often included a 'Saviour' figure, who works through numerous rebirths to gain the salvation of others. Its ethic is one of compassion and concern.

In the fourth century AD Vasubandhu, an influential Buddhist monk, wrote on a third-century Buddhist text. This text embodied the *dharma*, or religious and moral law, which governed four ends in life in both Buddhism and Hinduism. The concept of *dharma* was divided into so many categories that its Buddhist exponents felt the need to expound complex theories of causality in philosophy.[24] Meanwhile a second school of Buddhism had emerged as the Madhyamaka (or 'Middle') school of thought, under Nagarjuma (c. 150–200 AD), the leading thinker of Mahayan Buddhism. Nagarjuma set much store on the use of dialectic.[25] He stressed the 'emptiness' (*sunyata*) of all things, and encouraged silence and the withholding of 'yes' and 'no'. As a philosophy, Buddhism regards reality as *not what it appears*.[26]

(iv) Hebrew, Jewish and earliest Christian thought

The dating of the earliest books of the Hebrew Bible (or Old Testament) is contested, and I cannot here do justice to more than a small sample. Hebrew-Jewish wisdom literature embodies the most explicit philosophical questions. Within the Old Testament, Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes provide notable

examples of explicit ‘wisdom’ methods of communication and thought-content.

The date of Proverbs may in part go back to the eighth century BC. Its conventional ascription to Solomon probably indicates genre, rather than date. Most of the collection of sayings may well derive from the eighth to the sixth centuries, even if final editing belonged to the Persian period of 539–333 BC. In philosophical terms most proverbial aphorisms are based on observations of everyday life (i.e. empiricism), which may lead to assessments or questions based on rational inference (i.e. in part, rationalism).[27] In this respect the book’s philosophical method is akin to that of Aristotle (e.g. justice excludes ignorance and folly). Ethics is both ‘command’ ethics and consequential ethics. It includes reverence for God, and free will to choose a course of action. Wisdom (Heb., *chokmah*; Gk, *phronēsis*) is a priority.[28] Within this framework its view of providence is optimistic: virtue will bring its proper reward.

The Book of Job comes probably from between the seventh and fifth centuries BC. Its main themes address the justice and providence of God within the framework of the problem of evil and suffering. This is a stock-in-trade of the philosophy of religion. It may possibly reflect the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC. It is characteristic of wisdom literature to ask complex questions, rather than to lay down dogma. Against the optimism of Proverbs, which aims to embody the ‘traditional’ view, it undermines such an easy generalization. Tremper Longman writes, ‘Job . . . serves as a canonical corrective to a possible over-reading of the book of Proverbs.’[29] Job is ‘blameless and upright’, a man who fears God (Job 1.1), but disaster after disaster overtakes him. He cries out in his distress, ‘If I go forward, he [God] is not there; or backward, I cannot perceive him’ (Job 23.8). ‘I cry to you [God] and you do not answer me’ (30.20).

Ecclesiastes probably comes from perhaps about 250 BC. ‘The Preacher’ (Qohelet, the speaker) joins Job in seeing the meaninglessness of life. He says, ‘In my vain life I have seen everything; there are righteous people who perish in their righteousness, and there are wicked people who prolong their life in their evil-doing’ (7.15). Thus, he sees everywhere ‘vanities of vanities; all is vanity’ (1.2). Again, Longman comments, that while a superficial reading of Proverbs seems to guarantee rewards for goodness, ‘Ecclesiastes and Job both resist that notion’.[30] All his empirical observations have come to nothing, even if with rational assessments. Yet Fox, Bartholomew and others insist the Qohelet has an *epistemology*, or theory of knowledge.[31] Bartholomew says, ‘Qohelet’s epistemology is . . . not just empiricism . . . Ecclesiastes 7.23–29 demonstrates that starting with autonomous epistemology is not wisdom but folly, and will not

lead one to truth.'[32] Ecclesiastes undermines, thereby, both empiricism and rationalism as entirely adequate means of gaining knowledge and understanding.

Judaism largely replicates the two-sidedness of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes by including Wisdom of Solomon and Ecclesiasticus (the Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sirach) among its intertestamental writings. Wisdom uses Greek philosophical concepts to argue for the superiority of Jewish wisdom, much like Philo of Alexandria. Wisdom of Solomon, like Ecclesiastes, has pessimistic themes, coming from the first century BC in the Roman period. Wisdom of Solomon 14.8 and 12 denounces idolatry and 14.24–27 regards pagan idolatry as the source of all evil. Wisdom concludes, 'Short and sorrowful is our life . . . we were born by mere chance' (2.1–3). By contrast Ben Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) follows Proverbs in its belief in 'a universe that encourages virtue and punishes vice'.[33] Sirach comes from the second century BC Greek period and freely draws in Greek philosophical concepts for its own purposes. Thus the dual Hebrew epistemology is replicated in Judaism.

The New Testament provides some limited elements of a philosophy of religion. For example, Paul in Romans 9—11 offers a philosophy of history, designed to show that God has remained faithful to his promises to Abraham and to Israel. God's word, Paul says in 9.6, cannot have failed. He reaffirms God's promises in 9.9–13. He enquires whether history shows that God is unjust (9.14–16). In 10.1–18 he examines further aspects of this, and discusses the scope of salvation in 11.1–36. All the same, genuine philosophies of religion became more explicit in the early apologists, in Clement of Alexandria and Origen, and most of all in Augustine.

(v) Augustine of Hippo (354–430)

Plato, Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas constitute the four who shaped Western philosophy more than others before the Renaissance. Augustine produced the largest body of Christian writings in the first millennium. Initially, Manichaeism influenced him, although he later rejected it. Neoplatonism influenced him more permanently. Before his conversion he taught rhetoric. He became Bishop of Hippo in 395. His *Confessions* (397–400) and the *Enchiridion* or *Handbook* (423) are probably the least polemical of his writings. His classic work *City of God* (413–26) constitutes a philosophy of history, which addresses pagan claims about the fall of Rome in 410. The books of *De Trinitate* are philosophical theology.

In his early *Soliloquies* (386) Augustine shows a passion for intellectual

enquiry. Anticipating Kierkegaard, he writes, ‘My question is not *what* you know, but *how* you know.’[34] This also reminds us of Wittgenstein’s dictum in the *Tractatus*, ‘Philosophy is not a body of doctrine, but an activity.’[35] In such enquiry Augustine values the use of reason: ‘Virtue . . . is perfect reason.’[36] Truth concerns both will and intellect.[37] In *De Magistro* (389), he discusses language and knowledge. Like Wittgenstein, he shows the inadequacy or ambiguity of ostensive definition (i.e. pointing to something to explain its meaning).[38] In *De Libero Arbitrio* (395–6) he rejects metaphysical dualism, and asserts ‘God is not the author of evil’;[39] evil comes from a misdirected will.[40] He asks, ‘Why did you not use your free will for the purpose for which I [God] gave you?’[41]

In his autobiographical *Confessions* Augustine offers a psychology of self, regarding it as in bondage to disobedience to God and self-gratification, and capable of self-deception.[42] Books III and IV demonstrate his philosophical interest in Aristotle’s *Categories*, as well as his reflections on time.[43] He comments, ‘Evil . . . has its source in self-will . . . in the desire for self-ownership.’[44] After his conversion, he recalls that he has no difficulty about intercessory prayer.[45] Prayer, miracles and the nature of time feature in most philosophies of religion. Wittgenstein and Ricoeur both refer to Augustine on time. On the nature of evil Augustine appeals to the principle of plenitude; i.e. evil results may follow from ‘inequalities’ or ‘differences’ within the world.[46] God is the eternal One, who is Mind (*nous*), beyond Being and the Giver of gifts.[47]

2 From the medieval to the early modern era

(a) Arguments for the existence of God

These include the cosmological, design and ontological arguments, for which see further in Part 2. In Part 2, we note work on the cosmological argument by Plato and Aristotle, al-Kindi (c. 813–71), al-Ghazali (1058–1111), Moses Maimonides (1135–1204), especially Thomas Aquinas (1225–74), John Locke (1632–1704), G. W. Leibniz (1646–1716), Samuel Clarke (1675–1719), and finally critiques of causality by David Hume (1711–76) and Immanuel Kant (1724–1804). The argument is therefore of regular interest throughout this period by Jewish, Christian and Islamic thinkers, but I must avoid undue repetition. Al-Kindi first set out the *kalām* tradition as follows:

Whatever has a beginning of existence must have a cause (major premise);

The universe began to exist (minor premise);
Therefore the universe must have been caused to exist (conclusion).

The conclusion is generally taken to refer to God as first cause.

There is, however, a second tradition in Islam, represented by Ibn Sinna (i.e. Avicenna, 980–1037). He wrestled with the concepts of God, Being, knowledge, creation, evil and logic. One problem with the cosmological argument is that it can seem easy to lead to the naive child's question, 'Then who caused God?' The *kalām* tradition simply asserts that an infinite chain of causes is impossible; Ibn Sinna changed the terminology into the contrast between *contingent* and *necessary*, rather than caused cause and uncaused cause. *Contingent* denotes that which might or might not be, and *necessary* denotes that for which it is impossible not to be. Brian Davies has set out Avicenna's formulation as follows:[48]

1. Everything must either have a reason or cause of its existence, or not.
2. If something does not [have such a cause], then there is at least one thing which exists of necessity.
3. If something does not exist of necessity, its existence derives from a reason or cause.
4. There cannot be an infinite series of causes for the existence of contingent beings.
5. So contingent beings ultimately derive from what exists of necessity.

This more sophisticated formulation helps us to distinguish created entities or objects (caused causes) from the First Cause or Necessary Being. This would answer the 'naive' child's question. However, some aspects of Ibn Sinn's complex philosophical theories tend towards thinking of emanations of God, and it is not surprising that al-Ghazali attacked his work as moving away from the Qur'an.

In the section 'Cosmological argument' in Part 2, we examine Thomas Aquinas's Christian formulations in *Summa Theologiae* I.I, question 2, article 2.[49] We note that three of Thomas's 'five ways' of arriving at God's existence were versions of the cosmological argument. On the basis of his respect for Aristotle his first 'way' is the argument from *potentiality* and change to *actuality* and eternal Being. He argues, 'A thing in process of change cannot itself cause that same change; it cannot change itself.'[50] In philosophy this is often known as the kinetological argument (i.e. from movement). The significant Latin terms are

potentia, *actum* and *moveo*. We must 'arrive at some first cause of change, not itself being changed by anything, and this [he says] is what everyone understands by God'.[51] The second way is based on 'the nature of causation'; and the third, the contrast between 'what need not be' (i.e. the *contingent*) and 'what must be' (i.e. *the necessary*), or in Latin, *ex possibili et necessario*.[52]

Duns Scotus (c. 1266–1308) to some extent anticipated empiricism (see Part 1, Empiricism and rationalism), and countered objections to the cosmological argument, expounding the difficulties of the argument, especially that an infinite regress of causes might be possible. He draws a distinction between things 'ordered essentially' and 'things ordered accidentally'. His work appears to be more sophisticated than that of Aquinas, but ultimately reduces down to the same argument.

Locke and Leibniz in the early modern period defended the argument.[53] Leibniz depends less on the arguments from cause than from what he calls metaphysical *necessity*. He draws on 'The Principle of Sufficient Reason'; i.e. that nothing takes place without a reason, and that we can give a reason sufficient to explain why a given situation is what it is. He argued that there was never a time when nothing existed, or in that case we ourselves would not exist. Samuel Clarke, who was chaplain to Queen Anne of England, corresponded with Leibniz. Ultimately his cosmological argument is similar to that of Leibniz, concluding that only a self-existent, necessary being, namely God, can constitute the logical reason for the existence of finite, contingent, beings.

Hume, Kant and several recent philosophers, mounted objections to the argument. David Hume argued that we cannot strictly *observe* causality by experience; we can experience only *constant conjunctions*.[54] In his *Treatise of Human Nature*, Hume declares, 'We have no other notion of cause and effect, but that of certain objects which have been *always cojoined* together, and . . . have been found inseparable.'[55] Immanuel Kant seems to sympathize with Hume's attack on metaphysics at first, but soon parts company from him. He focuses more on the capacity of the mind and 'instrumental' reason. He argues, 'The proposition that everything which happens has its cause . . . has the peculiar character that it makes possible the very experience which is its own ground of proof, and that in this experience it must always itself be *presupposed*.'[56] We simply *presuppose* causes, we do not observe them, because the mind needs to postulate cause and effect as a condition for the intelligibility of the world.

The argument from design, or the teleological argument, likewise, flourished more readily in its simpler form in the Middle Ages, and earlier modern thought,

than it did after Darwin in the nineteenth century (see Part 2, Design argument). In Part 2 we consider the classic argument of William Paley (1743–1805), and the respective attitudes of Kant and Hume. We trace the debates that followed Charles Darwin (1809–82) and Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), and the theistic replies of F. R. Tennant, Arthur Peacocke and John Polkinghorne in the modern era, the latter against the claims of 'neo-Darwinians' such as Richard Dawkins.

Meanwhile, we confine ourselves to the period from Aquinas to Kant, seeking to avoid undue overlapping. Aquinas based his 'fifth way' on the guidedness (Lat., *ex cubernatione*) of nature (or *things*, *rerum*).[57] Things tend towards a goal, and the goal we call 'God'. Paley based his argument on the difference between design in a machine, and inanimate objects such as a stone. The sharpest controversy about the beneficial design of nature arose in the later modern period following Darwin. Its reinstatement relied on counter-arguments from Tennant to Polkinghorne.

Hume partly anticipated the post-Darwin argument by insisting that 'design' in nature depended on human-like, or anthropomorphic, images of God.[58] He expresses his view in his rhetorical reply by 'Philo' to Cleanthes. He is willing to grant to Cleanthes that a house may presuppose the design of an architect, but the analogy between a house and the universe cannot be made.[59] Hume adds that it cannot yield 'a just conclusion concerning the origin of the whole'.[60] In the *Dialogues* Hume declares, 'Look round this universe . . . The whole presents nothing but the idea of a blind nature.'[61]

Kant agreed with theists who saw 'order, purposiveness and beauty' in the world.[62] But ultimately, he insisted, this implies only the existence of an *architect* of the world, 'not a creator of the world'. In this sense, he says, 'The argument always deserves to be mentioned with respect. It is the oldest, the clearest, and the most in conformity with the common sense of humanity.'[63] But it falls short of 'demonstrative certainty' partly because it rests on the analogy with human art.[64] The method of empiricism (observation and experience), he argues, is 'impossible' in the search for 'absolute totality', or the transcendent. Our limitations are those which invalidated the cosmological argument; transcendent reason presupposes order and purpose in the first place.[65]

In my discussion of the ontological argument in Part 2 I state the classic argument of Anselm (1033–1109), the objections of his contemporary Gaunilo and the unintentional undermining of these arguments by Descartes (1596–1650) and Kant. Descartes set out the argument as a purely logical one, almost an argument by definition, and Kant seized on this criticism to agree that Anselm

had proved *not* the existence of God, but the existence of a *concept* of God. We note that Bertrand Russell elaborated Kant's objection in modern times, while Norman Malcolm, Charles Hartshorne, Hans Küng and, above all, Alvin Plantinga, produced counter-replies.

Unlike the other two arguments, the ontological argument attempts to begin from the very first (*a priori*), but as Barth shows, and Plantinga acknowledges, it functions best as a confession of God's existence by the believer. Plantinga insists, however, that it shows that belief in the existence of God is *not unreasonable*. It underlines such belief's 'rational acceptability'.[66]

(b) Faith and reason, and the problem of knowledge (epistemology)

Within this period (Aquinas to Kant), Aquinas effectively shares with Anselm a deep respect for *thinking*. He cannot imagine that reason could be incompatible with faith, even if knowledge of the invisible God is indirect. Certainly God cannot be the object simply of empirical enquiry. We cannot know God's 'essence' by reason or rationalism. Knowledge in this sense requires God's self-disclosure. He stated, 'We cannot know what God is, but only what He is not', although 'demonstration adds to our knowledge of God'; investigation concerns 'the implications of the Christian revelation'.[67] Aquinas adds, 'That God exists cannot, it seems, be made evident. For that God exists is an article of faith . . . Paul says, faith is concerned with the *unseen*.'[68] Nevertheless, he continues, there are 'truths about God which St Paul says we can know by our natural powers of reasoning' (Rom. 1.20).[69]

In a later discussion Aquinas appeals to Dionysius for the affirmation 'Negative propositions about God are true.'[70] Our minds, he says, 'do not understand simple forms', of which God is an example.[71] Nevertheless, 'It is impossible that the truth of faith should be opposed to those principles that the human reason knows naturally.'[72]

Blaise Pascal (1623–62) argued that it is still reasonable to believe in God, even if we have inadequate evidence. For if we choose to believe in God, we cannot 'lose'; but if we choose to reject such belief, and in the end discover that God does exist, we have, in effect, lost a life-affirming gamble. In the history of philosophy this became known as 'Pascal's Wager'. Pascal writes, 'How will you wager? Reason cannot make you choose either, reason cannot prove either wrong . . . You must wager . . . Let us assess the two cases: if you win, you win everything, if you lose, you lose nothing. Do not hesitate then; wager that he [God] does exist.'[73]

Is this ‘fideism’? (See Part 3, Fideism.) John Locke set out reasons for ‘entitled belief’ in Book IV of *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690). A modern specialist, Nicholas Wolterstorff (b. 1932) calls attention to Book IV. He writes, ‘What we ought to believe has something intimate to do with reasons, and/or reasoning, and/or Reason.’[74] He continues, ‘Locke was the first to develop with profundity and defend the thesis that we are all responsible for our believings, and that . . . reason must be one’s guide’ to ‘entitled belief’.[75] Locke recognizes that *reason* has different meanings.[76] Reasoning includes ‘finding out truths . . . laying them in a clear and fit order . . . perceiving their connexion, and . . . making a right conclusion’.[77] Syllogisms may be useful, but only in part, for understanding may go beyond formal abstract, logic.[78] Even reason may sometimes fail.[79] Hence intuition and judgement have their place.[80]

One of Locke’s reasons for concern finds expression in Chapter 19 of Book IV. *Enthusiasts* had crept into the Church, nourishing ‘groundless opinion’, under the guise of ‘illumination from the Spirit of God’.[81] Hence, ‘reason must be our last judge and guide in everything’.[82] For Locke, intensity of conviction or ‘firmness of persuasion’ is no guarantee of truth, even if it was prompted by religious ‘feeling’, however sincere.[83] Locke was a faithful Christian believer, and even wrote a brief commentary on Paul. But he also resisted irrationality in religion.

In the early modern period, philosophy settled on three broad models. First, René Descartes, Gottfried Leibniz (1646–1716) and Baruch Spinoza (1632–77) philosophized in the *rationalist* tradition. They presupposed *innate ideas* in the human mind. These seemed to provide a foundation on which to build *a priori* (see details in Part 2, Empiricism and rationalism). Second, John Locke, George Berkeley (1685–1753) and David Hume placed primary emphasis on *experience* which came through the five senses (seeing, hearing, etc.), and expounded the *empiricist* tradition. They inferred ideas and thoughts *a posteriori* from sense-experience. Their use of ideas made them also *idealists*, as the ‘immateriality’ of Berkeley’s philosophy shows (see Part 2, Empiricism and rationalism). Third, the critical philosophy of Kant overtook both rationalism and empiricism with a *transcendental philosophy.* He asked not simply ‘How do we know?’ or ‘What do we know?’ but ‘How is knowledge *possible* at all?’

Kant’s philosophy both emphasized and limited the power of reason. It laid down *conditions for the possibility of knowledge*. These were set out in his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) which constituted a turning point in philosophy.[84] ‘Regulative’ reason provides conditions for our understanding the

ordering of the world. This is Kant's 'transcendental dialectic'. Empiricism, in his view, received into the mind pre-ordered data from the world; or at least, sense-data became pre-ordered by the activity of the mind. Reason also produces 'antinomies', or apparent contradictions. Easy examples to think of are 'the edge of space' or 'the beginning of time'. The human mind can think only of more space 'beyond' its 'edge' or more time 'before' its 'beginning'. This is because the mind seeks to impose temporal or spatial 'categories' onto the world. C. E. M. Joad compared seeing the world as blue because we wear blue spectacles. What, then, is the 'real' world? Here theoretical reason reaches its limit. Kant compared his *Critique of Pure Reason* to a 'Copernican revolution'.

Kant's alternative was to emphasize the role of what he called 'practical reason', and the *moral* 'categorical imperative'. Thus, he produced his *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) and *The Critique of Judgment* (1790). These were followed by his *The Metaphysics of Morals* (1797). He stressed that the absolute was 'the absolutely good will', and deontological ethics; i.e. an ethics of duty and obligation. God, freedom and immortality were 'postulates' (in effect, presuppositions) of practical reason. But lest any theist might become over-optimistic, Kant produced *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1793). In this he argued that the notion of a personal God who interacts with the world (e.g. as responding to prayer), belongs merely to 'ecclesial' religion. Prayer in rational religion becomes merely meditative self-adaptation.

These three traditions, the rationalist, the empirical and the critical or transcendental, held sway until Georg Hegel (1770–1831). He introduced the notion of *historical reason*. This has tended to influence continental philosophy more than analytical philosophy, but completes the basic outline of the development of theories of knowledge, or epistemology. Hegel thereby began a tradition, which profoundly influenced such diverse thinkers as Karl Marx, Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre (see Part 1, Continental philosophy).

(c) Other problems in the philosophy of religion, especially the problem of evil

A number of these issues are discussed in Parts 2 and 3. The *problem of evil* features among the most widely debated. Aquinas had given much thought to this.[85] He argued, 'Evil cannot signify a certain existing being, or a real . . . positive kind of thing.'[86] In philosophy this is known as the *privative* view of evil. Evil, he says, has no form, but is 'like being found wanting' (Lat., *sed sicut privatio*).[87] God created only good; evil cannot destroy it. Aquinas acknowledges

that this may come from a deficient will in humankind, as a secondary cause. He drew this view from Augustine.

In question 47 Aquinas expounds the plurality and multiplicity of God's creation. This accounts for much of potential evil. A. O. Lovejoy called this the *principle of plenitude*. Aquinas writes, 'Divine wisdom causes the distinction and inequality of things [Lat., *distinctionis rerum . . . ita et inaequalitatis*] for the perfection of the universe, which would be lacking were it to display but one level of goodness.'[88] 'Inequality' offers the *potentiality* for envy and conflict. Fire, Augustine had argued, can be used for warmth or destruction, just as water can be used to refresh or to drown. This is not to *cause* evil, but has the *potential* for evil. Aquinas recognizes that sometimes God allows evils for a greater good. He quotes Paul, 'Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound' (Rom. 5.20, KJV). The dark of a valley throws into relief the sunshine of the mountain top.

Hume approached this subject in the opposite way. He revived the ancient objection of Epicurus (341–270 BC). Epicurus asked, 'Is [God] willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is impotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Whence then is evil?' Hume commented, 'Epicurus' old questions are yet unanswered.'[89] As 'Philo', he rejects the ascription of purpose in the universe by 'Cleanthes', in the *Dialogues*. If God were good, wise and powerful, he could have foreseen the utter miseries of the world *beforehand*, and prevented them. As it is, the universe displays an 'inaccurate workmanship'.[90]

Hume attacked his predecessor, Leibniz, in the *Dialogues*.[91] Leibniz had published his *Theodicy* in 1710.[92] Leibniz was a metaphysician and logician, and believed that the teaching of Scripture was fully compatible with reason. He argued that possibilities for human thought were possibilities for the action of God. Thereby, he could arrive at the conclusion that God had created our universe as 'the best of all *possible* worlds'. Such a world is 'the simplest in hypotheses and the richest in phenomena'.[93] There must be 'sufficient reason' for everything in the world. In a complex system of logic, he regarded necessity, contingency and freedom as coherently interlocking. This perhaps seems to anticipate *in part* and *in effect* what John Polkinghorne proposes today in the light of quantum physics. Leibniz also anticipated a version of the free-will defence argument; i.e. the freedom to choose of humankind leads to the *possibility* of evil. Today it might be argued that only if humans were well-programmed robots could the possibility of evil be avoided.

Part III of Leibniz's *Theodicy* explores 'The Justice of God and the Freedom of Man in the Origin of Evil'.[94] Then in his Appendices he summarizes the issues, formulating *eight* kinds of objections which Hume would make later in terms of formal syllogisms. Whatever conclusion we reach, his arguments are more meticulous and careful than Hume's. This account conveys only a basic outline of Leibniz's complex thought. All the same, it was left to writers of our day to offer still more convincing responses, including, for example, Swinburne and Plantinga.

Apart from arguments for the existence of God, problems of knowledge and the problem of evil, most anthologies of philosophy of religion today address such issues as the attributes of God, miracles, life after death, and questions about science and ethics. But I have addressed most of these issues elsewhere in this book: see Part 2, Attributes of God, Miracles, Life after death, Morality, Good and evil; Part 3, Omnipotence, Omniscience, Omnipresence.

3 From Hegel to the present day

Georg Hegel provided as much of a turning point in philosophy as Kant. He stressed especially *reason, history and the whole*. Reason is real, although it is also anchored in *historical* processes. Hegel, followed later by Dilthey and Gadamer, coined the term *historical reason*. He regarded Friedrich Schelling (1775–1854) as too subjective an idealist, and Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834) as too preoccupied by human feelings. Reason and logic open up a theory of reality. In his book *The Phenomenology of Mind* (1807), he regarded God as Absolute Subject and Ultimate Reality, while finite human beings constituted intersubjective reality.[95] God is the *Telos*, or End. Hegel regarded humankind as radically conditioned by the historical process. In other words humans were bounded by the point of view dictated by their situation in history and society.

This prompted a development which led through Dilthey to modern continental philosophy (see Part 1), beginning with Edmund Husserl (1859–1938). It is demonstrated especially in Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), then by Sartre and the tradition of hermeneutics, as exemplified by Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002) and Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005). Most of these writers emphasize the 'historical finitude' (Ger., *Geschichtlichkeit*) of human beings. In Hegel's thought, the Absolute unfolds itself as a 'ladder' of historical, dialectical and logical processes. A thesis, for example, finite human consciousness, encounters its antithesis, or negation, and the dialectical process raises this up (Ger.,

erheben) and ‘sublates’ or assimilates it (Ger., *aufheben*) into what is (supposedly) higher. Consciousness thus becomes self-consciousness, which in turn leads to reason and Spirit. Hegel strongly reacts against the static theory of knowledge in Descartes, and sets out his programme in his Preface, which he wrote after the completion of his book. After discussing these topics, he expounded religion in terms of absolute knowledge. Fichte and Schelling had earlier proposed the logic of ‘the other’ (*thesis* and *antithesis*), and it has played a constant part in continental philosophy, including Ricoeur and Emmanuel Levinas (1906–95) in France.

On religion, Hegel contrasts the imagery and pictures (Ger., *Vorstellungen*) used by believers with the critical concept (Ger., *Begriff*) characteristic of philosophy. D. F. Strauss (1808–74) derived from him the notion that myth could represent *ideas told in the form of narrative*. Hegel also applied this dialectical ladder to the Christian doctrine of the Holy Trinity. God the Father supposedly established the ‘thesis’ of creation; God the Son, the antithesis of dying on the cross and of Calvary; the Holy Spirit ‘sublates’ this with the synthesis of the risen spiritual life and freedom. He declared, ‘In thinking, I lift myself up into the Absolute . . . I am infinite consciousness while I remain at the same time finite self-consciousness’.[96]

In Germany Hegel’s influence has been profound (although less so in Britain). Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–72), David Strauss and Karl Marx (1818–83) turned Hegel’s philosophy on its head, and replaced *Spirit* with *matter*. Feuerbach drew on Hegel’s ‘infinite consciousness’ to argue that ‘consciousness of the infinite’ was simply a human projection of ‘God’ (see Part 2, Atheism). Freud also regarded *projection* as the origin of religion. Marx expounded a historical dialectical materialism, whereby the feudal era of lord and servant gave way to capitalism; capitalism gave way to state-socialism; and socialism gave way to communism, in which each gave and received according to need. Meanwhile, social oppression allegedly became a prime instrument of religion.

The theories of Charles Darwin (1809–82) and Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) were taken *at the time* to imply that the sciences were somehow at variance with religious faith and the account of creation in Genesis (see Part 2, Design argument). David Livingstone has traced the different stages of this debate. F. R. Tennant (1886–1957) showed, however, that evolutionary theory in no way undermined the principle of *order and design* in the universe. He wrote, ‘Gradualness of construction is in itself no proof of the absence of external design.’[97] Numerous theist thinkers then offered responses to ‘the new

Darwinianism' of Richard Dawkins (b. 1941) (see Part 2, Atheism; Design argument). Neo-Darwinianism combines a theory of evolution with genetics and genetic transfer.[98] In the late twentieth century a host of highly respected scholars offered convincing replies to Dawkins. These thinkers included Richard Swinburne (b. 1934), Arthur Peacocke (1924–2006), Ian Barbour (1923–2013), R. J. Berry (b. 1934), Alvin Plantinga (b. 1932) and above all John Polkinghorne (b. 1930). Polkinghorne and Barbour have established credentials both as scientists and as theologians.

Barbour wrote, 'Purposeful design was seen in the laws and structures through which life emerged.'[99] Polkinghorne traces the shift required in understanding the world by quantum theory in physics, from Heisenberg and Dirac onwards. He comments, 'Without contingent chance, new things could not happen; without lawful necessity to preserve them, they [stars, planets, etc.] would vanish away . . . One needs a world as big as this for life to emerge within it.'[100]

In reaction against Hegel's rationalist assumptions, Søren Kierkegaard (1813–55) emphatically resisted the notion of 'proving God'. He saw faith as a passionate self-involvement, which he called *subjectivity*, whereas Hegel had allegedly propagated *objective* truth. Hence Kierkegaard declared, 'To prove the existence of one who is present is the most shameless affront, since it is an attempt to make him [God] ridiculous . . . One proves God's existence by worship . . . not proofs.'[101] Hegel has, he said, 'A sort of world-historical absent-mindedness'.[102]

On the traditional side, we note in Part 2 that William Rowe (1931–2015), William Craig (b. 1949) and Richard Taylor (1919–2003) attempted to reinstate the cosmological argument in modern times. William Craig probably coined the term '*kalām* argument' to denote the Islamic cosmological argument in the Middle Ages, which rejected the eternity of the world. He argued that infinite time is logically impossible. Hence the universe had a beginning. He drew on Cantor's theory in mathematics and complex logic to argue that our sense of past events must be finite. He also drew on arguments from astrophysics, and considered theories about the origin of the universe, including relativity theory. Hence there can and must be a 'first cause', as al-Ghazali and the earlier Islamic thinkers had postulated (see Part 2).[103] Craig also wrote on divine foreknowledge.

William Rowe clarified Leibniz's appeal to the Principle of Sufficient Reason. Caused causes cannot be explained in terms of themselves; hence an independent Uncaused Cause is proposed. Rowe's argument constitutes a clarified version of the formulation by Samuel Clarke.[104] He argues that the

major premise of the cosmological argument should be divided into two distinct premises, which show (1) that an infinite chain of causes would be impossible, and (2) that an *uncaused* cause would be the ultimate ground of caused causes, in accordance with the Principle of Sufficient Reason. Richard Taylor, as we note under 'Cosmological argument' in Part 2, also appeals to the Principle of Sufficient Reason. Contingent causes, or caused causes, cannot account for the existence of the world. But temporal sequence is excluded with reference to the Uncaused Cause. Taylor rightly comments, 'Creation means essentially *dependence*', not simply cause and effect.[105]

The argument from design has also invited many reformulations in the modern era (see Part 2, Design argument). Under that heading we consider the contribution of numerous scientists and theologians. These modern writers include Tennant, Peacocke, Swinburne, Jeeves, Berry, Barbour, Plantinga and Polkinghorne. Several of these writers have established qualifications both in the sciences and theology. Richard Swinburne (b. 1934) presented an inductive version of the argument, namely the method of reasoning by which the general law is inferred from particular observed instances, in contrast to deductive reasoning, which provides watertight logical syllogisms.[106] He follows, instead, *a posteriori* early arguments, and compares different kinds of explanation.[107]

Swinburne distinguishes especially between the spatial order and temporal order in the course of clarifying and sharpening the teleological argument, and laments 'the virtual disappearance of the argument from design from popular apologetic'.[108] Yet in the temporal order 'regularities of succession are all pervasive'.[109] God, Swinburne says, produced an orderly universe, when he could so easily have produced a chaotic one. He admits, 'It is hardly a logically necessary truth that all order is brought about anew by a person.'[110] But a series of careful steps cumulatively suggest by inductive reasoning the overwhelming probability of the validity of the teleological argument.

The debate about the ontological argument continues in modern times with contributions from such thinkers as Norman Malcolm, Richard Rowe, Charles Hartshorne, Peter van Invagen, Hans Küng and Alvin Plantinga, all of whom offer positive reformulations of the argument. Russell and Findlay offer negative arguments against the validity of the argument (see Part 2, Ontological argument for details).

Charles Hartshorne (1897–2000) offered a version of the argument in modal logic. He accepts the concept of God's perfection and his necessary existence, but redefines perfection as *insurpassability*. In accordance with his process

thought (see Part 3), Hartshorne rejects the notion of perfection as static and changeless.[111] Norman Malcolm (1911–90) also defended his modal version of the ontological argument. He argued that God cannot exist as a contingent being, even if he also criticized Anselm's first formulation as inadequate.[112]

Alvin Plantinga prefers the term 'maximal greatness' over the traditional term. He also considers 'possible worlds' in the design and creation of God. He is a prodigious writer on logic, epistemology, Christian apologetics, God, freedom and evil, among many other philosophical issues. God's greatness, he argues, must be applied to all possible worlds. He argues that if something is possibly true, then its possibility is necessary if it is possible in *all* worlds. He reformulates the ontological argument to take account of this modal logic of possibilities. He concludes that an omniscient, omnipotent and perfectly good God exists. In Plantinga's words, 'A being has maximal excellence in a given world only if it has omniscience, omnipotence, and moral perfection in that world,' and further, 'There is a possible world in which maximal greatness is instantiated.'[113]

In this introduction we cannot consider the array of issues raised in modern thought throughout the philosophy of religion. In any case these are for the most part treated in Parts 2 and 3, as well as several articles in Part 1. Swinburne and Plantinga, together with Geach and van den Brink have advanced discussion on the omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence of God. Plantinga and Wolterstorff have broken new ground in their theory of knowledge and concept of *basicality*.[114] Vincent Brummer has written especially on intercessory prayer in the context of philosophy.[115] Swinburne and Keener have written on miracles.[116] Numerous contributions have been made to religious language (see Part 2), especially since the work of Wittgenstein, Austin, Ramsey and Searle in the twentieth century. I include many developments in Britain in analytic philosophy in Part 1. Our bibliography offers a wide range of anthologies or readings, edited by Brian Davies, John Hick, Louis P. Pojman, William Rowe and William J. Wainwright, Philip Quinn and Charles Taliaferro, Michael Peterson, and others.

Part 1

APPROACHES

1

Analytic philosophy

(a) Analytic philosophy in the British or Anglo-American tradition began with G. E. Moore (1873–1958), his rejection of idealism in favour of realism, and his defence of common sense. His work had affinities with that of Bertrand Russell (1872–1970) and the earlier thought of Ludwig J. Wittgenstein (1889–1951). As the movement came into full flower it stood increasingly in contrast to what British philosophers called ‘continental philosophy’. This latter movement included existentialism, phenomenology and deconstruction (see below, Continental philosophy). In the 1950s the lack of interaction between British and continental departments or faculties of philosophy found expression in continental admiration of Martin Heidegger, and Gilbert Ryle’s blistering review of Heidegger’s *Being and Time*. One side stressed the need for linguistic precision, logic and realism; the other explored metaphysics, subjectivity and human consciousness.

Moore and Russell vigorously rejected the philosophy of Hegel, together with that of Hegel’s British and American exponents, namely F. H. Bradley (1846–1924) with his notion of the Absolute and ‘the Whole’, J. M. E. McTaggart (1866–1925) on the unreality of time, and the American, Josiah Royce (1855–1916). Moore responded to Bradley and McTaggart with an appeal to common sense: if time is unreal, ought we not to be allowed to have lunch *before* breakfast? If ‘reality’ is spiritual, does it not follow that chairs and tables are far more like us than we think? Warnock recounts his response in this way, and comments, ‘He [Moore] was far more exacting in his standards of clarity and rigour’; i.e. than Bradley and McTaggart.[1]

In 1925 Moore published ‘A Defence of Common Sense’.[2] In this article he began with a list of ‘truisms’, including, ‘I have a human body’; ‘the earth has existed for many years’; and ‘here is my hand’. In 1903, he had published ‘A Refutation of Idealism’[3] and *Principia Ethica*.[4] Here he argued against the ‘naturalist fallacy’. We know intrinsically, he said, what good and evil are. In

1911 he became a lecturer in Cambridge; in 1921 edited *Mind*; and in 1925 he became a professor at Cambridge, with considerable influence.

Moore's collaboration with Russell further enhanced his influence. Russell is said to have remarked that Moore's influence worked on him as 'emancipation'.[5] His background was in mathematics, but he soon turned to logic. From earliest times, he had expressed reservations about metaphysics, regarding this area of philosophy as largely 'unscientific'. 'Facts', he argued, are to be 'analysed' into atomic states of affairs, which, in turn, can be translated into simple propositions. Many believe that this approach was reflected in the early Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921). But it has been shown conclusively that the *Tractatus* was not simply a version of Russell's logical atomism.

Nevertheless Russell, like the earlier Wittgenstein, believed that complex propositions could be reduced to simple ones. Indeed with the addition of 'and', 'or' and 'not', Russell regarded the first complex layer of propositions as 'molecular' ones. An example suggested by Warnock is, 'This is red, and that is brown', which combines two simple propositions into a molecular one.[6] 'Atomic propositions', for Russell, constituted the conclusion of analysis, and thereby yielded 'truth' or 'facts'. Thus Russell introduced into logic his notion of the *existential quantifier*. He examined such negative propositions as 'A round square does not exist.' Such a proposition, Russell pointed out, is not to be taken to imply that there is such an entity as 'a round square', for which 'existence' is denied. An existential quantifier may be expressed as 'It is false to assert that an *x* exists which is such that "round" and "square" can simultaneously be predicted of it.' The logical notation '$\exists x$' simply means 'for all *x*', without implying that *x* needs to *exist* (see also Part 2, Ontological argument). Russell aimed at *clarification, logical precision* and *analysis*.

(b) The second distinct stage of analytical philosophy was the *logical positivism* of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. In Anglo-American circles the leading name of this phase was Sir Alfred J. Ayer (1910–89), who made his name through the publication of *Language, Truth, and Logic* (1936; 2nd revised ed., 1946). He explains this book first originated in 1933 as part of his argument against the possibility of metaphysics. The heart of Ayer's argument was the *principle of verification* as the *criterion of meaning*.[7] Later, partly in the face of criticism, he modified this to the *principle of verifiability*.

Language, Ayer believed, consisted of two types of propositions. First, there were *analytical* statements, which Ayer called *a priori* propositions. These, in

effect were logical tautologies. They are *necessarily* true by definition. If I say, 'The three angles of a triangle add up to 180°,' or 'Water boils at 100°C,' these statements tell us nothing about the world, but make explicit some definition, or some principle of logic.[8] All other language, Ayer insisted, second, consists of *synthetic* statements, or *empirical* propositions.[9] The meaning of such statements must be established by the principle of *verification* (or *verifiability*). If they cannot be verified by sense-observation, Ayer dismissed them as 'non-sense'.

Verifiability applies to those statements which are, in principle, verifiable if we are in a position to make such verification. Ayer was writing when, as yet, there were no space rockets going to the moon. Hence, 'There are mountains on the moon' was understood to be verifiable on principle; i.e. I could verify them if I had scientific and technological equipment to make such verifications. Ayer includes a chapter in which he argues that ethics and theology cannot be tested by his criterion of meaning.[10] He concludes, 'The sentence "There exists a transcendent God" has, as we have seen, no literal significance.'[11] On the other hand, 'All propositions which have factual content are empirical propositions,' and therefore can be verified.[12] Metaphysics are eliminated, alongside theology and ethics.[13] Ayer is content to describe his method as philosophical analysis.

Ayer's brand of analytical philosophy dominated much positivist philosophy in Britain and America for twenty years, through the 1930s to the 1950s. But critical voices were emerging in the 1950s, especially in the philosophy of religion. One such voice among many was H. J. Paton in his *The Modern Predicament* (1955). He discussed Ayer's principle of verification, and concluded that this principle itself could not be verified. He wrote, 'The principle of verification itself is not obviously either one [analytic] or the other [synthetic] . . . As he [J. L. Evans] puts it, we do not expect a weighing machine to weigh itself . . . The principle . . . is not . . . an empirical generalization.'[14] It is not really a 'serious' argument, for it is simply positivism or materialism 'in a linguistic dress'.[15]

The 1950s witnessed a host of reappraisals of logical positivism from its beginnings in Rudolf Carnap. In 1950 Friedrich Waismann, among others, proposed modifications to the principle of verifiability. He restricted its application more narrowly and focused on the value in showing how language was *used*.[16] Further, towards the beginning of his *Philosophical Investigations*, Ludwig Wittgenstein, who had ruthlessly used 'analysis' in his earlier *Tractatus*, now argued for its futility as such. He argued, 'The speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life.'[17] There are 'countless kinds' of sentences, not

just analytic or synthetic. What is a simple' proposition? 'It makes no sense at all to speak absolutely of the "simple parts of a chair".'[18] He adds, 'When I say: "my broom is in the corner", is this really a statement about the broomstick and the brush? . . . I meant to speak neither of the stick nor of the brush in particular.'[19] 'If I said, "Bring me the broomstick and the brush which is fitted to it", I might answer, "Why do you put it so oddly?"'

(c) The third, more mature, stage of analytical philosophy concerns both *falsification* (rather than verification), and what became known sometimes as 'Oxford philosophy'. The first and perhaps most memorable example of the principle of falsification comes from an illustration in John Wisdom's essay 'Gods'.[20] His analogy is known as the parable of the Invisible Gardener: 'Two people return to their long neglected garden, and find among the weeds a few old plants surprisingly vigorous. One says to the other, "It must be that a gardener has been coming and doing something about those plants."'[21] The other points out that the growth may merely be natural. Upon enquiry they find that no neighbour has seen anyone at work in their garden. The two visitors still disagree, so they set a watch in case the gardener comes when the neighbours are asleep. But the gardener is unseen and unheard. The sceptic then asks, 'What remains of your original assertion? How does . . . an invisible, intangible . . . elusive gardener differ . . . from no gardener at all?'[22] What does it take for the sceptic to prove that the theist's claims about God are false?

A host of philosophers on both sides of the debate have engaged in this issue. Frederick Ferré (1933–2013), for example, discusses such claims as 'God created the world' or 'God is on our side', with reference to verification, falsification and emotive, evaluative or commissive statements.[23] What would count for or against such assertions or evaluations? Indeed two of the most robust theistic defenders were Basil Mitchell (1917–2011) and Ian Ramsey (1915–72).[24] Ramsey shows that theologians often use *models based on empirical data*, which are duly *qualified* to negate anthropomorphic meanings (see Part 2, Religious language). God is not only 'wise' (model), but infinitely wise (qualifier).[25]

(d) The 1960s and beyond witnessed the *fourth* stage of '*ordinary language*' *philosophy*. The original impulse for this was probably Wittgenstein's later work, which was often brilliant. But others made very important contributions to this fourth phase, notably Gilbert Ryle (1900–76), J. L. Austin (1911–60) and P. F. Strawson (1919–2006). Clearly they also continued the tradition of 'Oxford philosophy'.

In contrast to his earlier work, which regarded language as closely related to formal logic, the later Wittgenstein rejected the earlier pictures which had 'held us captive'.[26] He declared, 'What *we* do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use.'[27] He adds, in contrast to Russell, 'Philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual use of language . . . It leaves everything as it is.'[28] Everyday uses of language (which he called 'language games') are set up 'as *objects of comparison* which are meant to throw light on the facts of our language'.[29] 'Confusions' arise when language is abstract or static, 'like an engine idling when it is not doing work'.[30] We must, he argued, avoid 'super-concepts', and acutely observe the *particularities* of language in *action*. Elsewhere he remarked, 'Our craving for generality [comes from] our pre-occupation with the method of science.'[31]

This observation of ordinary language in action sheds a flood of light on a variety of regular expressions. For example, in his *Zettel* Wittgenstein carefully compares *love* and *pain*. He writes, 'Love is not a feeling. Love is put to the test, pain not. One does not say: "That was not true pain, or it would not have gone off so quickly."'[32] In other words, if love is sincere, it is a settled *disposition*; it does not come in temporary spurts, like a pain. Another example is *belief*. Belief, he argues, involves commitment. Thus, 'If there were a verb meaning "to believe falsely" it would not have a significant first person present indicative.'[33] In other words, I can say, 'He believes it, but it is false.' I cannot say, 'I believe it, but it is false.' A third example is *to expect*. Expectation is not primarily a psychological state. Wittgenstein comments, 'An expectation is imbedded in a situation.'[34] In *The Blue Book* he discusses what it means to expect a friend to come to tea. To expect him is to put out cups and plates, and behave as if he were expected.[35] I have similarly argued elsewhere that 'to expect' the return of Christ does not necessarily entail high excitement, but practical living in a way which makes us 'ready' for the parousia or return of Christ.[36]

Gilbert Ryle was recognized as probably the leading exponent of ordinary language philosophy, often called linguistic analysis. (See Part 2.) His consistent aim was to disentangle and elucidate conceptual confusions and 'informal' logical grammar. His most influential book was *The Concept of Mind*.[37] In this book he attacked René Descartes' dualism of mind and body. He wrote, 'I shall speak of it, with deliberate abusiveness, as "the dogma of the Ghost in the Machine" . . . It is one big mistake . . . a category mistake.'[38]

A category mistake occurs when it is assumed that two entities belong to the same category. Mental processes and physical processes, Ryle argued, do not

belong to the same category, as if ‘mind’ and ‘body’ formed a dualism within the same category. It is as fatuous a confusion of logic as, for example, the zeugma ‘She came home in a flood of tears and a sedan chair.’[39] *A rising tide*, he further explained, is *not the same kind of thing as* ‘*rising hopes*’.[40] This is not quite behaviourism, but it does not represent dualism either. Since Ryle, dualism is seen to belong, rather, to Plato, Aristotle and the Gnostics. Pannenberg, for example, defends ‘the biblical idea of psychosomatic unity’.[41] The Hebrew *nephesh* (soul) may denote a dead body. Ernst Käsemann regards ‘body’ and ‘mind’ as the God-given ‘public’ and ‘private’ modes of being of humankind.[42] (See Part 2, Humanity.) D. E. H. Whiteley rejects a ‘partitive’ view of the self in Paul in favour of an ‘aspective’ view of the whole person.[43]

The second classic book which Ryle produced is *Dilemmas* (1954), a collection of his essays.[44] He considers a number of traditional logical paradoxes and dilemmas, and offers a series of supposed conceptual elucidations, usually of the kind offered in *The Concept of Mind*. Arguably they are all brilliant solutions to earlier confusions. One striking example is the paradox formulated by Zeno (c. 334–262 BC) concerning Achilles and the tortoise.[45] At a common-sense level, everyone assumes that Achilles the athlete is the faster runner than the tortoise, and will always overtake the tortoise in a race. However, if a mathematician or logician were to calculate the distances involved, then if the tortoise had a good start over Achilles, he would set out markers for the race, and would discover that by the time Achilles had reached each marker, the tortoise would have moved ahead, even if very slowly. In these *theoretical* terms, it seems that Achilles could never catch up with the tortoise, without its moving on. Zeno used this supposed paradox to argue that change was an illusion.

Ryle’s acute ‘solution’ has far-reaching consequences. We have to distinguish between two questions, he argued. One is, ‘How many portions [of the course of the race] have you cut *off*?’; the other question is, ‘How many portions have you cut it *into*?’[46] Ryle adds, ‘A queer endlessness to Achilles’ pursuit of the tortoise’ is ‘a certain, special way of subdividing’, which yields ‘non-finality’.[47] He demonstrates this with various examples, from mathematics to slicing up a cake, and horse-racing.

The upshot of this is crucial for many supposed problems. The method of the logician differs from a supposed common-sense ‘nursemaid’.[48] Ultimately this can be resolved into the contrast between a *participant’s* view and an *observer’s* view. Ryle was not, to my knowledge, a Christian believer. But I have argued that this contrast can shed a flood of light on a well-worn question in Christian

eschatology: ‘Does the Christian enter the presence of Christ at once upon death, or does the believer have to wait for the return of Christ, the resurrection, and the last judgment?’ From the point of view of the *participant* the next thing the believer knows after death is waking up in the presence of Christ. From the point of view of the *observer*, the apocalyptic drama of the parousia, the resurrection and the last judgment have to occur.[49]

Elsewhere I have drawn on Ryle’s essays in *Dilemmas* to show that Titus 1.12–13, ‘Cretans are always liars . . . That testimony is true,’ is *not* a self-contradictory paradox, *nor* is it an empirical and racially prejudiced generalization about Cretans; rather, it is a *logical* point about fruitless debate based on an ironic allusion to a well-known paradox in ancient Greek philosophy.[50] The argument is necessarily complex, and I cannot set it out in full here.

Equally insightful in a different way was John L. Austin, another leader of ‘ordinary language’ philosophy. In effect he pioneered *speech-act theory* (see Part 2, Religious language). In 1946 he introduced the term ‘performative language’ in an essay entitled ‘Other Minds’, to denote such utterances as ‘I promise’.[51] In 1955 he gave some epoch-making lectures which were published as *How to Do Things with Words*.[52] Hence he also called ‘performative utterances’ an ‘illocutionary act’. He writes, ‘An “illocutionary” act [is the] performance of an act *in* saying something, as opposed to performance of an act *of* saying something.’[53] Initially Austin distinguished a *performative* utterance from *descriptive* uses of language. We do not, he argued, speak of a ‘false’ promise, of a ‘false’ marriage vow or of a ‘false’ bequest in a will.[54] We *make* a promise, a marriage vow or a bequest. There are reasons why it may be ineffective or invalid, but it is not ‘false’; we should not speak of ‘a false christening’ or false baptism.[55] In the case of performatives, ‘to *say* something is to *do something*’.[56]

Austin lays down *conditions* for *effective* performatives. It is no good a mother saying, ‘He promises, don’t you Billy?’, unless it is Billy who promises. It is no use saying ‘I will’ if I am already married. It is no help saying, ‘I bequeath my watch,’ if I have two. Often the effects of performatives may be ambiguous. What happens if an archbishop says, ‘I open this library,’ and the key snaps in the lock? What happens if a minister says, ‘I baptize this infant 2704?’[57] The procedure must be accepted and completed. Hence, ‘For a certain performative utterance to be happy, certain statements have *to be true*.’[58] They may *presuppose* that an alleged bachelor is really single, or that a given

convention is recognized.[59] Then it may constitute a valid ‘speech-act’.[60]

This also has profound consequences for Christian theology. I have discussed elsewhere the authority of the speaker, for example, in Jesus’ pronouncement of forgiveness, when he speaks in the name of God.[61] I have also explored the importance of *promise* and *oath* elsewhere. The most notable philosopher of language to have developed and modified Austin’s approach is John R. Searle in several books, alongside many other writers.[62] D. D. Evans and Nicholas Wolterstorff have developed Austin’s insights for philosophy of religion in Canada and America, and Richard Briggs in the UK. In *Philosophy and Ordinary Language* (1963) Caton includes essays by Peter F. Strawson, who should be considered alongside Ryle, Austin, Stephen Toulmin and J. O. Urmson.

2

Continental philosophy

Richard Kearney defines continental philosophy as ‘a patchwork of diverse strands: phenomenology, hermeneutics, existentialism, structuralism, critical theory, deconstruction – these are some of the salient movements which have developed in continental Europe between 1900 and the 1990s’.[1] This term was coined primarily by departments of philosophy in the Anglo-American world that broadly contrasted and compared it with philosophy in the analytical tradition.

(a) Existentialism

Existentialism already features as an ‘approach’ later in this Part (see Ch. 4). Hence we need to offer little more than an outline here. It is customary to begin with *Søren Kierkegaard* (1813–55), and then with *Friedrich Nietzsche* (1844–1900). Thereafter we discuss the main existentialist thinkers: Karl Jaspers, Gabriel Marcel, Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre.[2] Common to all these diverse and individualist thinkers are four shared features: (i) the importance of *first-hand decision* and human will; (ii) the role of time and temporality; (iii) the historical and social situation into which we are born; and (iv) the unimportance of abstract rationality and the need to search for truth through subjectivity. ‘Subjectivity’, however, is not what James Brown called ‘grubbing about in the depths of one’s particular psyche’, but what Kierkegaard called ‘inner transformation . . . an infinite, passionate . . . being sharpened into an “I”’.[3] Although he might lack the passionate engagement of the other five thinkers, Heidegger still dismisses a merely ‘objective’ description of life and time as entirely secondary to the *given experience* of specific human beings. In his earlier work he speaks of human beings as ‘being-there’ (Ger., *Dasein*). They do not relate directly to Being (*Sein*). Karl Barth ‘rediscovered’ Kierkegaard *for theology* in the second edition of his *Romans* (1921).

Karl Jaspers (1883–1969) remains influential for his psychology and 'limit-situation'. This occurs when an individual reaches the end of his or her tether, and thereby exposes what is genuinely true for them. *Gabriel Marcel* (1889–1973) emphasized persons. He insisted that people were not to be dismissed as mere numbers or cases, but given the dignity of genuine and unique persons.

Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) dominated philosophy and theology, especially in German universities. Pannenberg remarked that it is unfortunate that one single thinker had such an influence on so many people, a sentiment with which many British philosophers agree. The other huge influence on continental thought was the French philosopher *Jean-Paul Sartre* (1905–80), alongside Simone de Beauvoir and Albert Camus. I have expounded Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Sartre in detail, however, under existentialism, so may omit undue repetition here.

(b) Phenomenology

Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) is generally regarded as the founder of phenomenology. Heidegger and Sartre had initially begun with this approach, but later abandoned it. Other exponents of phenomenology include Maurice Merleau-Ponty. It would replicate another entry, however, to discuss the nature of phenomenology in detail here, because I devote a substantial discussion to it later in Part 1 (see Ch. 7).

(c) Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics began in the modern era with the work of Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834) in Germany, although Friedrich Ast (1778–1841) anticipated aspects of his work. The giant figures of continental hermeneutics after Schleiermacher were Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911); Martin Heidegger; Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002); and Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005). In addition to these five major philosophers, Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultmann, Ernst Fuchs and Gerhard Ebeling developed hermeneutical approaches in theology. Jürgen Habermas and Karl-Otto Apel have also contributed major insights as social philosophers. All of the above come from Germany, except Ricoeur (France) and Barth and Ebeling (Switzerland). Some liberation and feminist theologians have drawn on this work for their own purposes.

(i) *Schleiermacher* has often been called 'the founder of modern

hermeneutics'.[4] He was both a professor at Berlin and an influential preacher. He regarded preaching as 'striking up the music, awaking the slumbering spark' and as his proper vocation.[5] Whereas, before his work, most regarded hermeneutics as '*rules* of interpretation', Schleiermacher saw the subject as 'the *art* of understanding'.[6] He believed that to interpret a text that was written at a different time and in a different language and culture could *not be merely mechanical or instrumental*, or to serve the prior interests of the interpreter. Under the influence of romanticism, he stressed the 'divinatory' (Ger., *divinatorisch*) dimension of understanding. He associated this explicitly with the 'feminine' principle, which was more than merely rational and reflective. He comments, 'Divinatory knowledge is the feminine strength of knowing people; comparative knowledge, the masculine. The divinatory method seeks to gain an immediate comprehension of the author as an individual.'[7]

The *art of understanding* arises because the interpreter must 'transform himself, so to speak, into the author'.[8] The 'masculine' and 'feminine' principles are, however, complementary. Comparative interpretation involves necessary *explanation*; divinatory interpretation involves the *intuition rapport* that can exist between friends. The former approach largely uses analysis of the *parts*; the latter penetrates the *whole*. The necessity is seen in what Schleiermacher called 'the hermeneutical circle'. He declares, 'The unity of the whole is grasped and then seen in relation to the various sections . . . The provisional grasp of the whole . . . our initial grasp of the whole is only provisional and incomplete.'[9] In other words, we need a *preliminary* understanding, which is subsequently revised and corrected until a better understanding is reached. The partial, or grammatical, must be involved, and a repeated process of interaction between the parts and the whole improves our understanding. Further, an initial or preliminary understanding which the Germans call *Vorverständnis* (pre-understanding) is corrected in the light of author and text as a whole.[10]

(ii) Whereas Schleiermacher focused on the art of understanding authors and texts, *Wilhelm Dilthey*, effectively his successor, applied hermeneutics especially to the social sciences, including such institutions as law and the state. He regarded hermeneutics as the foundation of 'the human sciences' (*die Geisteswissenschaften*). People and social institutions, he believed, are *historically conditioned* by their situation, as Heidegger later stressed. The method for understanding the natural or physical sciences may simply be empirical; but the *humanities and social sciences* can be understood *only by hermeneutical methods*. The goal of hermeneutics is to understand not simply

ideas (*Geist*), but human *life* (*Leben*).

Dilthey showed his radical advance in traditional philosophy in his aphorism 'In the veins of the knowing subject [i.e. for Locke, Hume and Kant] no real blood flows.'[11] Dilthey's works amounted to 26 volumes, up to now largely untranslated, although partial translations exist.[12] He rejected positivism in favour of life-experience (*Erlebnis*). Life is a shared flow of experiences both in the communal or social diversity and in the unique life of the individual. Social relationships demonstrate the 'interconnectedness' (*Zusammenhang*) in speech and in activity. The interpreter must 'relive' (*nacherleben*) the other's life-experience by stepping out of his or her shoes and finding 'sympathy' (*Hineinversetzen*) or 'transposition' with the person or institution that is to be understood.[13] One of his memorable phrases is 'a rediscovery of the "I" in the "You"'.[14]

(iii) *Martin Heidegger* provides the third stage of development in modern, sophisticated, hermeneutics. 'Understanding' (*Verstehen*) is bound up with interpreting *Dasein*'s possibilities of existence. Understanding is existential, and *prior to cognition*. Interpretation (*Auslegung*) is not simply 'the acquiring of information about what is to be understood'; it has to work out a *projection* (*Entwurf*) of possibilities.[15] We must understand something *as* something. For example, we understand a door in terms of a *projected* opening door. Heidegger unpacks projection as '*a fore-having* [*Vorhabe*] . . . *a foresight* [*Vorsicht*] . . . and a *fore-conception* [*Vorgriff*]'.[16] This will develop into the notion of 'pre-understanding' (*Vorverständnis*), or preliminary understanding, in Gadamer, Ricoeur and others. Understanding is not without presuppositions, as Bultmann made a prime point for theology. Heidegger writes, 'Any interpretation . . . must already have understood what is to be interpreted'; and adds, '*If we see this circle as a vicious one . . . then the act of understanding has been misunderstood from the ground up* . . . The "circle" in understanding belongs to the structure of meaning.'[17]

This may sound unduly complicated. But Rudolf Bultmann, Heidegger's theological disciple, explains it more simply. He uses the analogy of understanding a mathematical or musical text. If we understand nothing whatever about mathematics or music, this is hardly a starting point for understanding and interpretation. In his essay 'The Problem of Hermeneutics' he writes, 'The demand that the interpreter must silence his subjectivity . . . in order to attain to an objective knowledge, is the most absurd one that can be imagined.'[18] For example, he says, 'I only can understand a mathematical text if

I have a relationship to mathematics'; 'I only understand a text dealing with music . . . in so far as I have a relationship to music.'[19] He makes the same point about a 'life-relation' to the subject in 'Is Exegesis Without Presuppositions Possible?'[20]

(iv) *Hans-Georg Gadamer* constitutes the fourth key figure in the modern development of hermeneutics. Like Heidegger, he taught history and art. In his major volume on hermeneutics, *Truth and Method* (Ger., 1960; Eng., 2nd ed., 1986), Gadamer departs from the 'objective' approach of the Enlightenment. He is critical of the 'objective' approach of Descartes and the sciences, in favour of the 'historical' and communal method of Giambattista Vico (1668–1744), Hegel and Dilthey.[21] He writes that hermeneutics begins 'from the experience of art and historical tradition'.[22] *He makes a full-scale attack on the applicability of Enlightenment rationalism to the humanities, the social sciences and hermeneutics*. He prefers to follow Hegel's notion of 'historical reason', and Heidegger's notion of 'historical finitude' (*Geschichtlichkeit*).

Although he accepts Schleiermacher's hermeneutical circle, Gadamer also has reservations about the romanticist leanings of Schleiermacher and his alleged subjectivism.[23] He also follows some, but not all, of Dilthey's insights. One distinctive argument concerns 'play', games and festivals. If one is in the midst of playing a game, he writes, '*The primacy of play over the consciousness of the player* is fundamentally acknowledged.'[24] In other words, the aims and movement of the play take over from a merely 'objective' or spectator's view. Players, by contrast, lose themselves in the game. The game becomes the 'world' in which they live, and reach decisions. He adds, 'Play draws him [the player] into its domain.'[25] Introspection to examine 'consciousness' may be misleading, for the 'being' or reality of the game or festival '*occurs in presentation*, and belongs . . . to play as play'.[26] In other words, no two 'performances' or events are alike; each determines the nature of the game in question. In the same way, *interpretation* can be seen in the *event* of interpretation and understanding. A festival, similarly, exists only in its being *celebrated*. A sermon or exposition exists only in its presentation and 'performance'. Each is unique, and cannot be replicated.

In Part II of *Truth and Method* Gadamer traces the hermeneutical tradition through Schleiermacher, Hegel, Ranke, Droysen, Dilthey, Husserl, Yorck and Heidegger. He concludes that, by contrast, 'the fundamental prejudice of the Enlightenment is the prejudice against prejudice itself, which denies tradition its power'.[27] He continues, 'The focus of subjectivity is a distorting mirror. The

self-awareness of the individual is only a flickering in the closed circuits of historical life. *That is why the prejudices* [Ger., perhaps 'pre-judgements'] *of the individual, far more than his judgments, constitute the historical reality of his being*'.[28] The authority of a tradition means acknowledging that 'the other is superior to oneself in judgment and insight . . . [which is] an act of reason itself which, aware of its own limitations, trusts to the better insight of others'.[29] Hence Gadamer heads this section 'The Rehabilitation of Authority and Tradition'.[30] He continues to focus on interpretation for today. Thus he writes, 'Understanding always involves something like applying the text to be understood to the interpreter's present situation.'[31]

Gadamer here appeals to legal and theological hermeneutics. He declares, 'Here is where openness belongs . . . Openness to the other, then involves recognizing that I myself must accept some things that are against me.'[32] Because the subject matter to be understood is contingent and historical, Gadamer follows R. G. Collingwood in asserting the priority of questions. Questions bring into prominence the motivation behind what we seek to understand.[33] Part III of *Truth and Method* concerns language, but this is generally considered to be of less significance for hermeneutics than Parts I and II, even if it contains many insights.

(v) *Paul Ricoeur* constitutes the fifth giant figure in the development of hermeneutics. In the French army, he was taken prisoner of war by the Nazis, and took this opportunity to study Jaspers, Husserl and Heidegger. Initially he was influenced by phenomenology, but in 1965 he published his book called in English *Freud and Philosophy*. From Freud, he discovered the contrast between surface-meaning and what someone genuinely wishes to convey. Freud had shown how deceptive and disguised surface-meaning can be. Hence he declared, 'Hermeneutics seems to me to be animated by this double motivation: willingness to suspect, willingness to listen; vow of rigor, vow of obedience. In our time we have not finished doing away with *idols* and we have barely begun to listen to *symbols*.'[34] Unlike Gadamer, who stressed only *understanding*, Ricoeur urges the importance of both 'explanation' (*Erklärung*) and 'understanding' (*Verstehen*).[35]

In *The Symbolism of Evil* and *The Rule of Metaphor* (1975) Ricoeur explored the role of both symbol and metaphor.[36] Symbols emerge from his understanding of lived experience. In relation to evil, humankind uses such symbols as guilt, estrangement, wandering, burden and bondage; he comments, 'I had to introduce a *hermeneutical dimension* into reflective thought.'[37] Symbols entail what he

calls ‘double meaning expressions’. These are layers or levels of meaning in symbols. In *The Rule of Metaphor* Ricoeur argues, ‘Metaphor presents itself as a strategy of discourse that, while preserving and developing creative powers of language, preserves and develops the heuristic power wielded by fiction.’[38] He explores here the *creative* power of language, and *The Rule of Metaphor* is almost an encyclopedia on metaphor from Aristotle onwards. Metaphors, he suggests, extend *sentences*, just as symbols extend *words*.

Ricoeur’s two most epoch-making works are *Time and Narrative* (3 vols., first published in French in 1983–5) and *Oneself as Another* (Fr., 1990; Eng., 1992). In *Time and Narrative* he is clearly indebted to Dilthey and Heidegger, also the narrative theorist A. J. Greimas. He draws especially on Heidegger’s notion of historicity and ‘temporality’ (*Zeitlichkeit*), and in theology he uses aspects drawn from Augustine and Gerhard von Rad. He begins by comparing Aristotle and Augustine on time.[39] From Augustine he explores the ‘three functions’ of time: ‘expectation . . . attention . . . and memory’.[40] These represent the ‘discordance’ of future, present and past. On the other hand Aristotle also points the way to ‘concordance’. This *dialectic of discordance and concordance* provides ‘the poetic act of *emplotment*’.[41] It is a ‘dialectic of time and eternity’ in which Aristotle provides logic for ‘the organization of events’.[42] It lays the foundation for ‘the composition of the plot [that] is grounded in a pre-understanding of the world of action’.[43] ‘“Emplotment” is both eventful and intelligible.’[44]

In his volume 2 Ricoeur takes up Gérald Genette’s notions of order, duration and frequency.[45] He combines his narrative devices with A. J. Greimas’ narrative semiotics and narrative grammar. These open the way towards a ‘configurational activity’. Ricoeur also draws on his volume 1, and speaks of ‘the common source of historical and fictional narratives’.[46] Narratives in *neither* field are simply *chronological reports* of sequential events, but are *shaped to serve a plot*.

In volume 3 Ricoeur explains how ‘the three modes of temporality’ make ‘possible’ the configuration of narrative.[47] Heidegger’s ‘historicality’ (*Geschichtlichkeit*) and ‘temporality’ (*Zeitlichkeit*) are the transcendent conditions of situation and time. This volume elaborates on Genette’s distinction between ‘narrative time’ and chronological, astronomical or clock time: the former allows for flash-backs (the standard device of detective stories), changes of narrative speed (very important for Mark’s Gospel) and other temporal devices. The volume provides, in effect, a *hermeneutic of narrative*, in which the ‘world’ of the reader interacts with the ‘world’ of the narrative. This leads to the question of narrative-identity.

Oneself as Another primarily concerns the identity and stability of the self (see Part 3, Self). The self of Descartes merely explores the question of ‘what’ constitutes the self. We begin to move towards the ‘who’ with the speaking subject of Recanati, Austin and Searle.[48] Elizabeth Anscombe on intention and H. L. A. Hart on ascription of responsibilities take us further, but not yet far enough. Narrative-identity offers a turning point.[49] Narrative concerns the actions of unique characters, and the connectedness of life. One key to the continuity of personhood is ‘keeping one’s word in a promise [as] a basic sign of this continuity’.[50] In contrast to Hume’s self as a bundle of fleeting perceptions, Ricoeur rightly insists, ‘The category of character is . . . a narrative category.’[51] The remainder of the book largely anticipates Ricoeur’s later emphasis on all this. *Accountability* is thus a primary pointer to continuity of self-identity. He includes chapters on ‘The Self and the Ethical Aim’, ‘The Self and the Moral Norm’ and ‘The Self and Practical Wisdom’.[52] Ricoeur has left a plethora of further books. His intellectual biography can be found in *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur*.[53]

(d) Critical theory

Critical theory denotes the approach to *sociology and to the philosophy of the social sciences* developed especially by the Frankfurt School. Its most important philosophers were Max Horkheimer, Theodor W. Adorno, Herbert Marcuse and Jürgen Habermas. Horkheimer is said to have coined the term ‘critical theory’ for his work, for the Frankfurt School and for a revision of Marxism. This last point may involve a contradiction, for Horkheimer claimed to work strictly in scientific method, whereas Gadamer and Ricoeur regard the sciences as inadequate for hermeneutics and the humanities. The one shared feature is the aim of being practical. The claim of critical theorists to follow scientific method, and simultaneously to attack positivism, while not strictly contradictory, provides a source of internal tension. The debate about fact and value lies at the heart of critical theory.

The ultimate roots of critical theory go back to Hegel’s critique of Kant. Hegel aimed at combining a philosophy of action with a philosophy of rational reflection within the framework of history. He understood *praxis* as theory-laden action. Marx inherited aspects of Hegel’s thought, even if he reversed its overall perspective, replacing spirit with human history and materialism. He expressed this in his eleventh thesis on Feuerbach: ‘Philosophers have always interpreted

the world; the point is to change it.' He claimed that thought without action was merely ideological, and in its place historical materialism would liberate the masses.

(i) *Max Horkheimer* (1895–1973) became sceptical about whether Marx's notion of history and especially the Enlightenment, which were understood to be philosophies of liberation, would ever *secure the liberation* of the masses or proletariat which they seemed to promise. In the 1930s he saw the effects of emerging Stalinization in Russia, together with the iron fist of National Socialism in Germany. Both were meant to be liberating, but both imposed *totalitarianism*. In 1937 he endorsed Dilthey's separation of the *Geisteswissenschaften* (the humanities and social sciences) from the *Naturwissenschaften* (the natural sciences). He described Enlightenment reason as 'an iron cage'.[54]

(ii) In view of their outspoken criticisms of Nazism, Horkheimer and his close colleagues, including Theodor Adorno (1903–69), had to move from Frankfurt. They emigrated to Southern California. In 1947 Horkheimer and Adorno jointly wrote *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.[55] This anticipated Foucault's theme that power and knowledge entail each other, and developed the theme that Enlightenment reason had become self-contradictory. They argued that Nietzsche had first recognized the ironic dialectic which perceived the Enlightenment as both exposing those who had power, and yet simultaneously duping the masses with illusion.[56] Especially in the American context, they regarded film, mass advertising, music, art and technology as facilitating such illusion and holding the masses captive.

(iii) *Herbert Marcuse* (1898–1978), a third member of the Frankfurt School, went further, and offered a critique of post-war capitalism. He attacked a culture of *consumerism* which generated 'false needs', and thereby deceived what he called the underclass of outcasts, outsiders and unemployed. He was associated with student revolts in the mid and later 1960s, chiefly through his book *One Dimensional Man* (1964).[57] Consumerism is seen as a form of social control, which imposes supposed choices to buy happiness.

(iv) Jürgen Habermas (b. 1929) is also associated with the Frankfurt School. In spite of his sympathies with the School, he also felt that it had become paralysed by its scepticism. Yet he shared their concern for the public and social sphere and for the role of reason within it. He also worked on hermeneutics and social theory. More than the earlier thinkers, together with Karl-Otto Apel (b. 1922), he saw *language* as an important resource. It could become a way of

exposing corporate deceit and self-deception. Two of his most influential books are *Knowledge and Human Interests* and *Theory of Communicative Action*.[58]

In his *Theory of Communicative Action* Habermas drew on *speech-act theory*, and together with Apel drew on Wittgenstein and Austin, as well as Saussure and Bakhtin. In sociology he drew on Talcott Parsons (1912–79). He expounded the notion of 'system' as interacting with 'life-world'. The latter personalized the human world of the self; the former offered some 'control' over human subjectivism. Harbermas saw the linguistic turn in philosophy as a genuine 'paradigm shift'. This locates 'the foundations of social science in the theory of communication'.[59] He regards the 'three routes of communicative action [as lying] in the propositional, the illocutionary and the expressive'.[60] Like Austin, he sees the importance of human intersubjectivity; and like Wittgenstein, he sees the importance of 'the common behaviour of humankind', or the life-world shaped by *shared horizons and common behaviour-situations*.

(e) Deconstruction

Deconstruction represents a fourth strand in continental philosophy. In the eyes of hostile critics, it tends to swallow up the conscious aims and judgements of human authors in an endless sea of signifying systems. Texts become processes which move us on, but never end, because they call into question any 'final' meaning. A never-ending network of 'intertextuality' surrounds all texts, and places them within new signifying systems. This theory of texts reaches its philosophical climax in Jacques Derrida (1930–2004), who supports it with a philosophy or world-view shaped by Nietzsche and Freud, and with philosophical underpinnings drawn from the later Heidegger. Often texts become primarily iconoclastic or exploratory in function and constitute, in the eyes of John Dominic Crossan for example, parables of parables or metaphors of metaphors. However, to admirers of this approach, it rests not on iconoclasm but on a respect for the infinite and endless resources of language and literature. It also draws a radical contrast between surface meaning and depth meaning, and it opens up new models and paradigms of textuality**.**

Deconstruction sometimes includes the wider phenomenon of postmodernism. In particular it often seeks to criticize and attack the more wholistic dimension in structuralism, often as 'post-structuralism'. It is hostile to the Enlightenment, and often regards reading texts as 'free-play', almost according to the whim of the reader.

(i) *Roland Barthes* (1915–80), especially in his later thought, and Jacques Derrida are usually regarded as leaders of this movement. They legitimately draw from general linguistics the agreed consensus that differences and alternative choices, as well as relations between words, determine the scope of meanings. This view has been firmly accepted since the work of Ferdinand de Saussure. For example the difference between the colours *red* and *yellow* depends on whether the colour *orange* is included in the range of available colour choices. Another well-grounded principle in general linguistics is that words and sentences may operate at different levels with different meanings. It is not at all arbitrary to assume that a so-called 'depth-meaning' may differ from a 'surface-meaning'.

Roland Barthes showed this very clearly in his popular work *Mythologies* (Fr., 1957). Here he examined photography, for example, in which clothing reflects far more than an objective description of the clothes being worn.[61] In such a photograph he wishes to convey something about the *social aims* and concerns of the person being described. The same applies to purchasers of furniture. Furniture may not simply be for comfort or convenience of posture, but to convey messages of the social class to which someone aspires. Barthes spoke of 'a feeling of impatience at the sight of the "naturalness" with which newspapers, art, and common sense, constantly dress up reality . . . I resented seeing Nature and History confused at every turn'.[62]

But as Barthes and Derrida increasingly turned to postmodernism, they tended to overstress the role of *multiple* meaning and ultimately *indeterminate* meaning. Sometimes, Barthes maintains, 'The work is not surrounded, designated, protected, or directed by any situation, no practical life is there to tell us the meaning which should be given to it.'[63] Often, he argues, two semiotic systems are used in which 'in connotative semiotics the signifiers of the second system are constituted by the signs of the first'.[64] In other words the second system *takes over the first language* (i.e. what words mean on the face of it, or in everyday life). Barthes also declares, 'The text is experienced only as an activity, a production. It follows that the text cannot stop.'[65] It is at this point that Kevin Vanhoozer takes up arms to attack what he calls the dissolution of the author, the text and the message itself.[66]

(ii) *Jacques Derrida* goes even further than Barthes, if this is possible. In discussing Saussure, he writes of 'the absence of the signatory' and 'the absence of the referent. Writing is the name of these two absences.'[67] He comments further, 'It is no longer a finished corpus of writings, some content enclosed in a

book or its margins, but a differential network, a fabric of traces which vary endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential traces.'[68] Derrida's iconoclastic tendency can be seen in discussions of Nietzsche, Freud and Heidegger. The development of Saussure's key category of *difference* ends in the notion of *deferment* (Fr., *différance*). *Différance* (or deferment) gives rise to the deferment entailed in an endless series, in which writing constitutes *traces* in the double sense of the term: both *marks* and *tracks* which proceed forward to allow movement.[69] Derrida also uses the concept of *erasure* to eliminate the first, referential or everyday, units of meaning. As in much postmodernism, meaning is only, for Derrida, *fleeting and temporary*. As soon as it is given, it is under *erasure* (Fr., *sous rature*). It leaves only *track*s or *traces*, as everything moves on.

(f) Structuralism

Before 1978 François Bovon stated that the goal of structuralism was to understand a text 'for itself, apart from all reference to an author, to a history, or to a reader', and was 'a way of understanding the . . . material better'.[70] Bovon wrote in an era when readers sought to *escape the subjectivity of existentialist hermeneutics*. But the discipline has moved fast since then. Structuralism originally drew on three distinct routes: first, the *general linguistics* of Saussure, Trier and others; second, the *social anthropology* of Lévi-Strauss and his systems of kinship; and third, the *structural analysis of narrative* suggested by Propp, Greimas and others. Each of these three sources emphasized the system, whole or structure, from which meanings could be derived. Saussure stressed *la langue* (or the *language-system* or reservoir from which the individual word-in-action (*la parole*) could derive its function). Lévi-Strauss stressed the whole kinship system from which such terms as *brother*, *sister* or *wife*, could derive their meaning. Propp and Greimas emphasized the network on which stories or narratives of such figures as the king, the hero, the villain and the princess could derive their role within the narrative.

To consider these three, first, Ferdinand de Saussure's (1857–1913) *General Linguistics* was published as long ago as 1913. He distinguished between the actual *event of speech* (*la parole*) and an abstract *system of language* from which speech or written words were selected (*la langue*). In this abstract system or reservoir of language it is clear that every word has meaning only in relation to that in which it stands in contrast (called its 'paradigmatic' relation), and to

which it is adjacent (called its ‘syntagmatic’ relation). Thus, to select an example, the scope of the word *red* depends on whether it operates with *orange* or simply with *yellow* as its contrasting term. Trier developed this principle further by asserting that *only within a field* can words have meaning (Ger., *nur im Feld gibt es Bedeutung*).

Second, Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2009) applied this structural principle to kinship systems in anthropology (1958). Here he argued that a marriage system, for example, operates as a network, in which ‘kinship rules’ emerge as determinants of permissible and impermissible marriage relationships. The terms *brother*, *sister* and *wife*, he argued, derive their significance from similarities and differences within a kinship system or structure.

Third, Vladimir Propp (1895–1970) and A. J. Greimas (1917–92) produced a ‘narrative grammar’, in which the roles of different characters in a narrative depend on their place *within a binary system or structure*. Thus a *hero* and a *villain* stand in opposition to each other; and related roles are assigned to a *helper*, a *task*, a *sender*, a *reward*, and so on. In many traditional folk tales it is not difficult to see how these categories work out in stories about princes or knights as heroes, kings as senders, tasks such as slaying a dragon, and marriage to a princess as the reward.

It is noteworthy that in classical structuralism the system of binary polarities plays a dominant role. Its main application came to focus especially on narrative. After all, the author may be of less significance in a narrative than in other modes of discourse. Advances in narrative theory were being made simultaneously by Gérard Genette, Pierre Guiraud and others, especially in narrative plot. Guiraud argued that often narrative embraces standard patterns of action, for example that of the villain, the helper, the traitor, the confidant, and so on.[71] Propp identified 31 functions, such as that of the hero, the provider, the villain, the princess (as the ‘sought for’ person), the helper and the false hero.[72] His book has been called a primer for the structural analysis of narrative. Greimas used the binary roles of subject and object, sender and receiver, and helper and opponent. His ‘narrative grammar’ operates against the background of struggle.[73]

With the advent of postmodern approaches, however, structuralism began to give way to post-structuralism and even deconstruction. A lack of ‘objectivity’ in structuralism was widely recognized. The initial optimism, signified by such a journal as *Semeia* in biblical studies, seemed to lose its initial vision. Meanwhile, it remains a substantial part of continental philosophy, even if its influence seems

to be on the wane. John Sturrock has produced a masterly evaluation of the movement in his book *Structuralism and Since: From Lévi-Strauss to Derrida*.[74]

3

Empiricism and rationalism

Prior to Kant's transcendental or critical philosophy, virtually the whole of mainstream traditional philosophy fell into *one of two contrasting methods* of approach to the subject: *empiricism* and *rationalism*.

Empiricism at its broadest and simplest denotes the belief that all knowledge comes through experience (Gk, *empeiros*, 'experienced'). In practice this means that knowledge comes as sense-data through one or more of the five senses (sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell). It therefore stands in contrast to rationalism and to theories of innate ideas. The classic British empiricists were John Locke (1632–1704), George Berkeley (1685–1753) and David Hume (1711–76).

Locke envisaged the human mind as a blank sheet (Lat., *tabula rasa*), in which experience comes through the senses to write data in the mind. This does not eliminate rational reflection. Experience delivers raw sense-data to the mind; reflection and reason organize it into more coherent and complex combinations of ideas. Hence empiricists are also idealists. The senses mediate 'images'; reason combines and evaluates these as ideas. An analogy might be the perception of images which are filtered through a window. From 'a few simple ideas' the mind can then generate 'an inexhaustible and truly infinite' reservoir of concepts.[1] On this basis Locke no longer sought absolute certainty, as many rationalists did. As a Christian, he aimed to defend the 'reasonableness' of Christian belief, and many regard his philosophy as a work of English common sense.

Berkeley progressed to build upon Locke's empiricism, to promote idealism and immaterialism. Locke had regarded 'primary' qualities, such as weight and shape, as given objects. But he saw 'secondary' qualities such as colour, taste and sound, as perceptions, which needed to be interpreted actively by the mind. Berkeley, however, ascribed all reality to the mind itself. He declared, 'To be is to be perceived' (Lat., *esse est percipi*).[2] Givenness, he suggests, depends on the

divine mind. He was partly influenced by his theological beliefs as an Anglo-Irish bishop.

David Hume was the most thoroughgoing of the empiricists. Although he built on Locke and Berkeley, he rejected the part played by reason in Locke, and immateriality in Berkeley. This Scottish thinker produced *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739–40) at the age of 28. He was never a professional philosopher, but worked as a librarian and historian. Speculative philosophy, he argued, is 'uncertain and chimerical . . . Scepticism is subversive of speculation.'[3] Like Locke, he spoke of impressions of sensation, but regarded them as 'all our more lively perceptions'.[4] He argued, 'Nothing can ever be present to the mind but an image of perception . . . The senses are the only inlets.'[5] His ultimate conclusion was that the *mind* is no more than a *bundle of perceptions*. This has disastrous consequences for any idea of a stable core of human identity and its continuity.

C. A. Campbell has argued in reply that if Hume's account is said to explain what constitutes the self, we could never distinguish between hearing Big Ben strike nine o'clock, and nine sequential perceptions of its striking one o'clock![6] Hume's scepticism clearly included his critique of religion, whether the possibility of miracles or the problem of suffering and evil. God remained an enigma to him, and his critique of miracles, he said, was only 'to silence . . . bigotry and superstition'.[7]

Some have suggested that several ancient philosophers anticipated the classical British empiricists to some extent. Democritus (460–370 BC) and Epicurus (341–270 BC) urged the importance of physical processes and images, while in the medieval period William of Ockham (c. 1287–1349) represented a very broadly empirical approach, especially in his nominalism. This emphasized the role of convention in language and in the formation of concepts.

Rationalism stands in *complete contrast* to empiricism. As a philosophical movement rationalism must be distinguished from rationality, reasonableness or simply the use of reason. In philosophy it usually denotes the importance of ideas or concepts that are 'innate', or inherent in the human mind. Such ideas are thought to be prior to, or independent of, human experience, although for the empiricists experience has primacy in the acquisition of knowledge. Rationalism seeks that for which the technical and Latin term is *a priori* truths. Rationalism thus stands in contrast to empiricism, which stresses not only the initial role of experience, but also regards inferences from experience as *a posteriori*, or 'derived' from it. Locke, the empiricist, was not a rationalist, but he nevertheless believed in reasonableness, especially the reasonableness of belief. Reason could

often evaluate feelings. Rationalism is also used often to denote the view that reason is the judge of all things, but this does not denote the core of philosophical rationalism in every case.

While Locke, Berkeley and Hume represent the classical British empiricists (see above), the philosophical rationalists include René Descartes (1596–1650), Baruch Spinoza (1632–77) and Gottfried Leibniz (1646–1716). Later they were followed by the deists and most thinkers of the Enlightenment. It is no accident that Descartes and Leibniz were also mathematicians, who began with what is self-evident in *logic*, rather than in experience.

Descartes sought 'clear and distinct' ideas that were certain, in contrast to sense-experience which, he claimed, was often 'observed and confused', fallible, and capable of doubt. His first rule he said 'was never to accept anything as true, if I did not have evident knowledge of its truth . . . [I determined] to include nothing more in my judgments than what presented itself to my mind . . . clearly and . . . distinctively . . .'.[8] His 'method' was to build on what was in his mind, as he recounts: 'I stayed all day shut up alone in a stove-heated room, where I was completely free to converse with myself about my own thoughts.'[9] From this self-reflection emerged his most celebrated dictum: 'This truth, "I am thinking therefore I exist" [Lat., *cogito, ergo sum*] was so firm and sure that . . . I decided that I could accept it without scruple as the first principle of the philosophy I was seeking.'[10] Not only personal experience, but also all the inherited assumptions drawn from history and tradition were peeled away as being less firm and certain than *a priori* ideas. Descartes determined that at least 'once in a life-time' we must 'demolish everything and start again right from the foundations', in order to leave 'nothing but what is certain and indubitable'.[11]

Descartes's approach and method explains why this tradition of philosophy tends to *underrate tradition and history, and to elevate the lone individual*. Because of its individualism, William Temple described it as 'the most disastrous moment in the history of Europe . . . a faux-pas of monumental proportions'.[12]

Spinoza and Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) were rationalists only in certain respects. Spinoza drew much from Descartes, but also verged on pantheism (see Part 3) and naturalism. Kant made a classic statement about the 'Enlightenment' (*Aufklärung*) as representing 'man's exodus from his self-incurred tutelage', i.e. tutelage to traditions and other people, and freedom to use one's own understanding.[13] He also wrote, '*Philosophical* knowledge is the *knowledge gained by reason from concepts*'.[14] Unlike Descartes, however, Kant regarded

‘knowledge of myself’ not as certain truth, but ‘merely as I appear to myself’.[15]

An even more important reason exists why we cannot classify Kant simply as a rationalist. His distinctive transcendental philosophy, in effect, transcends both rationalism and empiricism. In his philosophy reason as such is relegated to an *instrumental* role, in that it *constructs*, *conditions* and *constitutes* what we regard as knowledge, rather than simply evaluating it. Reason itself cannot be his ‘absolute’; that is the moral imperative, which presupposes the existence of God, freedom and immortality. Kant expounds this in his *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788). His main question in transcendental philosophy concerns not knowledge, but what makes knowledge *possible*. Phenomena such as *cause*, *purpose*, *order* and *space* are constructed or imposed by the mind. He agreed with Hume that we perceive not causes, but constant conjunction. Unlike Johann G. Fichte (1762–1814), he did not believe that the mind constructed everything, but it had a decisive part to play in exploring metaphysical questions. If, for example, we try to imagine ‘the edge of space’ or ‘the beginning of time’, the mind always forces us to consider ‘the other side of’ space or time. Reason can thus be a limiting factor to our knowledge.

We are on safer ground with Gottfried W. Leibniz (1646–1716). Like Descartes he was a mathematician and logician. He advanced beyond Descartes in postulating not just ‘substance’ but units of reality that he called *monads*. In effect, he anticipated logical atomism by regarding the truth of all propositions as the sum of the truth of all elementary propositions. His notion of ‘reality’ is complex: it is ‘a labyrinth of freedom’. God, he claimed, ‘is without limits . . . without negation . . . without contradiction’; he includes all perfections, and without him ‘nothing [is] possible’.[16] God, he postulated, has created ‘the best possible world’, in spite of the presence of suffering and evil.[17] Leibniz’s work is complex and subtle, but he gives priority to logic, not experience, and is emphatically a rationalist.

Many thinkers of the Enlightenment were more critical, more sceptical and less theistic than Descartes or Leibniz. In the Enlightenment, reason came to dominate. The English deists included Matthew Tindal (1657–1733) and John Toland (1670–1722). Voltaire (1694–1778) and Denis Diderot (1713–84) represented secular rationalism in France, and Samuel Reimarus (1694–1768) and G. E. Lessing (1729–81) represented rationalism in Germany. Not until the twentieth century did a full-scale onslaught on the ‘Enlightenment’ emerge with Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002) and kindred thinkers in hermeneutical philosophy. Henning Graf von Reventlow (1929–2010) and others showed the

debt of radical biblical criticism to this approach in Christian theology.[18]

Georg Hegel (1770–1831) stressed especially *reason, history and the whole*. Reason is real, although it is also anchored in *historical* processes. Hence the title ‘rationalist’ is too vague for Hegel. He pioneered *historical reason*. Yet he is closer to rationalism than to empiricism. He regarded Friedrich von Schelling (1775–1854) as too subjective an idealist, and Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834) as too preoccupied by human feelings. Reason and logic open up a theory of reality. In his book *The Phenomenology of Mind* (1807), he regarded God as Absolute Subject and Ultimate Reality. Hegel regarded humankind as radically conditioned by the historical process. Only the rational is real, he concluded. In this sense he was broadly rationalist. In England F. H. Bradley was a follower of Hegel, and it was in reaction against Bradley that Moore and Russell began their empirical analysis.

4

Existentialism

The first explicit use of the term *existentialist* or *existentialism* came from the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (1813–55). His thought was closely bound up with his life, and his early rejection of second-hand values came when he discovered that his father, whom he had idolized, was guilty of having an immoral affair with his housekeeper. From then onwards he became determined to reject all second-hand assent to other people's values and ethics, but to discover truth purely for himself.

This became the centre of Kierkegaard's existentialist approach to life and thought. It involved the primacy of the individual self; an emphasis on passionate involvement, rather than supposedly value-neutral objectivity, and an emphasis on personal decision and will, rather than abstract reasoning. He chose as his epitaph 'That individual', rejected any notion of founding a 'school of thought' and is famed for his aphorism '"Subjectivity" becomes the truth.'[1]

By the term 'subjectivity' Kierkegaard did not mean what one writer has called 'grubbing about in one's psyche'. On the contrary, it denoted passionate self-involvement; participation, in contrast to being a passive spectator; and making the most of one's personal situation in life and history, in contrast to trying to pretend to a universal system of truth. He wrote, 'Truth becomes untruth in this or that person's mouth.'[2]

Kierkegaard produced biting satire against philosophical and theological orthodoxy. He attacked especially the then fashionable and influential German philosopher Georg W. F. Hegel (1770–1831). Hegel had claimed to present a system of philosophy and a system of logic in which he identified speculative, abstract, thought with reality. Kierkegaard was sceptical about this. He wrote, 'I should be as willing as the next man to fall down in worship before the System, if only I could manage to set eyes on it . . . Once or twice I have been on the verge of bending the knee . . . even at the risk of ruining a pair of trousers . . . [but] I always received the same answer, "No, it is not yet quite finished."'[3]

Kierkegaard used satire extensively and without mercy. The system-builder, he said, is like a man who builds an enormous castle, but lives in a shack close by. He talks about perfection, but has a patch on his elbow. He creates lofty ideas, but eagerly collects his pay-packet. For in the end, he said, 'I am only a poor, existing individual, in a finite situation.' How dare Hegel talk about infinity and perfection?[4] The title of his book *Philosophical Fragments* (1844) well expresses the point.[5] Like all existentialist thinkers, Kierkegaard rejects system in favour of *points of view*, fragments or given perspectives. No one can have a 'theocentric' grasp of the whole.

The contrast between the pretensions of thought and the practical actions of the individual who is bound by his historical situation apply both philosophically to truth and theologically to faith. On the negative side Kierkegaard's existentialism led first to an undervaluing of the Church. Second, it also led to devaluing rational argument. He wrote that faith denotes 'believing against the understanding'.[6] Third, it led to the individual's overruling both tradition and ethics. This lay behind his broken engagement to Regine Olsen, and to his perception of himself as like Abraham slaying Isaac, the son of promise, on the grounds of personal faith and obedience.[7]

Yet on the positive side Kierkegaard insisted that Christianity is *not* a theoretical intellectual system, but a matter of *personal commitment and obedience*. He wrote, 'The most ruinous evasion of all is to be hidden in the crowd . . . to get away from hearing God's voice as an individual.'[8] In his later work he wrote, 'Christianity has been *abolished by expansion*, by these millions of name-Christians'.[9] God has been hoaxed, he observed with deep irony: no real Christians exist; only those thousands who can afford a fee to be baptized and buried in the Danish State Church.

The second positive theme emerges in his book *The Point of View for My Work as an Author*.[10] He writes, he says, from various points of view (often under a pseudonym), but his ultimate aim, he says, is to show what 'being a Christian' really means by obedience to God and living as a Christian, rather than merely assenting to some system of thought.

Kierkegaard thus formulated four main themes of existentialism: (1) the *individual*, as against mere *convention*; (2) concrete *points of view* from a given situation, rather than an abstract *system* which pretends to universality; (3) courageous *will*, rather than theoretical *reason* and argumentation; and (4) 'subjective' *self-involvement*, rather than supposed value-neutral *objectivity*. In varying measures these four themes occur in all so-called existentialist writers.

Nietzsche stresses sheer will as against reason; Heidegger stresses a given situation or historical finitude (*Geschichtlichkeit* and *Dasein*, 'being there') rather than abstract being (at least in his earlier work); Sartre emphasizes the artificiality of convention; and so on. Kierkegaard influenced both Barth and Bultmann in theology.

In many respects Friedrich W. Nietzsche (1844–1900) represents the extreme of existentialist atheism, in contrast to Kierkegaard's Protestant Christianity. In his earlier work he sought the assertion or driving-force of *sheer will* in some of the pre-Stoic philosophers and in Greek tragedies, especially Euripides' tragedy *The Bacchae*. He expounds this in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872).[11] Against the character of Pentheus, who represents the 'Apollonian' principle of restraint and moderation, he urged the Dionysian principle of exotic, frenzied celebrants of life and self-will. He regarded these two principles as reflecting Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860) in *The World as Will* (1818) in contrast to ideas and 'conformity'. Initially he shared this vision with Richard Wagner.

In the later-middle period of his thought, Nietzsche became more radical, increasingly emphasizing the primacy of the will against all rational systems. Once we discard all notions of rationality, however, it is a short step to viewing life and the world as meaningless. These two themes emerge in his books *The Gay Science* (1882), *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883) and *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886). He took the first step, however, in his *Notebooks* (1873). Here he wrote, 'What is truth? – A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms and anthropomorphisms.'[12] Truth gives way to relativism.

In *The Gay Science* (*Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft*) Nietzsche goes further. He states 'God is dead' (*Gott ist tot*), and draws the conclusion that morality will therefore perish; 'everything is permitted'. Morality, he argued, is a coercive mechanism, which represses the individual's will. He repeats this aphorism three times. He repeats it a fourth time in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. In all four references Nietzsche's meaning is that the Christian God is no longer credible, and can no longer be a source of moral principles.[13]

In some respects, however, Nietzsche constitutes a better introduction to atheistic nihilism than to existentialism. During his last years in *The Twilight of the Idols* (1889), *The Will to Power* (1884–8) and most especially *The Antichrist* (1895), his atheism became even more polemical. In *The Twilight of the Idols* he wrote, 'They have got rid of the Christian God', but 'Christianity is a system, a . . . complete view of things' and morally is bound up with belief in God. Nietzsche attacks English religion and morality.[14] In *The Antichrist* Nietzsche

undertakes a blistering ironic attack on convention and sheltering behind conventional religious language. He writes, '"the salvation of the soul" – in plain words "the world revolves around *me*".'[15] Priests appeal to the will of God, but it is all 'pure lie': they have 'truth on its head'.[16] The will of the individual has primacy: 'Wherever the will to power declines in any form, there is . . . a decadence.'[17]

Karl T. Jaspers (1883–1969) actually rejected the term 'existentialist'. Nevertheless because of his emphasis on human personhood, the human situation and the discovery or disclosure of true selfhood in 'limit-situations', most thinkers give him this label. His work as a medical psychiatrist contributed to his emphasis on individuals and their situations. He wrote, 'Truth is not a property but something that is present as *we* search for it.'[18] Facing up to guilt in death offers an example of 'boundary situations'.[19] Such boundary situations may strip away all conventions and false self-perceptions, and allow one 'to find my real self'.[20]

Gabriel Marcel (1889–1973) has been called 'the human face of existentialism'. He became a convert to the Roman Catholic faith in 1929. He urged that human personhood was not to be reduced to numbers, categories, objects or cases. He stressed 'availability' (*disponibilité*) to fellow human beings, or 'the Other'. In *Being and Having* he stressed the difference between persons and objects, following Martin Buber's distinction between a relation of 'I–it' and 'I–Thou'.[21] He emphasized here the dignity and profundity of concrete or specific persons.

Heidegger (1889–1976), together with Sartre, is perhaps most widely known for his existentialism, even if, like Jaspers, he did not readily welcome this term. He shared with Kierkegaard and Marcel the primacy of human *situatedness in time, place and history*, which he called 'being there' (*Dasein*) or *historical finitude* or 'historicality' (*Geschichtlichkeit*).[22] Heidegger's terminology is difficult, for he coins many German words, which carry a distinctive meaning. *Dasein* stresses *finitude* and *temporality*. Heidegger writes, 'Being cannot be grasped except by taking time into consideration.'[23]

Heidegger rejects the possibility of an 'objective' picture of the world. He prefers to speak of *existentialia*, as against 'categories' which describe objects.[24] He rejects the 'objective' way in which Descartes regarded the world. Time, for example, is not to be measured 'objectively' by the clock, but 'subjectively' from the point of *Dasein*, or a concrete human being: i.e. time for rest, time for a task, time for a useful conversation. Time and other entities can be intelligible only as

‘a projection in terms of which something becomes intelligible as something’.[25] The same applies to many objects. For example, many Anglo-American philosophers might define a hammer in Cartesian terms as a wooden handle attached to a weight; for Heidegger, a hammer is for hammering. A tool can be defined in terms of its purpose for *Dasein*. He borrows some aspect of phenomenology from Husserl, or ‘that which shows itself to be seen’.[26] He adds, ‘The phenomenology of *Dasein* is a *hermeneutic*.’[27]

This applies most of all to human individuals. Mind and body are not ‘parts’ of an entity, but *modes of being* for *Dasein*. In Christian theology Rudolf Bultmann, and with more caution John Macquarrie, have applied this to the biblical teaching on humanity.[28] ‘Existence’ (in Heidegger *Existenz* or even *Ek-sistenz*) characterizes a human being, whereas ‘things’ can be only ‘present-at-hand’ (*vorhanden*).[29] *Dasein* is characterized by uniqueness or ‘mineness’ (*Jemeinigkeit*), and possibility for the future.[30]

Heidegger also elaborates further the significance of will, decision and freedom. We must also distinguish his existentialist stage in *Being and Time* (1927) from his movement towards a new era after roughly 1936, when he stressed the importance of poetry, art, creative language and his earlier hopes for an unattainable ontology.

Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–80) constitutes the remaining giant figure of existentialism. In the earliest period of his philosophy he draws on Husserl and Heidegger, initially in *The Transcendence of the Ego* (1936). His first novel, *Nausea* (1938), and first story, *The Wall* (1939), reflect his autobiographical experiences of anguish, dread of imminent death, and what Jaspers called ‘boundary situations’. Everything focuses on human ‘consciousness’. The main themes of these earlier works are summarized in W. Kaufmann’s *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*.[31] *The Wall* recounts extreme fear of military interrogation and the imminent threat of being shot. The accused loses control of his bladder, and bewails his life as unfinished. Many praise Sartre’s genuine existential experiences, in contrast to Heidegger’s more theoretical approach.

Yet many of Sartre’s themes are borrowed directly from Heidegger. Sartre contrasts ‘objects’, which broadly have ‘being-in-itself’ (*être-en-soi*), with human beings, who are ‘being-for-itself’ (*être-pour-soi*). *Être-pour-soi* belongs to a *temporal* mode, with a *past* and a *future*. ‘My being’ is not another’s; and as an object the world is inaccessible to me, as in Sartre’s major work *Being and Nothingness* (1943).[32]

Sartre’s emphasis on what is uniquely ‘mine’ corresponds with Heidegger’s

‘mineness’ (*Jemeinigkeit*), and his stress on temporality corresponds with Heidegger’s *Zeitlichkeit*; with the existentialist contrast between bondage to a *past* and the possibilities of the *future*, he is associated with Heidegger. Further, ‘being-in-itself’ (*être-en-soi*) and ‘being-for-itself’ (*être-pour-soi*) reflect in part Heidegger’s ‘presence-at-hand’ (*Vorhandenheit*) and ‘potentiality-for-being’ (*Sein-Können*). The limits of rationalism owe much to what Heidegger called ‘thrownness’ (*Geworfenheit*). Yet in spite of many affinities, Sartre stresses human consciousness and ontology far beyond Heidegger.

In 1951 Sartre sought to found a radically left-wing political movement with Albert Camus. This demonstrates the variety of individual existentialist thinkers: Kierkegaard as a Protestant; Nietzsche and Sartre as atheistic; Heidegger as agnostic; Marcel as a Catholic; and Jaspers as broadly ‘religious’.

5

Feminist philosophy

The nineteenth century witnessed many demands for the recognition of the status of women. John Stuart Mill placed a bill before the British Parliament for women's suffrage in 1865, and in 1895 Elizabeth Cady Stanton produced *The Women's Bible*. Emmeline Pankhurst founded a movement popularly known as suffragettes in 1903, and by 1918 the movement had largely achieved its aim. Nevertheless a *philosophical* underpinning of feminism began only in France, first with *Simone de Beauvoir* (1908–86). As a philosopher she drew on phenomenology and existentialism, and collaborated closely with Jean-Paul Sartre. In 1947 she published *The Ethics of Ambiguities*, and in 1949 her most famous book, *The Second Sex* (Fr., *Le deuxième sexe*). This depicted traditional woman as allegedly 'other', and as squeezed into accepting a subordinate and secondary role in relation to men.

De Beauvoir wrote, 'Humanity is male, and man defines woman not in herself, but as relative to him . . . He is the subject . . . She is the Other.'[1] In Part I she discusses the reproductive organs, the reproduction of the species, biology, physiology and economic oppression and subordination. She examines Freud, Adler, private property, the family, the state and Engels. In Part II, she traces the evolution of women's condition, especially motherhood and inheritance, and stereotyped notions of woman as inferior. She then discusses industrialization, women's suffrage and birth control. In Part III she considers motherhood, marriage and prostitution under the heading 'Myths'. She writes, 'The only . . . destiny reserved to the female animal is always man.'[2] Her second volume deals with upbringing, a negative view of marriage as a life of service, a tirade against the Catholic Church, and so on. She concludes with 'Toward Liberation' for the independent woman.

In keeping with her existentialist philosophy, Simone de Beauvoir rejected any notion of an 'essence' of womanhood, and sees identity as indissolubly entangled with *social roles* and *convention* (see Part 2, Gender). She writes,

‘One is not born a woman; one becomes one.’[3] ‘Liberation’ can be achieved only by sheer effort of will. Women, she argued, must accept autonomy, and stop ‘colluding’ in becoming the *other* for men. Her work is shaped not only by existentialist philosophy, but also by Jacques Lacan’s structuralism and psychoanalysis, especially the function of differences within systems of signification.

Evaluations of Simone de Beauvoir’s work vary. Judith Butler considers that she helpfully distinguishes between sex and gender, in which ‘gender’ can gradually be socially constructed.[4] Deidre Bair, however, regards her as ‘guilty of unconscious misogyny’.[5] Similarly C. B. Radford declares that she is so distorted by autobiographical influences that the individual problems of the writer herself assume an exaggerated importance in her discussion of femininity. Diane Johnson calls her ‘the serious, frumpy, mother of feminism, the Mother Courage of existentialism and left-wing French politics, the epitome of bourgeois rebelliousness’.[6]

Second, the next major thinker in French feminism is *Julia Kristeva* (b. 1941), a Bulgarian-French philosopher, literary theorist and psychologist. Much of her work was in semiotics, intertextuality, feminist philosophy and post-structuralism. Her semiotics were closely dependent on Freud’s notion of the infantile ‘pre-Oedipus’ stage, as well as Marxism. She regarded her work primarily as that of cultural critic, but much of her thought concerned ‘the feminine’. Her first major work was *Revolution in Poetic Language*.[7] This aimed to provide a theory of identity-formation in the context of Lacan’s psychoanalysis and structuralism. All of her work was multi-disciplinary.

Kristeva attacked the notion of identity as a fixed essence, and emphasized its social construction. She resisted stereotypes, and stressed ‘the subject-in-process’.[8] Even sexual difference, she argued, is part of a shifting process. Social roles are by no means fixed, but always in *process of* formation, for they are generated by systems of meaning that change. Further, from Lacan, she developed the notion that the relation of the self to the mother is fluid. The systems of language which appeared to communicate fixed roles, have ‘edges’. She saw ‘madness’ and ‘schizophrenia’ (as Foucault does) as imposed by artificial cultural notions of what is ‘normal’. Deviant practices are often merely departures from conventions. Kristeva concluded that the body cannot be reduced to merely biological status: the body is not an essence.

Kristeva developed her thought about the symbolic in *Desire in Language* (1989).[9] Language allows the child to become ‘a speaking subject’, now with an

identity separate from that of the mother. Continual association with her mother's identity may lead to depression, while on the mother's side she suffers from lack of her own identity. Kristeva's thought becomes complex as she discusses the relation between the semiotic and the symbolic. She developed this work in *Powers of Horror*, in which a breakdown in meaning is threatened by a loss of distinction between subject and object, or between the self and the 'other'.[10]

Third, Luce Irigaray (b. 1930) and Hélène Cixous (b. 1937) complete the primary philosophical founding thinkers of French feminism. Like Kristeva, Irigaray is heavily influenced by Lacan and psychoanalysis. Her book *Speculum of the Other Woman* was published in 1974, and *This Sex Which Is Not One*, in 1985. They are strongly influenced by Marxism, and the commodification of women. She writes, 'As commodities women . . . [are] utilitarian objects and bearers of values.'[11]

Hélène Cixous was influenced by Freud, Derrida and deconstruction. Again, she appeals mostly to those who already stand in this tradition. Nevertheless Cixous also makes some fundamental points about conceptual grammar. She comments, 'Thought has always worked by opposition . . . by dual *hierarchized oppositions* . . . [Hence] logocentrism [the way we write and think] subjects thought . . . to a two-term system, related to "the" couple man/woman.'[12] However, she observes, this unfortunate conceptual tradition, which has demeaned women, is in process of being undermined.

Fourth, if this were a section on feminism, it would become huge, not least because of the explosion in feminist biblical studies and feminist theology in America and Britain. But feminist *philosophy* is more specialized. In recent years *Elizabeth Anderson* (b. 1959), who works in America at the University of Michigan, has published *The Imperative of Integration*, *Value and Ethics in Economics*, and other works.[13] Although her interests include feminist epistemology, her primary concern is the wider one of equality in society and law. *Miranda Fricker* (b. 1966) is professor of philosophy at the University of Sheffield, England, and has edited *The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Philosophy*.[14] She has also written *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*, in which she argues that a particular kind of injustice undermines the status of a person as a knower.[15] Another form of injustice leads certain social roles to seem unintelligible. Her main concern, therefore, is with social epistemology and ethics.

It would be inappropriate to include here the multitude of writers on religion

and theology. Phyllis Trible's *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (1978) and *Texts of Terror* (1984), and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's *In Memory of Her* (1983) deserve mention, alongside others. From another viewpoint, Janet Radcliffe Richards deserves note for attacking those feminists who reject the 'universals' of rationality and argument, and for attacking those writers who serve only 'a community of women'.[16] We cannot end, however, without noting two of the most influential writers, at least for the wider public. Kate Millett (b. 1934) placed feminism on a wider agenda with her book *Sexual Politics* in 1970.[17] She is an American, although she also studied at Oxford. Her main concern is to argue for equality in social roles. She borrows some themes from French feminism, except that, by contrast, she attacks the role usually given to psychiatrists. Germaine Greer (b. 1939) obtained similar fame or notoriety through her book *The Female Eunuch* (1970).[18] She grew up in Australia, but emigrated to England. She focuses, like most feminists, on social roles and social power, but argues not for 'equality' with men, but for the liberation of women to be more assertive and less submissive. She does not welcome marriage and the nuclear family.

While most feminist philosophers focus on the social conventions which generate instruments of power, oppression, domination and social control, a very large diversity of approaches and attitudes has now emerged. Many insist that social conventions and procedures in epistemology cannot be 'value-neutral'. In this sense the critical dimension of earlier French feminism survives in America and England. Many in the Global South dissociate themselves from 'middle-class' white feminism to promote a wider agenda in 'womanism'. This addresses a wide range of ethical questions.

6

Personalism

Personalism in broad terms sees ultimate reality and value in personhood. But it has emerged in many different versions. Most personalists stress the uniqueness and significance of personhood, both among human beings and in God as Supreme Person. However, they often describe God as 'supra-personal', or beyond and above human persons. Traditionally philosophers used the word *personality*, but today mass media has taken the word over (wrongly) to signify popular celebrities. Two of the earliest examples of personalism in modern thought are Borden P. Bowne (1847–1910) in *Personalism* (1908) and Ralph T. Flewelling (1871–1960) in *Personalism and the Problems of Philosophy* (1915).[1] In the early twentieth century this mainly constituted a reaction against nineteenth-century tendencies to devalue the person in such systems as pantheism, deism, a materialist theory of evolution, or psychological determinism.

Yet more than two millennia earlier, Plato and Aristotle had emphasized the role of humans as persons; Augustine in the patristic age and Thomas Aquinas in the medieval era also stressed personhood. More recently Aquinas' approach has been expounded by Etienne Gilson and Jacques Maritain. The biblical witness is so strong and important that Hans Urs von Balthasar urged that personalism would be inconceivable without its biblical background.

At the beginning of the modern era a strange ambiguity marked the philosophy of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804). On one side, he greatly enhanced the dignity and responsibility of human beings by his work on the moral imperative. Persons, he argued, must be treated as moral *ends* in ethics, not as means or instruments. Moral duty had the status of an absolute. He declared, 'So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of any other, in every case as an end . . . never as a means only.'[2] Yet on the other side, especially in his *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1793), 'God' is no longer fully personal in the sense of addressing humankind, and responding to

prayer by action. This is part of ‘ecclesial’ religion. God, in practice, becomes a postulate or presupposition of freedom and immortality. The same ambiguity attaches to Georg W. F. Hegel (1770–1831). On the one hand, he ascribes to *Geist* (*mind* or *spirit*) a crucial role, even among finite human beings and in the intersubjective world. On the other hand, ‘God’ is the Absolute, End or Ultimate Reality, who unfolds his or its absolute Being in a historical and logical process. As Absolute, Spirit unfolds itself in this dialectical process; there is little room for the significance of persons. Yet some have called him an absolute idealist personalist. The ‘young’ Hegelians easily transposed his system into a dialectical impersonal materialism.

In modern America, personalism came into full flower in the philosophy of Bowne, Flewelling, Edgar Brightman (1884–1953), Josiah Royce (1855–1916), Peter A. Bertocci (1910–89) and others. Bowne studied at New York University and at Halle and Göttingen. He became professor at Boston. He strongly believed in free will, and offered a theological, rather than materialist, interpretation of evolution. Many regard him as the founder of ‘Boston Personalism’. He also drew on aspects of Kant and Lotze. His *Metaphysics* appeared in 1882. His influence is partly shown in his teaching: he taught Brightman, and Brightman in turn taught Bertocci, all three personalist philosophers. Brightman, like Bowne, was a Methodist minister, and studied at the universities of Berlin and Marburg. He taught philosophy at Boston from 1919 until his death in 1953, and followed Bowne in regarding the human self as the dominant metaphysical reality. His view of theology, however, was not orthodox. He believed in a ‘finite’ God, on the basis of God’s self-limitation; God does not have unlimited power over suffering. Brightman collaborated with the process philosopher Charles Hartshorne.

Peter Bertocci regarded persons and their lived experience as the fundamental metaphysical reality. Teleology and the experience of moral struggle were important to him. Much of his philosophy concerns moral striving. One of the difficulties for both Brightman and Bertocci remains whether they sufficiently distinguished the personhood of God from that of human beings. God is hardly a ‘person’ in exactly the way humans are. Some of Bertocci’s tenets, therefore, may be technically correct (e.g. that humans can be ‘co-creators’ with God), but theological tradition demands balancing qualifications that underline the otherness or transcendence of God.[3] Bowne, Brightman and Bertocci constitute the ‘Boston’ school of personalism.

We must also note Josiah Royce of the ‘Californian’ school in earlier years.

He, like Bowne, was much influenced by Lotze. He first graduated from the University of California at Berkeley, then studied in Germany, and taught at Johns Hopkins University and then at Harvard from 1884 until his death in 1916. In 1885 he published *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, in which he discussed 'the ambiguous relation of the conscious individuals to the universal thought'.[4] In addition to the community of persons, he argued for the existence of God on the basis of what counts as error. Error may only be judged as such in the light of some total truth. This implies a notion of 'The Absolute', but not the Absolute of Hegel. The Absolute has a personal and temporal character. Royce developed the notion of a personal individual further in *The World and the Individual* (1899 and 1901).[5] This included 'the Theory of Being', a critical examination of realism, the human self and other issues. He produced *The Hope of the Great Community* in 1916, the year of his death; his *Lectures on Modern Idealism* were published in 1919.

Outside America, France and especially Paris became a major centre for personalism. I have referred to Gabriel Marcel, the existentialist, and to Jacques Maritain, the neo-Thomist. Emmanuel Mournier constitutes a third thinker. Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005) did not explicitly identify himself as a personalist, but many of his major themes overlap with personalism. On personal identity and continuity of identity he carefully considers a 'semantic approach', and also an ethical approach to 'person' and 'the self'.[6] He explores speech-acts and the speaking subject; the work of Anscombe, John Locke and P. F. Strawson.[7] Ricoeur further shows how personhood becomes demonstrated in the distinctive genre of narrative, and more especially in 'the self and the ethical aim', with a special emphasis on human accountability, responsibility, virtue and duty.[8] (See Part 1, Hermeneutics, under Continental philosophy, and Part 3, Self.) In Germany, personalism has associations with Husserl's phenomenology (see below, Phenomenology). This relates, in turn, to Husserl's former students Max Scheler (1874–1928), Roman Ingarden (1893–1970) and Edith Stein (1891–1942).

7

Phenomenology

Phenomenology is one of the most difficult of our ‘approaches’ to define. Its meaning has varied not only in the history of philosophy, but also even in a single writer. At its most basic it concerns the relation between consciousness and ‘intentionality’, i.e. being conscious *of* something. It usually concerns *describing* objects or events of which we are immediately aware, rather than the mental states through which such awareness is mediated. Most versions of phenomenology involve suspending or ‘bracketing’ certain assumptions about the truth of these objects or events. Although it stresses ‘experience’, it is *not* simple empiricism, much less positivism.

The founder of modern phenomenology was *Edmund Husserl* (1859–1938). Husserl influenced Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–61), and less directly Martin Heidegger and John-Paul Sartre. Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005) began his thought on the will and fallibility with phenomenology. Many have argued that phenomenology constitutes the origins of continental philosophy. In 1764 Johann Heinrich Lambert had used the term, admittedly in a different way, to denote ‘illusory’ experience. Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) also used the term differently, to denote objects as mere ‘appearances’, in contrast to ‘things-in-themselves’. Georg Hegel (1770–1831) urged in his *Phenomenology of the Spirit* (1807) that Spirit or Mind (*Geist*) first revealed itself as a phenomenon, but, as it developed, finally emerged as *noumenon*, or underlying reality. C. S. Peirce (1839–1914) came nearest to anticipating Husserl, when he used the term to denote solely *descriptive* philosophical study in America.

Husserl studied mathematics at Leipzig, Berlin and Vienna. He then studied philosophy under Franz Brentano, and in 1886 went to Halle to do research on the concept of number. From 1887 to 1928 he taught at Halle, and in 1891 he published his *Philosophy of Arithmetic*. He then moved to Göttingen as professor, where he published his famous *Logical Investigations* (1901). This rejected mere ‘psychologism’ in favour of pure logic, and he began here his

exposition of phenomenology.[1] From 1913 to 1930 Husserl gathered around himself a band of followers, collaborators and students. His influential book *Ideas* appeared in 1903 and 1913.[2] This especially explored *intentional consciousness*. In 1916 he moved to Freiberg University. He became professor of philosophy there until 1928, when Heidegger succeeded him. During retirement he wrote *Cartesian Meditations*. All in all, he wrote some 24 books.

In *Logical Investigations* Husserl made some fundamental conceptual distinctions, and began to expound 'intentionality'. He argued that 'essences' are possible for knowledge only if our assumptions about the world are 'bracketed' or suspended. He described this suspense as *epoché*. In particular, what has to be bracketed includes ambiguities suggested by our dependence on a particular linguistic and conceptual framework, which has been drawn from the empiricist tradition from Locke onwards. This followed Brentano's notion that our perceptions yield merely *subjective* appearances.

Husserl began with a reappraisal of *signs and symbols*. He wrote, 'Every sign is a sign *for* something, but not every sign has "meaning".' In many cases it is not even true that a sign 'stands for that of which we think it is a sign'.[3] But such signs may function in *mental* life, even if they no longer indicate any external object. He explores 'indication', in the sense of indicating something. He writes, 'A brand is a sign of a slave, a flag the sign of a nation.'[4] Even a knot in a handkerchief can be a sign to aid memory. Signs *indicate* something to thinking beings. They indicate the 'reality' of certain other objects or states of affairs. They can thus be a 'demonstration' for the belief the sign motivates.[5]

In a subsequent section Husserl expresses concern about 'utterances [which] involve . . . intent . . . thoughts put on record expressively . . . They mean something to him [or someone] in so far as he interprets them'.[6] Here he overlaps with hermeneutical reflection, following Schleiermacher and Dilthey, and anticipating Heidegger and Gadamer. Husserl drew implications for intentional distinctions. A name, for example, can 'show forth' or 'mean' by conveying some content. This 'led to our distinction between the notions of "experience" and "indication".'[7] Communicative acts of 'sharing' thereby become possible 'if the auditor also understands the speaker's intention' as a personal speaker, who addresses him.[8] If the sign operates not to communicate to another, but solely within 'interior mental life', it is not an expression of meaning.[9] Mere sounds of words, Husserl continues, are not '*meanings conferring acts* or . . . *meaning intentions*'.[10] Thus a merely physical sign phenomenon differs from a 'meaning-intention'.[11]

Chapter 2 of *Logical Investigations* further characterizes acts which confer meaning.[12] Conferring meaning is not a matter of giving rise to certain *images in the mind*. Images may well *accompany* meaning, but they are not 'necessary conditions for understanding'.[13] Signs are not the direct object of thought. What is important is the 'intentional act-character of the communication . . . This act-character is a *descriptive* trait in the sign-experience, which . . . understands the sign.'[14] Husserl is attacking the overemphasis on the purely physical in too much contemporary psychology. All this has significance for hermeneutics. In terms of phenomenology it emphasizes the *descriptive* character of investigation, and *self-evident* beliefs in contrast to mental intermediaries. The Polish philosophical literary critic Roman Ingarden (1895–1970) took much of Husserl's thought as his point of departure in his reader-response theory.

The whole of Husserl's first volume of *Logical Investigations* attacks 'psychologism', in favour of focusing on objects of immediate experience, not mental states. Further, *intentionality* is always consciousness *of* these objects. Husserl's second volume considers further expressions of meaning, and also universals, the ontological status of parts and wholes. His emphasis on intentional acts as representing something *as* something plays a prominent role in Heidegger. His inclusion of some non-intentional acts as expressions is illustrated with reference to *pain*, which Wittgenstein discusses at length. Wittgenstein also regards 'pictures' or 'images' as needing to be *applied in practical life*. Pictures and images of themselves convey nothing, unless they are interpreted. *Continuous* perception is not unrelated to Wittgenstein's emphasis on *dispositions*. The sixth investigation in volume 2 further attacks the British empirical tradition.

In *Ideas*, the first volume continues to explore cognition, experience, intuition and logical necessity.[15] The 'fatal mistake' of much philosophy, says Husserl, is to ignore the intentional *horizon of meaning*. In chapter 2 he again attacks empiricism.[16] In Part 2 he turns to *intersubjective aspects of meaning* and the world. His chapter 2 is probably pivotal, where Husserl introduces 'pure' or 'transcendental' consciousness as a key aspect of phenomenology.[17] The phenomenologist is supposed to perform description *from a first-person point of view*. Husserl writes, 'I, the actual human being, am a real Object, like others in the natural world.'[18] Thus 'I' is the 'Pure Ego'. He continues, 'We are directed to the "external world" in a natural manner.'[19] He refers favourably here to the *cogito* of Descartes.[20] What the first-person ego perceives is a transcendental object.[21] 'Being' is both consciousness and reality, but 'pure consciousness [is

seen] as the field of phenomenology'.[22] He calls this directedness of consciousness 'noetic'.[23] The 'noetic' sense embraces both immanental and actual objects. The Ego postulates and embraces the Object, but is 'not "subjective"'.[24] Intentionality makes possible the extension of the transcendental beyond material content to ontology.[25]

British philosophers have been largely sceptical of Husserl's complex and sometimes over-sophisticated work. On the other hand, his work on 'life-world' has convinced many, especially in hermeneutics and sociology. Jürgen Habermas approved of his attack on objectivity in science. Alfred Schutz drew positively on his concept of *life-world* in sociology (*Collected Papers*, 1962–6; *Reflections on the Problem of Relevance*, 1970). Maurice Merleau-Ponty, one of France's most profound philosophers, drew on Husserl's concept of experience, especially in his *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945).[26]

Among four French philosophers, Maurice Merleau-Ponty is probably the one most consistently devoted to phenomenology. Gabriel Marcel (1889–1973), Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–80) and Paul Ricoeur all retain some elements of phenomenology, alongside existentialism in Marcel and Sartre, and alongside hermeneutics in Ricoeur. In his *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty writes, 'The most important accomplishment of phenomenology is, without a doubt, to have joined extreme subjectivism and extreme objectivism in its notion of the world or of rationality.'[27] 'Extreme subjectivism' would include some versions of existentialism; 'extreme objectivism' would include most empiricism, and certainly include positivism. One way through this dilemma, according to Merleau-Ponty, is the *inter-subjective*: to disclose the way in which 'perspectives blend', perceptions confirm each other, a meaning emerges. The fuller vision comes 'where my own and other people's [perspectives] intersect and engage with each other, like gears'.[28] This analogy of the meshing of gears also applies to past experiences relating to those of the present.

The Phenomenology of Perception explores the role of the *body* in perception, together with speech and language, and social and cultural experience. It further includes sexuality and art, in addition to the perception of everyday objects. Regularly Merleau-Ponty asks, 'How can "I" be put into the plural?' Human bodiliness is one route to 'the other', as Paul Ricoeur brilliantly explored later.[29] Merleau-Ponty declares, 'To seek the essence of perception is to declare what perception is, not presumed true, but defined as access to truth.'[30] On the nature of the self and of humanity, he observes, 'Man is taken as a concrete being, not as a psyche joined to an organism, but the movement to and fro of existence

which at one time allows itself to take corporeal form, and at another moves towards personal acts.'[31] He continues, 'It is precisely my body which perceives the body of another . . . My body and the other's are *one whole*, two sides of one and the same phenomenon.'[32]

Nevertheless, most of all it is the experience of *language and dialogue* which provide the common ground between the other and me. Commenting on the givenness of shared language, Merleau-Ponty observes, 'Our words are inserted into a shared operation of which neither of us is the creator . . . Our perspectives merge into each other, and we co-exist through a common world.' Language, literature, culture and art provide a 'progressive awareness of our multiple relations with other people and the world'.[33] In further work he also engages with freedom and history, and with Sartre.

Gabriel Marcel is sometimes called a phenomenologist, but is better known as an existentialist. Like Merleau-Ponty and Ricoeur he speaks of 'openness to the other' and intersubjectivity. In *Being Human* (1935) he distinguishes between 'having' mere objects, and being *persons*. In *Creative Fidelity* (1940), like Ricoeur, he stresses responsibility, fidelity and 'availability' (Fr., *disponibilité*).[34] Paul Ricoeur was a student of Marcel, and studied Husserl and Heidegger while he was a prisoner of war. His most phenomenological work was *Philosophie de la valonté* (1950), published in English as *Freedom and Nature: The Voluntary and the Involuntary*. Although he is best known for his hermeneutics, in his earliest works he often drew on phenomenology.

8

Pragmatism

Pragmatism is a distinctively American philosophy, which looks back in particular to three founding fathers, Charles S. Peirce (1839–1914), William James (1842–1910) and John Dewey (1859–1952). Peirce insisted that questions of meaning could not be divorced from *practice*. The quest for truth can be pursued only amidst the *practical* concerns of community life. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries Richard Rorty (1931–2007) represents a revised postmodern neo-pragmatism. Both maintained that the quest for truth can be pursued only amidst the practical concerns of community life. In popular terms, something is 'true' only if it *works*. At first sight this looks like the saying of Jesus 'You will know them by their fruits' (Matt. 7.20).

Peirce and Rorty imply that the nearest that we can come to 'objectivity' is *intersubjective agreement between people*, although Peirce's attention to logic and semantics provides a more 'objective' dimension. Truth is a *public* matter, not a private one; hence Peirce rejects the entire programme of Descartes, who sought to find truth by individual introspection. By contrast, he argues that the meaning of any idea is developed by the *consequence* that it produces.[1] Pragmatism broadly denotes the belief that the truth or validity of a claim to truth may be assessed in terms of its *usefulness*, *success* or potential for *communal progress*.

Critics of pragmatism argue that this at once raises the problem of 'By whom are the consequences deemed good or fruitful?' They argue that people, therefore, *make* truth. But Peirce was a systematic philosopher who in earlier years worked on logic, the theory of knowledge and semiotics. As the years passed, Peirce's interests changed. He regarded logic not as an abstract, self-constrained, system, but as a growing subject. He formulated no fewer than four successive theories or systems of logic. In the first period he derived ontological categories partly from Kant; in the second, he paid increasing attention to signs, propositions and semiotics; in the third, he explored the logic of relations, and

pragmatism as a theory of *meaning*, *not of truth*. Finally, after 1885 at Johns Hopkins University he applied a sophisticated calculus of relations to mathematics, studying Cantor's set theory.

The significance of this development is to show the complexity of Peirce's pragmatism. It does not easily fall prey to cheaper, general, criticisms. Commentators have discussed his careful development.[2] In theology, Peter Ochs (b. 1950) has recently defended Peirce's distinctive approach, even arguing that some of his better insights are equivalent to what Ochs calls 'the logic of Scripture' or 'scriptural reasoning'.[3]

It is largely through *William James* that pragmatism became known to a wider public. In his essay 'The Will to Believe' (1897), James appears to go further than Peirce in the claim that pragmatism in effect 'makes' truth rather than discovers it.[4] He argued, 'The true is the name of whatever proves itself to be good in the way of belief.'[5] In 1861 James studied chemistry, and later anatomy and physiology. In 1864 he transferred to the medical school, and took a medical degree in 1869. In 1875 he began to teach psychology, and in 1879, philosophy. In 1902 he gave the Gifford Lectures in Edinburgh, which were published as *The Varieties of Religious Experience*; *Pragmatism* was published in 1907. He drew on such influences as C. S. Peirce, Josiah Royce, John Dewey and Henri Bergson (1859–1941).

The *practical* concern of pragmatism can be seen in the fact that James addressed his philosophy to ordinary people, rather than to other philosophers. His popular influence was enormous, and he was regarded as *the* American philosopher of the day. His work in *Principles of Psychology* (1890) was primarily descriptive. Even in this work he declared that scientific enquiry is 'for the sake of *practical effectiveness exclusively*', and he repeated this assertion in 'A Plea for Psychology as a "Natural Science".'[6] As in *The Will to Believe*, James stresses both the will and its freedom. His notion of good and purpose is coloured by his emphasis on the importance of evolution for life. He regards his pragmatism as associated with 'Darwinism' and biology. Here one influence, among others, was that of Henri Bergson, with his emphasis on life-flow and freedom. 'Pragmatism' appears in James' insistence that the truth of what we observe is seen not in the mental data themselves, but in their consequent *use* and *application*. He wrote in *The Principles of Psychology*, 'The only safeguard [of truth] is the final consensus of our further knowledge about the thing in question.'[7] Truth must be corroborated by pragmatic criteria.

James was heavily influenced by theories of evolution, in which he regarded

function as the key component. His work *The Varieties of Religious Experience* was intended as a descriptive survey, but belief and truth could be shown, he said, only through *action*. Alongside this, he produced a popular and influential book, *Pragmatism* (1907).[8]

John Dewey represents the third major thinker of American pragmatism. He was first educated at Vermont, but then joined the graduate school at Johns Hopkins University. He studied under Peirce, and some call Dewey 'America's most influential philosopher', at least in the earlier twentieth century. In his early years he studied Hegel, and the psychology of Kant. He became immersed in psychology, education and radical politics, always stressing *practical action*. He published *The School and Society* (1900) and *The Child and the Curriculum* (1902).

Dewey's prime concept was that of *experience*, but in terms that he called the '*new*-empiricism'. He was drawn to naturalism, as the title of his book *Experience and Nature* (1923) indicates. His other key theme was that philosophy must be *practical*. It should always build in a practical way on the aspirations of ordinary people. It should work in parallel with advancements in the natural sciences. The context of philosophy should be 'problems of men', i.e. ordinary people. Yet he engaged with problems of metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, logic and social and political philosophy. In his book *The Theory of Inquiry* (1938) he defined enquiry as 'the controlled or directed transformation of an indeterminate situation into one that is determinate . . . to convert the elements of the original situation into a unified whole'.[9] All enquiry presupposes a public and social background.

It is worth noting that much in James Dewey corresponds with a distinctively American ethos. Robert Corrington, for example, calls attention to this in his book *The Community of Interpreters*, on American hermeneutics.[10] Two themes dominate much American thinking; one is progress, success and being a winner; the other is 'the community' and consensus. Benjamin Franklin (1706–90) looked for 'the benefits of humanity', while Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–82) called his political party 'the Party of the Future'. Similarly the American philosopher Josiah Royce constantly stressed 'community' and 'progress'.

Further, pragmatism, which is complex in Peirce, and less than precise in James, becomes exceedingly clear and sharp in the neo-pragmatism of Richard Rorty (1931–2007). Rorty traces links between Peirce, James and Dewey and neo-pragmatism in Wilfrid Sellars (1912–89) and Hilary Putnam (1926–2016). Sellars attacked what he called 'the myth of the given'. Putnam insisted that

truth depends on intersubjective consensus among the community. Rorty's debt to Donald Davidson (1917–2003) is clear in Rorty's comment 'Nobody should even try to specify the nature of truth.'[11] He continues, 'Pragmatists cannot offer a theory of truth.'[12] Because of human progress, 'We are closer to it [truth] than our ancestors were.'[13]

The word 'justification', Rorty argues, is better than the word 'truth'. This is partly because 'justification is always relative to an audience'.[14] He prefers Dewey to James because of his emphasis on community life. With Nietzsche, he believed that 'what is *believed* to be true' has the 'highest importance', while 'what is true' remains a matter of indifference.[15] Truth is simply what is 'successful' to the local community. However, he explicitly agrees with James that 'the true is the name of whatever proves itself to be good in the way of belief'.[16]

More than one problem however, arises about equating truth with 'progress'. First, Terrence Tilley points out that the drive to offer the very latest phase of thought betrays itself in such phrases as 'postmodern', 'post-Christian', 'post-industrial', 'post-structural', and so on.[17] Second, if truth is evaluated by a community, *which* community do we mean? Rorty likes to speak of a liberal democracy, but in the end it is simply a local community. Like J.-F. Lyotard, who praises 'paganism', Rorty praises polytheism for liberating us from an all-encompassing, universal view of reality.[18] Rorty prefers the term 'ethnocentric' to 'relativism'. Third, pragmatism can hardly take the reality of *history* seriously, for over the centuries of history whatever leads to 'flourishing' has drastically varied. Again, many believe that 'pragmatism . . . holds that we *make* truth'.[19]

Some aspects of pragmatism make a valid point. Jesus declared, 'You will know them by their fruits' (Matt. 7.20). Pragmatism can be a corrective to an overemphasis on theory and abstraction. It cannot, in spite of Peirce's sophistication, offer a comprehensive philosophy. On the other side, the testimony of *history* is crucial. What is deemed to be 'useful' may change. Further difficulties and drawbacks of 'neo-pragmatism' have been recently helpfully discussed by Adonis Vidu in a theological context in *Theology After Neo-Pragmatism*.[20]

Part 2

CONCEPTS AND ISSUES

Animals

Animals present at least two distinct philosophical problems. One concerns the continuity between animals and human beings. Do animals possess cognitive awareness and language, comparable with that of humans? Are humans related to animals only in degree or in kind, and are human beings unique? A second problem concerns animal suffering and ethics. Are humans free to treat animals as a means to the end of human welfare? Or do animals have 'rights' as living entities? On the first question Jeeves (ed.) *The Emergence of Personhood* (2015) represents a fine inter-disciplinary study.[1] On the second question Wennberg, *God, Humans and Animals* (2003) shows the complexity of the problem in a careful and balanced way, while Singer, *Animal Liberation* (1978) and *In Defence of Animals* (1983) introduces and defends 'animal rights', in addition to such writers as Andrew Linzey.[2]

The first question inevitably concerns issues about evolution. A. N. Whitehead declared, 'The distinction between men and animals is in one sense only a difference in degree. But the extent of the degree makes all the difference.'[3] Richard W. Byrne, Professor of Psychology at St Andrews University, specializes in the evolution of cognition. He concludes his chapter in *The Emergence of Personhood*:

> Many of the 'obvious differences' between humans and all other animals are misapprehensions: like us, chimpanzees can make tools to a plan; they use a series of different tools toward a single aim; they recognize themselves in a mirror; they show forethought in planning; they hunt mammals, and they deliberately kill members of neighbour[ing] communities in 'common style' raids . . . The chimpanzee is more closely related to us than it is to any other animal . . . Linguistic communication is the only robust 'dividing line' [between animals and humans], and even that was undoubtedly built on cognitive foundations we share with other species.[4]

In addition to questions raised by evolutionary theories, two other areas concern moral consciousness and sciences that relate to the human brain and to language. Francesco J. Ayala argues that human personhood cannot be fully understood apart from cultural context and especially moral sense. Some kind of quasi-moral norm, he argues, may owe much to biological factors. But genuine ethics and moral sense, together with the capacity for language, depend on more than this. No other animal, he suggests, has ever reached the level of human mental faculties, language included. He adds, 'The moral evaluation of actions emerges from human rationality, or, in Darwin's terms, from our highly developed intellectual powers . . . Our high intelligence allows us to anticipate

the consequences of our actions with respect to other people.'[5] He continues, 'The necessary conditions for ethical behaviour only come about after crossing an evolutionary threshold. Thresholds occur in other evolutionary developments (e.g. in the origins of life, multicellularity, and sexual reproduction) as well as in the evolution of abstract thinking and self-awareness.'[6] An advanced degree of rationality is required for moral behaviour. Ayala writes as professor of philosophy and the philosophy of science.

Warren Brown and Andrew Zeman write on the human brain as professors of behavioural neurology, psychology and related areas. They argue that humanness emerges from simple patterns of physiological interactivity, especially within the brain. Humans have developed higher levels of cognitive capacities. Zeman, Professor of Cognitive and Behavioural Neurology at the University of Exeter Medical School, explores human subjectivity. He concludes that the brain is itself dynamic, autonomous and creative, and quite at home with human culture. He addresses the distinction between 'knowing' and 'knowing that we know', or self-consciousness.[7] On subjectivity, he writes that it has everything to do with having a viewpoint. Moreover, he writes, 'The brain is very much alive, intrinsically active, autonomous, creative, a natural host for the self . . . The human brain was shaped by and for human culture.'[8]

In Christian theology what constitutes the distinctive feature of humans is *interaction with God in address and response*, and having been created in the *image and the likeness of God* (Gen. 1.26; cf. Ps. 8.5–8; 2 Cor. 4.4). Vladimir Lossky, the Russian Orthodox theologian, argues convincingly that 'human *individual*' is by no means equivalent to 'human *person*': 'Individual and person mean opposite things.'[9] The individual, he argues, belongs only to nature, or to a chain of cause and effect. By contrast, to reflect the image of God is a *vocation* made possible by *grace*. It is the vocation of God's people to reflect God's character as his image, and this constitutes a communal calling. God made humankind not so much 'in' his image, but 'as' (Heb. *b*e) his image, i.e. to represent him to the world, especially in his kingship and love for the world. It was because Israel failed to represent him as his 'image' that substituting 'images' of wood or stone was prohibited (Exod. 20.4).[10] Clearly, then, the 'image of God' does not merely consist of a set of qualities such as rationality, dominion and relationality, although these are all involved. It is a unique vocation for human beings, and thus points to unique human personhood.[11]

The second major question concerns the ethical status of animals. First, we must rid ourselves of the picture of a human-centred universe. In Christian

theology God created both the human and non-human worlds because he loves them, and for his pleasure. This at once implies an equal rejection of an instrumental view of animals, namely that they exist purely for the exclusive pleasure and exclusive use of humankind. Genesis 1.24 reminds us that they are 'living beings' (Heb., they have *nephesh chayyāh*). The 'dominion' that God has given to humankind (Ps. 8.5–8) implies *stewardship* rather than *exploitation*.

On the other hand, this issue is one of debate in Christian theology. Thomas Aquinas, partly following Augustine, regarded humankind as in control of animals, while Origen implied that what is done in creation is 'for the sake of man'.[12] Aquinas explicitly declared, 'Animals . . . [are] for the use of man.'[13] Yet, on the other side, David Clough, Ryan McLaughlin and Andrew Linzey vigorously attack what they call 'the dominant tradition' in Christian theology.[14] Linzey not only attacks factory farming and the use of animals for cosmetics, but calls for a vegetarian diet. He calls Aquinas's approach anthropocentric. Yet Wennberg seeks to offer a mediating view. He traces the ethical concern for a right treatment of animals, but leaves some discretion about how we are to interpret this.

René Descartes denied that non-human animals have souls. Yet Descartes' dualism has become discredited. Vatican II continues the 'dominant tradition', stating, 'God intended the earth, with everything contained in it, for the use of all human beings and peoples.'[15] Yet McLaughlin and Linzey explicitly oppose this.[16] In spite of aggressive polarity on both sides, not only Wennberg, but major theologians such as Pannenberg do succeed in holding a middle view. Wolfhart Pannenberg devotes over 40 pages to 'the world of creatures', rejecting any merely 'anthropocentric' view of creation. He concludes, 'God cares for each individual creature, providing it with food and water at the right time (Deut. 11:12–15; Jer. 5:24; Psalms 104:3–9, 27; and 145: 5–16).'[17] There is more to be said, but space is limited.[18]

Cosmological argument

The cosmological argument constitutes one of the three traditional main 'proofs' for the existence of God. In its popular form, many argue that the world needs a cause, which must ultimately be God. Respected advocates of the arguments come from Judaism, Christianity and Islam. But difficulties can be expressed even by children. They may respond, 'If everything needs a cause, who caused God?' Scientists and philosophers often regard a chain of observable

astronomical or subatomic data as ‘causing’ the world. This shows that the crucial issue in the argument is the distinction between a *caused* cause, and a *first* cause or *uncaused* cause.

Historical advocates of the cosmological argument include Plato (c. 428–348 BC) among the ancient Greeks, Maimonides (1135–1204) among Jewish thinkers, Thomas Aquinas (1225–74) among Christian thinkers, and al-Kindi (c. 813 – c. 871) among Islamic theologians. Plato contrasts the changing, imperfect, time-conditioned world with a ‘higher’ realm of perfection, eternity or Forms. In the *Timaeus* God was changeless and eternal. Maimonides defended a doctrine of creation against the view of al-Farabi that the world was eternal. Whereas al-Farabi drew from Aristotle the notion that the world might be eternal, al-Kindi and al-Ghazali followed the *kalām* version of the cosmological argument. This argument states that what has a beginning must have had a *cause*.

In Christian theology Thomas Aquinas set out the cosmological argument in detail, carefully distinguishing between a *first cause* and *caused* causes, or in his language, a *moved mover* and an *unmoved* or *prime Mover*.[19] He states, ‘There are five ways in which one can prove that there is a God.’ The first is based on change (the kinetological argument); the second, ‘on the nature of causation . . . [in which] a series of causes must, however, stop somewhere . . . [with] a first cause’; the third, on the distinction between finite or contingent objects or events and necessary being (‘or what must be . . . something, and owes existnece to other beings than itself’).[20]

Aquinas’s fourth ‘way’ draws inferences from gradation, or degrees of being; while his ‘fifth’ way constitutes the argument from design, or ‘the guidedness of nature’. His preference to argue from *movement* over *causality* is due to the enormous influence of Aristotle in the thirteenth century. Aristotle had made much of the contrast between actuality and potentiality, and also between contingency and necessity. Contingent objects or events *might* be or not be; necessary ones *must* be. Of lasting value, however, is his claim that the chain of causes cannot be infinite. On this basis the child’s question ‘Who made God?’ is illogical, because God is *first* cause by definition. Whatever is a caused cause would not be ‘God’.

Samuel Clarke (1675–1729) drew on Sir Isaac Newton’s laws of motion to defend the cosmological argument. John Locke (1632–1704) also defended it. But David Hume (1711–76) vigorously opposed it. In strictly empirical terms (see Part 1, Empiricism), he claimed, we cannot actually *observe* causation, but only ‘contiguity’ or ‘constant conjunction’. We can observe only habit,

convention and regularity, which our minds interpret as ‘cause’.[21] Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) similarly regarded *causality* as a presupposition imposed by the human mind. Søren Kierkegaard pressed the otherness or transcendence of God so far that he concluded that to ‘prove’ him would be ‘a most shameless affront’ to God, which would make God seem ridiculous.[22]

Nevertheless Aquinas does not regard this argument as a ‘proof’ in the strictest sense, only that it shows that belief in God is *not contrary to reason*.[23] In practice it serves to lift our eyes from the world to the reality in which it is grounded. G. W. Leibniz (1646–1716) also affirmed the *reasonableness* of the argument, as Locke did. Among modern philosophers the argument is controversial. J. L. Mackie attacks several aspects of it, while, as we have noted, William Craig revives the *kalām* version.[24] G. E. M. Anscombe presents a positive critique of Hume’s attack on the argument.[25] More recently William Rowe (1931–2015) and Richard Taylor (1919–2003) have also defended the argument. Rowe substitutes the words *dependent* for *cause*, and *self-existent* for *uncaused cause*. In summary, he argues, ‘Not every being is a dependent being; therefore there exists a self-existent being.’[26] He also appeals to the principle of sufficient reason, i.e. that everything must have an explanation. Taylor offers similar arguments. He concludes that only a Being that depends on nothing outside itself (i.e. a self-caused being) could have caused the world.[27] John Hick includes an Introductory Note, Aquinas’ formulation, and Kant’s critique, in his *Classical and Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Religion*.[28] Brian Davies includes arguments from Duns Scotus, Leibniz, Mackie and Anscombe.[29]

Design argument

Often called the *teleological* argument for the existence of God, the design argument constitutes one of the three main traditional arguments, together with the cosmological and ontological arguments. It draws inferences from the observation of design, purpose or order in the world, usually to an Intelligent Designer. The classic formulation of the argument was offered by William Paley (1743–1805). He argued as follows: ‘In crossing a heath . . . I found a *watch* upon the ground, we perceive . . . that its several parts are framed and put together for a purpose, e.g. that they are so formed and adjusted as to produce motion, and the motion so regulated as to point out the hour of the day.’ He infers that the watch must have had a maker, ‘an artificer’.[30] Paley’s point was to contrast finding a watch with finding a stone. He would not draw the same

inference from this inanimate object. Similar objects could be cited: many people have pointed to the complexity of the human eye.

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) thought that this argument could not provide watertight and logically deductive proof, since the very notions of *purpose* and *order* were imposed on sense-data by the human mind. But he also described it as the oldest and clearest of the three theistic arguments, and insisted that it deserved respect. Some ascribe the argument to Anaxagoras (fifth century BC), and certainly to Plato, Aristotle and Augustine. Thomas Aquinas wrote, 'The fifth way [to argue for the existence of God] is based on the guidedness of nature [Lat., *ex gubernatione rerum*]. An orderedness of actions to an end is observed in all bodies obeying natural laws . . . they truly tend to a goal.'[31] But this 'directedness' demands what we call 'God'. An arrow, he adds, requires an archer, in the same way.

David Hume (1711–76) in effect partly anticipated the arguments that Paley later made, and opposed them. Many would say that he did so convincingly. In his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* his view is represented by 'Philo'. 'Philo' argues that rather than point to 'God', a design may suggest a plurality of designers. Moreover the argument depends ultimately on the validity of the cosmological argument, which he also rejects (see above, Cosmological argument). In effect, both Hume and Kant deny that *cause* is an empirical or observable phenomenon. Among other criticisms Hume also thought that the argument pointed equally to a poor design of the universe, or, in other words, the problem of dysteleology, or to the cruelty of nature. 'Nature' does not only demonstrate, for example, communal cooperation by ants or bees, but animals preying on one another, making them victims of violence, and so on. He virtually anticipated the slogan that nature is 'red in tooth and claw'.

Yet the greatest challenge to the design argument comes from Charles Darwin's evolutionary theories, whether directly from Darwin (1809–82), from Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) or from others. Spencer's notion of 'the survival of the fittest' suggested that far from the inference that the complexity of the eye points to a Designer, it was those organisms that developed sight through having complex eyes that were fit to survive, in contrast to those that did not. While theists quote Psalm 145.16, God 'fills all things with plenteousness' (*Book of Common Prayer* translation), the sceptic urges in the light of evolutionary theory that whatever was not 'filled with plenteousness' simply failed to survive. Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859) made a huge popular impact at the time, concluding that 'design' should be replaced by natural, random, processes. His

later book *The Descent of Man* (1871) seemed to many to conflict with the biblical accounts of creation. It began a serious misunderstanding of the Bible, as if Genesis were a biological, botanical, chronological report, and as if the scientific research were somehow in conflict with Genesis.

At first, many theologians overreacted to Darwin's and Spencer's claims. But by the turn of the century and in the early twentieth century F. R. Tennant and others adopted a less polarized view. Tennant argued, 'Gradualness of construction is itself no proof of the absence of . . . design'.[32] In any case neither Augustine nor Calvin had regarded Genesis as a chronological or biological account of creation. Moreover David Livingstone carefully charts the varied reactions to evolutionary theories held by conservative evangelical Christians.[33]

It may seem today that 'neo-Darwinianism', especially within the new atheism, has reignited the polemical extremes of the nineteenth century. This movement seeks to combine Darwin's theories with more recent genetics, and with updated issues in biology about genes, genotypes, phenotypes and 'memes'. Richard Dawkins is a well-known, influential, proponent of this (see Part 3, Atheism). But from the last years of the twentieth century until the present, such writers as Richard Swinburne (b. 1934), Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at Oxford, Alvin Plantinga (b. 1932), Professor of Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame, Arthur R. Peacocke (1924–2006), Professor of Biochemistry at Oxford, ordained Anglican John Polkinghorne (b. 1930), Emeritus Professor of Mathematical Physics at Cambridge, distinguished scientist and theologian Malcolm Jeeves (b. 1926), Emeritus Professor of Psychology at the University of St Andrews, and R. J. Berry (b. 1934), Emeritus Professor of Genetics at Cambridge, have taken neo-Darwinianism in their stride and vigorously responded to it.[34] The credentials of all of these thinkers are unimpeachable. In 1998 Ian Barbour wrote, 'In a reformulated version, *purposeful design* was seen in the *laws and structures* through which life and mind emerged and in the *directionality of the total process*.'[35] Richard Swinburne, like Tennant, appeals not so much to the minutiae of individual designs, but to structural orderedness.

In particular Polkinghorne discusses Schrödinger's equation on quantum theory and Maxwell's equations in electrodynamics. He comments that these are 'like a rehabilitation of the argument from design – not a knock-down argument . . . just as an insight into the way the world is'.[36] In the same chapter he discusses the interplay of chance and necessity and genetic mutations as a random event. He concedes, 'Without contingent chance, new things could not happen, without lawful necessity to preserve them . . . they would vanish away

as soon as they were made.'[37] He adds, 'One of the reasons why one needs a world as big as this for life to emerge within it, is because a smaller system would have run its course too swiftly.'[38] Explanations of data, he adds, can take place at various levels. At a lower level, music may be explained as only sounds as recorded visually on an oscilloscope. But to exclude the explanations offered by musicians would be absurd. The 'level' at which neo-Darwinians seek to 'explain' the world is simply inadequate. A musical symphony is more than a matter of acoustic wavelengths. In continental philosophy, especially in Karl-Otto Apel and Jürgen Habermas, *explanation* is not *understanding*.[39]

Divine action

Divine action is a vital presupposition of theism. By contrast deists used to affirm the existence of God, but a 'God' who was remote from the world. They regarded theists as believing that God intervened to 'correct' what deists regarded as the imperfections of nature. Many deists, agnostics and atheists also regard 'the laws of nature' as fixed and prescriptive, and in no way malleable to divine action in the world. By contrast Jews, Christians and Islamic thinkers believe in a God who could regularly or from time to time shape nature and history. The Hebrew Bible, for example, portrays God as enacting saving and redemptive events in history, such as the liberation of God's people from slavery in Egypt, the giving of the law and instituting the covenant at Sinai, the raising up of kings and prophets, and a relationship of continuity in covenant acts. Jews, Christians and Muslims endorse such acts of God.

Nevertheless some raise allegedly decisive criticisms of this. Some may claim that God, who is invisible and incorporeal, cannot become an agent of physical acts. Others claim that such actions would 'break' laws of nature, as Hume states.[40] In response, on the first point, some point to the mind–body relation among humans, and to the fallacy of a 'timeless' God (see Part 3, Eternity). Others cite the argument that God does not act *against* nature, but often *through* nature, i.e. through an order of created, second, causes. In the thirteenth century Aquinas (following Augustine) distinguished the false notion that God acts 'against nature' (Lat., *contra naturam*) from the alternatives that God is 'above nature' (*supra naturam*) and 'beyond' or 'apart from' nature (*praeter naturam*).[41] It is therefore surprising that in the light of ancient and medieval caution about 'breaking' natural laws, Hume and others perpetuate this misleading language.

In 1970 A. Boyce Gibson, among others, took Hume to task about expounding

such an approach. He accused Hume of holding 'the dogma that nothing happens only once, or for the first time . . . The dogma follows from Hume's general theory of causation.'[42] More recently (1995) Nicholas Wolterstorff has called on speech-act theory to demonstrate that utterances can perform multiple functions, and often use deputies (or 'second causes') in this debate. For example, a director may speak and act through his secretary, and a government official through an ambassador.[43] Craig Keener also rejects whole-heartedly Hume's notion of 'breaking' fixed prescriptive laws. He rejects as 'problematic' the traditional notion of a 'miracle' as 'an extraordinary event with an unusual supernatural cause'.[44] He adds that 'extraordinary' is also a subjective judgement. On the other hand, if divine acts *always* constitute regular events or accord with natural laws, miracles would never count clearly as 'signs' of divine activity, which is a major, especially Johannine, concept of miracle. In the biblical writings, the Greek *sēmeion* ('sign') usually translates the Hebrew *'ōth*, *sign, symbol* or *wonder* (e.g. Deut. 29.3; Exod. 4.30; 7.3). *'Ōth* or *sēmeion* is often a visible sign that God is at work or acting. The New Testament also uses Greek *dynameis*, 'deeds of power' or 'effective acts'.

Yet, as Alan Richardson reminds us, there is always an ambiguity about such signs, for while they may confirm belief, they do not normally arouse faith among unbelievers.[45] A turning point in the rejection of a 'closed universe with fixed prescriptive laws' was the advent of the 'open, dynamic, universe' of today. Richard Swinburne firmly places acts of God or 'miracles' in the context of quantum theory and Heisenberg's 'Uncertainty Principle'.[46] John Polkinghorne, the highly respected scientist, physicist and theologian offers a similar comment. He declares:

> Science simply tells us that . . . [certain] events are against normal expectations . . . The theological question is: does it make sense to suppose that God has acted in a new way? . . . God can do unexpected things . . . The laws of nature do not change . . . yet the consequences of these laws can change . . . when one moves into a new regime.[47]

Nancey Murphy is another philosopher of religion who directs us to consider God's action in the world in the light of quantum physics. She argues that our account of *caused* causes is incomplete, and that God always acts in cooperation with created agents. God must be involved in the most basic of natural events. Recent scientific debate and observation, she urges, suggest that in the light of quantum phenomena, even at the lowest level of explanation a measure of indeterminacy must be allowed for.[48] Thomas F. Tracy concludes, 'Theists, then, may affirm *both* that God acts universally in the creation and conservation of all

things *and* that God acts in particular events in history . . . God can affect the course of history and interact with human beings to achieve particular divine purposes.'[49] As Swinburne, Polkinghorne, Pannenberg, Murphy and Tracy affirm, the universe is not a closed mechanical system, but a highly complex permeable creation, which moves towards an open future.

Evolution

In itself, evolution denotes *unfolding* or *development*, but in more precise respects assumes several given formulations and theories. It is applied mainly to biological evolution as formulated by Charles Darwin (1809–82) in his two works *The Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871). These works resulted from observations of different life-forms at different stages of development, collected during a five-year voyage of the *Beagle*, especially in the Galápagos Islands in the Southern Hemisphere. Some argue that Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) made an equally huge impact on the public with his slogan 'the survival of the fittest', which he substituted for Darwin's phrase 'natural selection'.[50] Nowadays, especially in so-called neo-Darwinianism, evolution is closely intertwined with genetics, to describe the survival of individuals through differences of phenotype, which result from differences of genes, then unknown to Darwin and Spencer. In genetics the genotype denotes factors drawn from heredity, while the phenotype draws on variants that heredity may produce; i.e. phenotypes allow diversification. In the aftermath of Darwin's discoveries and his interpretation of them, a furious and heated debate broke out which was originally polarized between those who regarded the creation of species as due to purely random mutations, and theists, who appealed to the Book of Genesis as yielding the narrative of divine design.

From the second half of the nineteenth century until broadly the 1920s the debate remained largely polarized into two opposing camps, in which many theists were seen as largely opposing the orthodox findings of science. But modifications of these opposing views began to emerge from the turn of the century, as chronicled by David Livingstone in 1987.[51] At first attitudes hardened on both sides. T. H. Huxley (1825–95) argued for an entirely mechanistic view of humankind, thereby confusing scientific method with a scientific world-view. 'Consciousness' was allegedly merely an epiphenomenon, as in the later behaviourism of Watson and Skinner. Among the Princeton theologians in America, at first Charles Hodge appeared to reject Darwin's account, but after

about 1860 believed that divine design was not incompatible with evolution among plant and animal species.[52] On the other hand, B. B. Warfield, Livingstone comments, was more partisan.[53] Yet P. T. Forsyth argued, 'There is nothing in evolution fatal to the great moral and spiritual teleology of Christianity.'[54] Similarly, Livingstone recounts the moderate and reconciling stance of James Orr in contrast to the early Fundamentalism movement in America from 1909.[55]

In England, W. R. Matthews and F. R. Tennant (1866–1957) saw God's design and purposes as in no way challenged by evolutionary theory. Both argued, in Tennant's words, 'Gradualness of construction is not proof of the absence of . . . design'; he adds, 'lucky accidents and co-incidences bewilderingly accumulate' until divine purpose seems no less unreasonable than 'groundless contingency'.[56] Today the eminent scientist, physicist and theologian John Polkinghorne also uses language about 'lucky accidents'. He writes, 'Lucky accidents mount up. If the force of gravity were slightly stronger, all stars would be blue giants; if a little weaker, red dwarfs.' There is an infinitesimal, small balance between 'the competing effect of explosive expansion and gravitational contractions at the very earliest epoch . . . A deviation of one part in ten to the sixtieth.'[57] Similarly Swinburne compares temporal and spatial 'order' with more mechanistic understandings of the universe. Darwin's theories, he concludes, in no way invalidate the Christian affirmation of divine purpose and design as an ultimate principle, not only in response to the question 'How?' but also in response to the question 'Why?'[58]

Barbour has produced a number of specialist studies on the relation between science and religion. He carefully examines *methods* both in the sciences and in theology.[59] He, like Livingstone, traces the controversy from the nineteenth century to early decades of the twentieth.[60] Like Polkinghorne, he distinguishes 'levels' of explanation, and a so-called God of the gaps reaction. On scientific method, he bewails the fact that 'all "data . . . are already theory-laden"', as N. R. Hanson puts it.[61] Like many others, he objects to the notion that laws are 'causal' or prescriptive, rather than what amount, in effect, to progress reports of the natural world.[62] Yet many advocates of neo-Darwinianism seem to suggest that (like Hume and the deists) we can return to a mechanistic outlook, if we include genetics in our considerations. Under the article on atheism I have examined neo-Darwinianism in more detail, citing some leading advocates of it, and numerous well-informed scientists, and theologians who reply (see Part 3, Atheism; Part 2, Design argument; Divine action; Miracles).

Faith

Faith does not denote any *single* attitude or stance alone. Although he understandably selects ‘trust’, ‘reliance’, ‘confidence’ as ‘the’ New Testament meaning, Rudolf Bultmann also cites New Testament meanings of faith as including ‘acceptance of the gospel message’, ‘obedience’ and other meanings.[63] He adds that its meaning depends on *to whom it is directed*. Jonathan Tallon also argues that the term is context-related. In philosophical contexts, however, the term usually denotes what is believed, in contrast to what is seen. But this is also a New Testament understanding. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews declares, ‘Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen’ (Hebrews 11.1). In Hebrews, however, ‘not seen’ does not simply denote the *spatial* contrast of most philosophy, but the *temporal* contrast between the here and now and what has not yet happened.

All the same, *trust* (Heb., *he’emin*) constitutes a very frequent meaning (Gen. 15.6; Rom. 4.3; Exod. 14.31; Deut. 1.32). James D. G. Dunn observes, ‘When *pistis*, *faith*, is understood as *trust*; better sense can be made of alternative forms.’[64] Richard Hays provides a meticulous discussion of the wide range of scholarly voices and interpretations.[65] In the Gospels *faith* may be a second cause of healing, as in, ‘Your faith has made you well’ (Matt. 9.22; cf. Mark 2.5). In James it may denote theoretical belief in monotheism (Jas 2.19).

‘Believing’ is less a state of mind than a *disposition*. In Greek the noun *pistis*, *faith*, has the cognate form *pisteuō*, *I believe*. In Latin and English *fides*, *faith*, may appear remote from *credo*, *I believe*. But this is an accident of language. In German *der Glaube*, *faith*, is more intimately and clearly cognate with *glauben*, *to believe*. On the other hand, the French *la foi*, *faith*, seems unrelated to *croire*, *I believe*. In Greek, however, and often in Hebrew, the two concepts are clearly and intimately related. Thus it becomes instructive and legitimate to compare the views of Ludwig Wittgenstein and H. H. Price on *belief*. The important thing about *belief* is ‘What are the consequences of this belief, where it takes us?’[66] How is this ‘feeling of confidence’ manifested in behaviour?[67] A confession of belief, Wittgenstein says, is a speech-act: there is no first person present indicative of ‘to believe falsely’.[68] Believing, like love, he observes, ‘has duration . . . it is a kind of disposition’.[69] While one can say of a pain, ‘I am in real pain – oh, it’s all right: it’s gone off now,’ one cannot say this of loving someone or believing something.[70]

Price works this out in greater detail in his book *Belief*. He begins by pointing

out that there have been two main ways of regarding belief in philosophy. The less significant way is 'occurrence' analysis; i.e. to think of belief primarily as a mental 'occurrence'.[71] The 'modern way' is to regard it 'as a *disposition* . . . that is, a series of conditional statements describing what he [the believer] *would* be likely to say or do or feel if such and such circumstances were to arise', e.g. someone's denying or opposing the belief, or involving circumstances in which his belief made a *practical difference* in life.[72] Price adds, 'Belief *shows itself* or manifests itself in various sorts of occurrences.'[73] *Believing* is also a performative speech-act, as Wittgenstein had shown. It is 'a public act of self-commitment'.[74]

Therefore belief expresses an attitude, a stance, or taking a stand, which has a 'guarantee-giving character', even if there may be degrees of guarantee-giving, and even unconscious beliefs.[75] Here Price expounds contrasts between faith and knowledge. Both Price and Wittgenstein agree that belief or faith is not a feeling. Price observes, 'Sureness is a state of mind in which conflict or tension is absent.'[76] He adds, 'Our beliefs are like posts which we plant in the shifting sands of doubt and ignorance.'[77] Beliefs form a 'multiform disposition'.[78] Yet Price also acknowledges that 'half-belief' may regularly show itself. This is believing 'on some occasion' but not 'on other occasions'.[79] This is a problem not only for some churchgoers (for whom it is easier to believe 'in church' than at other times), but is apparent in the narrative of the Book of Jonah.

Jonah is a satire on half-belief. In Jonah 1.3 Jonah takes a ship 'to flee from the presence of the LORD'. Yet when a storm threatens to break up the ship, Jonah declares, 'I am a Hebrew . . . I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land' (1.9). From the stomach of the fish he prays in psalmlike language. In 3.1–4 the delivered Jonah preaches judgment against Nineveh. But when the people repent, he is 'displeased', because 'I knew you are a gracious God' (4.1–2). Finally he finds shelter under a bush, but when God destroys it, he is angry, because he cares more about the bush and his comforts than about the huge city, which is the concern of God. Half the time Jonah occupies a world of exclusiveness, vindictiveness and self-centredness, and half the time he assents to the orthodox beliefs of a Hebrew prophet.

Faith does not exclude doubt. John Suk, in a moving autobiographical account of faith and doubt as a pastor, states that doubt for him opened fresh doors of deeper enquiry, although doubt also hurt: 'Doubt is like a new set of glasses: you see more.'[80] Socrates constitutes an example of advocating doubt in order to gain wisdom. Gregory Boyd declares, 'The *certainty-seeking concept of faith* is

causing a great deal of *harm* to the church today.'[81] It is not, he claims, the enemy of faith, but protects us from bumptiousness and cocksureness. A third writer who takes up these cudgels is the philosophical theologian Ian T. Ramsey. He states, 'The desire to be sure in religion leads, it will be said, to prejudice, bigotry and fanaticism.'[82]

Waismann and Wittgenstein both praise the value of what they call, in effect, 'polymorphous concepts'. I have argued elsewhere that *faith* provides an example of this. Waismann selects 'try to' as a clear example. If we want to say what *trying* is, compare, he says, 'trying to sleep', 'trying to lift a heavy weight', 'trying to play the piano better'. The meaning varies according to its context.[83] Thus, according to the testimony of a believing Christian, Martin Luther defined faith as 'a living, daring, confidence in God's grace, so sure and certain that a man would stake his life on it a thousand times. This confidence in God's grace makes men glad and happy.'[84] Bultmann's comment that what faith *is* depends on to whom it is directed, in the light of these comments seems to have added force.

Free will

To possess free will generally denotes the capacity to act without external compulsion or coercion. But constraints on possible actions may result from internal compulsions of habit, or, mainly for theists, of grace or law. Normally people will accept responsibility for an action only if they believe that they could have acted otherwise. Yet in philosophy this may run up against the problem of determinism, and in theology or religion, the part played by sin and grace in the tradition of Augustine and Calvin. Freedom of choice and lack of coercion play a huge part in philosophy and politics, especially with the rise of individualism in the West and the emergence of liberalism. J. S. Mill (1806–73) provided the classic expression of individual English liberalism in his *On Liberty* (1859). He argued for maximum liberty in society, alongside representative government and better education.

Philosophical debates about free will become complex and sophisticated. At one extreme 'the liberty of indifference' suggests that a human agent is entirely free to choose various courses of action, provided there are no constraints imposed by governments or people in authority. A more moderate view is held by 'compatabilists', who argue that every individual has sufficient freedom of choice and action to give currency to moral responsibility, but do not exclude

every kind of determinism. Aquinas explains, ‘Man has free choice, or otherwise counsels, exhortations, commands . . . would be in vain.’[85] A number of theologians start elsewhere. They do not regard free will as freedom *from* constraint, but as freedom *for* the expression of one’s character.

The issue has been as controversial in the history of philosophical theology as it has been in the history of philosophy. Origen of Alexandria (c. 185 – c. 254) interpreted the ‘fall of Adam’ in Genesis as largely allegorical. He wrote, ‘Every rational creature is capable of earning praise and censure.’[86] His bold assertion of free will was largely prompted by his opposition to Gnostic notions of determinism. In this respect he has even been called ‘the father of Pelagianism’.[87] Pelagius (c. 355–420) also insisted on the reality of moral struggle. Human nature, he argued, stands in a position of equilibrium, to choose good or evil. He vigorously attacked Augustine’s dictum ‘Command what you will, and grant [by the power of grace] what you command.’[88] Both Origen and Pelagius appealed to the moral responsibility of human beings, arguing that conscience and guilt were misplaced, if human beings did not have free will. Augustine recognized the concern of Pelagius for goodness and holiness, calling Pelagius ‘a holy man, who had made no small progress in the Christian life’.[89]

On the other hand, Augustine (354–430), perhaps the most influential church father in the West, believed that Pelagius’ ‘equilibrium’ was lost at the ‘fall’. One of his stronger arguments is from the apostle Paul’s clear teaching on the inadequacies of the Jewish law. The law, he said, could not assist moral effort, but provoked sin. Sin and grace have both abounded (Rom. 5.20–21). If a person could live righteously by obeying the law, he argued, ‘faith in Christ’ and the power of grace would have become unnecessary.[90] This was a different conception of freedom from that which separated Augustine and Pelagius. In Pelagius it was freedom to choose without external constraint, as it is for many philosophers. In Augustine it was freedom to express one’s character without external constraint. In this case, he argued, an unredeemed character can choose only what falls short of God’s righteous standards; but human beings who have been created anew by grace are free to choose according to the new nature, by the power of grace.

This controversy, albeit in modified forms, continues in theology today. John Calvin (1509–64) argued, like Augustine, that if everything good comes from God, human beings cannot choose the good in their own strength. Similarly Luther (1483–1546) wrote *The Bondage of the Will* (1525) in response to Desiderius Erasmus (1466–1536), who emphasized the importance of free will.

Erasmus was a fair-minded scholar, who supported the basic aims of the Reformation, but attacked Luther for going too far in his undervaluing of free will. Indeed the Protestant theologian James Arminius (1560–1609) whole-heartedly endorsed Reformation theology, but rejected the alleged determinism of Calvinism, embracing a position that philosophers today would call 'compatabilist'. In popular thought he is sometimes associated with Pelagius. But this would be an exaggeration of his protest against a rigid emphasis on predestination. His position is not dissimilar from Luther's colleague Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560). Even prior to the Luther–Erasmus debate, Gottschalk of Orbais (c. 808 – c. 869) overstressed predestination, teaching even 'double predestination', while Scotus Erigena (c. 815 – c. 877) attacked Gottschalk, drawing on neoplatonic philosophy.

It becomes difficult to disentangle philosophical and theological debates. Many philosophers today distinguish between freedom of *action* and freedom of *will*. A person may freely select a course of action in terms of what is willed, but be unable to carry what is willed into action. One classic example would be that of an alcoholic, who wishes not to take another drink, but finds that he cannot avoid it. This brings us back to the theological debate about character. Commenting on free will and habit in Aquinas, Moxon observes, 'A disposition to do a thing does not necessarily mean the performance of the action, nor does the possession of a habit imply also the exercise of that habit.'[91] Aquinas quotes Aristotle with approval as saying, 'volition is of the end, but choice is of the means'.[92] In other words, the will is free to choose the means to an end, but constraints may limit effective *action*. He adds, 'The reason for choosing a thing is that it conduces toward an end. But what is impossible cannot conduce to an end.'[93] Free choice, therefore, cannot guarantee the *achievement* of an end. The movement of the will, he concludes, resides in the intellect: 'Choice is an act of rational power.'[94] Our success in carrying out our ends depends in part on factors which are wholly beyond our control, and therefore not our direct responsibility.

Among those who advocate determinism, some appeal (1) to divine sovereignty or predestination. Occasionalists in the Islamic tradition may understand every event as 'the will of Allah'. (2) Others see a rigid and physical chain of cause and effect mapping out and also restricting possibilities, often within a mechanistic or pseudo-scientific framework. (3) Yet others appeal to psychological constraints of character, although this is limited by the experience of people acting 'out of character', or 'not as themselves'. Against all these arguments is an intuitive sense of choice and responsibility which makes us all

think of ourselves as moral agents. Yet this should not necessarily lead to a 'liberty of indifference' or belief in total equipoise in willing or deciding. Descartes might be said to have gone too far in this direction when he defined the will as having 'the ability to do or not to do something'.[95]

The ethical dimension of appealing to moral responsibility as an indicator of free will emerges from Kant's emphasis on moral obligation and 'the good will'. Kant regarded duty as the moral or 'categorical imperative', to which we adhere whatever our personal inclinations, desires and experience of moral struggle. The poet Schiller, however, in spite of his admiration for Kant's system, offers a satirical response to this aspect in Kant, which has been paraphrased in English as follows:

> Willingly serve I my friends, but I do it, alas, with affection.
> Hence I am cursed with the doubt, virtue I have not attained.

He imagines Kant's reply:

> This is your only resource, you must stubbornly seek to abhor them;
> Then you can do with disgust that which the law may enjoin.[96]

An entirely good will that acts out of an entirely good character will not, or may not, produce any evidence of freedom of choice. The Apostle Paul, when he expounds the moral situation of humankind (most contemporary scholars do *not* interpret his 'I' as autobiographical), declares, 'I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing that I hate' (Rom. 7.15). He adds, anticipating Aquinas and many modern philosophers, 'I can *will* what is right, but I cannot *do* it' (7.18, my italics).

Gender

In many societies gender is popularly regarded as a synonym for sex. However, most sociologists and psychologists regard the difference between these two terms as fundamental. Sex, they argue, is assigned at birth on the basis of *biological* features such as genitalia, sex chromosomes and internal reproductive structures. Gender, they often argue, constitutes an *internal sense* (or recognition of oneself) as male or female, which in turn is related to the *role in society* which people generally expect. Most sociologists and psychologists regard such a role as conventional, or the result of arbitrary *social constructs*. Many date this

distinction from 1955, with the work of John Money (1921–2006).[97]

It has often been the task of philosophy and theology, however, to examine and explore the assumptions which lie behind the work of social scientists, psychologists and clinicians. Do gender roles rest merely on tradition and convention or might more be involved? Social scientists are the first to acknowledge that Graeco-Roman society and Western medieval culture were what they call ‘patriarchal’. But are the values of today sufficiently well based to act as arbiter of other cultures and societies?

Often appeal is made to ethics. Where there is injustice and oppression this decisively counts against inherited values. But does every discussion of differences of gender role come under this heading? Philosophy cannot become the mere tool of sociological assumptions or indeed those of so-called gender studies, which are usually regarded as part of sociology. On the other hand, it must be admitted that *gender* is seldom found among entries in general encyclopedias of philosophy, or in general books on philosophy. Where philosophical contributions have emerged, they almost entirely follow a social constructionist model, as in Michel Foucault (1926–84), who is emphatically postmodernist, and regards social systems as underlying the possibility of knowledge, power and evaluation. Foucault consigns especially systems of bureaucratic control and regimes, likewise, to traditions, conventions and given situations of race and class.[98] In the first volume of his book *The History of Sexuality*, entitled *The Will to Knowledge* (1976), Foucault rejects past notions of sexuality, including marriage and the alleged guilt-feelings often bequeathed by the Roman Catholic Church. In the second volume, entitled *The Use of Pleasure*, he traces sexual attitudes in the societies of Greece and Rome, even if he has been criticized by some classicists as reflecting a non-professional expertise in this area. The third volume, *The Care of the Self* (1985), promotes a radical theory of sexuality.

Foucault’s antipathy toward any ‘control’ finds expression in his *Discipline and Punishment*, where his concern about ‘surveillance’ prisons, and hospitals, runs parallel to his theories of sexuality.[99] Everywhere he regards ‘surveillance’ as the power-tool of prisons, hospitals, the army and the police, and attacks ‘the smiling face in the white coat’. Similarly his *Histoire de la folie à l’âge classique* (Eng., *Madness and Civilization*) readily shows how different concepts have been culture-related. His parallel between the relativity of madness and that of gender is easy to understand.

A second prominent philosopher, Simone de Beauvoir (1908–86), wrote as an

existentialist, feminist and social theorist. Her book *The Second Sex* (Fr., 1949) had enormous influence. It aimed to unmask the oppressive roles traditionally expected of women. She studied philosophy at the Sorbonne, worked on Leibniz and phenomenology, and became a resolute atheist and collaborator with Sartre. She constantly raised questions about the relation between symbolic conceptual perceptions and the roles of women. In *The Second Sex* she typically writes, 'Humanity is male, and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him . . . He is the subject . . . she is the Other.'[100]

The imposed subordinate roles of women become prominent in feminism (see Part 1, Feminist philosophy). Kate Millett took up Foucault's theme about power structures in her well-known *Sexual Politics* (1969). Germaine Greer, who largely supports Foucault's approach, published her equally well-known *The Female Eunuch* (1970), arguing about the imposition of subordinate social roles for women, especially in the family. In effect they 'reduce' or 'castrate' women. I have discussed in Part 1 the rise of French feminism. Within this approach, Julia Kristeva (b. 1941) is a well-known Bulgarian-French philosopher, feminist and psychoanalyst, who strongly advocates postmodernism.

Many might argue that it is a pity that all the major philosophical writers on this subject often come from the same postmodern tradition. In spite of this, however, there are certain facts and insights which even a common-sense approach cannot ignore. For example, that society has certain expectations of gender roles cannot be neglected. When baby clothes are purchased most people buy blue for a boy and pink for a girl. They are likely to give footballs or train sets to a boy and dolls and dolls' houses to a girl. As they become older, styles of dress, hair, shoes and deportment impose social constraints which often limit life-choices. *Transgender* people reject such traditional expectations as wrongly assigned to them at birth on the basis of physiological and biological factors.

Some argue that advances in technology have disrupted some gender roles. Electronic amplification can boost women's voices in communication. During the Second World War, women successfully took over work which hitherto had been assigned only to men. Bipolar difference between gender roles appeared to become blurred. With pressures from the Equal Opportunities Commission (United Kingdom), which was set up in the wake of the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975, salaries and appointments of women in office became increasingly comparable with those of men. Legislation about gay rights and the widespread recognition of transgender people further changed traditional attitudes.

Nevertheless many instances of adjustments have occurred in the name of

justice by the Church, other religions and an increasingly secularized state. Some would argue for exceptions, such as the institution of marriage between a man and a woman. The Roman Catholic Church regards this as a sacred sacrament, and most Protestants view it as a divine ordinance. But within this framework certain adjustments have also been made. For example, modern Anglican liturgies no longer include the question 'Who gives this woman . . .?', as if she might be her father's property, and often omit 'obey' in the marriage vows. It is difficult today to find value-neutral philosophical arguments which can offer criteria by which to evaluate sociology-dominated arguments. The 'is' of present society should not in *every* respect dictate the 'ought' of ethics uncritically. Some might claim that this makes 'today' the arbiter of everything that has been inherited from previous generations. The issue demands *both* freedom from oppression *and* critical evaluation.

On the other hand, the attempt has been made to overcome stereotypical roles in theology and biblical studies. There are many examples of this. Phyllis Trible is often credited with showing that the 'image of God' refers not to man alone, but to men and women co-jointly as humanity, even if Karl Barth argued this earlier.[101] Letty Russell rightly argued that God *transcends* male and female gender, and is neither alone.[102] Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza argued that women took on a more prominent role in church leadership than had hitherto been agreed.[103] She advocates reading traditional biblical texts with 'a sharpened . . . "hermeneutic of suspicion"', and portrays Mary Magdalene as the first of the apostles to preach the resurrection of Jesus.[104] Rosemary Radford Ruether warns us of 'the "androcentric" bias of male interpreters of the tradition', in which 'women's silence is the norm'.[105]

Eldon Epp, a celebrated textual critic, argues convincingly that 'Junias' in Romans 16.7, which has traditionally been understood as masculine, is an incorrect reading of the feminine Junia, who is 'prominent among the apostles'.[106] We should be cautious, however, about regarding all feminine theology as explicitly Christian, Jewish or Islamic. Mary Daley, for example, was disillusioned with the Roman Catholic Church and describes her book *Beyond God the Father* (1973) as 'post-Christian radical feminism'.

Finally, we should briefly consider the traditional use of *gender* to denote a grammatical category. It is generally agreed by those working in linguistics that this owes more to value-neutral convention than to *gender* in the modern or feminist sense. James Barr writes, 'No one would suppose that the Turks, because they nowhere distinguish gender in their language . . . are deficient in

the concept of sexual difference – nor would we seriously argue that the French have extended their legendary erotic interests . . . by forcing every noun to be either masculine or feminine.'[107] It is pointless to argue that 'spirit' (*ruach*) is feminine because it happens to be a feminine noun in Hebrew. The same noun 'Spirit' is either neuter in Greek (*pneuma*), or can be described by a masculine term (Gk, *ekeinos*). This is not just a distinctive insight of Barr, but virtually every specialist in linguistics follows this approach.

God, attributes of

God's attributes are qualities or characteristics that are ascribed to God (from Lat., *ad*, 'to', and *tribuere*, 'to ascribe'). It was a term regularly used of God in the systematic theologies of the later nineteenth century, for example in A. H. Strong (1886) and Charles Hodge (1871).[108] Strong defines God's attributes as 'distinguishing characteristics of the divine nature'.[109] Under this term they include personality, immutability, truth, love, holiness, eternity, omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, mercy, goodness and faithfulness. The term was also the standard one in philosophies of religion in the first half of the twentieth century. George Galloway (in 1914) used the term, and includes such attributes as infinity, eternity, omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence.[110] Eric Waterhouse used it in 1933 and 1947.[111]

By the year 2000, however, Brian Davies qualifies a sentence about 'attributes' by 'some would say'.[112] Swinburne (1977) appears to avoid the term in *The Coherence of Theism*, although Peterson, Hasker, Reichenbach and Basinger still use it as a chapter heading in 1996, and Robert Audi uses the term in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (1995).[113] Charles Taliaferro (1998), however, avoids the term.[114] It is not wrong to retain the term *attributes*. But why do many recent writers seek to avoid it?

There are several reasons, but the main one seems to be that while most contemporary theologians prefer to speak verbally of *God who acts*, who *does* things, there are lingering suspicions that 'attribute' suggests *being rather than action*, and *static* substance *rather than* purposive actions. Older writers were also influenced by the Greek Septuagint's famous translation of Exodus 3.14 as 'God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM,"' whereas most Hebrew scholars understand the Hebrew to be 'future imperfect', meaning, 'I will be who I will be' (Heb., ʾehᵉyeh ʾᵃsher ʾehᵉyeh).[115] This may mean, 'You will find out,' or, perhaps more likely, 'I will faithfully perform my purposes in the future.' This

explains God's purposes by what he *will* do. God is the *living* God, not a God of static Being, as he tends to be in Aristotle and ancient Greek philosophers.

Related to this is caution about possible anthropomorphism. In the view of many German scholars after Bultmann, this might seem to risk *objectifying* God, as if he were like a superior man, or a superior object. Karl Barth is among many writers who conceive of God in terms of the *living* God of *action*. With some justification, therefore, contemporary thinkers show some caution about risking overtones of Aristotelianism. The Old Testament specialist Brevard Childs comments, 'God's nature is neither static being, nor eternal presence. The God of Israel makes known his being in specific historical moments.'[116] 'The living God' (Heb., *'el chay*) occurs regularly in the Old Testament. Similarly, Edmond Jacob writes, 'Life is what differentiates Yahweh [God] from other gods.'[117] Wolfhart Pannenberg declares, 'The confession of Israel . . . consistently holds fast to the one history of God which binds them [promises and fulfilment] together.'[118] Jürgen Moltmann observes how different the biblical and Christian view is from static 'theism'. 'The biblical writings . . . do not deal with general religious truths.'[119] By contrast, the more Aristotelian perspective *could* suggest a notion of God who could be neatly packaged and labelled. Thomas Aquinas did not intend that parallels could be drawn between God and Aristotle's notion of substances in which attributes inhered, but many modern writers regard the possibility of drawing such parallels as too close for comfort.

If we take account of this, we may still speak of the traditional attributes of God. For example, in Hosea 11.9, God declares, 'I am God, and no mortal, the Holy One in your midst.' But *attribute* may not be the best term to convey this. The philosopher O. R. Jones declares that the holiness of God is not a 'quality' as such; it is a 'disposition to behave in a certain way', when certain circumstances arise.[120] This is why John can declare, 'God is love' (1 John 4.8). Other 'attributes' such as holiness and wrath are related to historical episodes and historical actions. Hans Küng declares, 'As redeeming love, a God who has identified himself with me in Jesus, who . . . bestows love. . . [he] is himself *wholly love*.'[121]

Under the general heading of 'A Contingent God', therefore, Swinburne provides a fine exposition of God as omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, perfectly good and eternal.[122] He demonstrates that these traditional 'attributes' not only are characteristic of God's action, but are to be understood with logical consistency. God is 'everywhere present . . . yet . . . without a body'.[123] He is 'Creator of all things . . . [yet not] the cause of his own existence'.[124] *Creation*

does not simply mean ‘bring about the existence of’, but also ‘sustains all things’.[125] God sustains contingent beings. He creates the universe *ex nihilo*. Swinburne writes, ‘To be omnipotent a person need not be able to do the logically impossible’; but he must be ‘able to do any logically possible action’.[126] Thus omnipotence does not mean ‘to bring about a past state’, or to create a stone too heavy for an omnipotent person to lift, or to sin, or to square a circle.[127] If God is omniscient he knows everything; this includes what will *necessarily* come to pass in the future, but not what *might or might not* happen in the future because the happening does not yet exist as part of ‘everything’.[128] Pannenberg also speaks of contingent truth.

There are two further characteristics of God, however, which many philosophers of religion do not explicitly list as ‘attributes’. The result is that over history they have sometimes been neglected. The first is that of *revelation*. God in Hebrew thought is not only the *living* God, but also the *speaking* God, who bestows self-revelation or self-disclosure. Karl Barth (1886–1968) has rightly called attention to the fundamental significance of this. To hear and respond to God’s self-revelation is entirely different from human ‘discovering’ of God.[129] The first episode in the Bible is that of God’s *addressing* human beings, as an ‘I’ to a ‘thou’. The Jewish thinker Martin Buber (1878–1965) expands this unique ‘I–Thou’ relationship.[130]

Another more controversial feature concerns God’s nature, action and activity as *Holy Trinity*. This in no way contradicts the attribute that God is *one*. As Gregory Nazianzus (c. 330–90) and Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335–94) rightly insisted, the reality of the Trinity does not mean that ‘God is three’ in any *numerical* sense; numbers, they argued, can be applied only to finite human beings and finite objects (see Part 3, Monotheism).[131] Nevertheless, while God’s being *one* remains a fundamental attribute, his action as the Trinity remains equally fundamental to Christian belief. According to traditional Christian doctrine, all Persons of the Trinity were and are involved in creating and sustaining the world; all are involved in the redemption of the world; all are involved in whatever is predicated of one.[132] Jürgen Moltmann remarks, ‘*The New Testament talks about God by proclaiming in narrative the relationship of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit*.’[133] In more philosophical terms, John Zizioulas, Paul Fiddes, Wolfhart Pannenberg and Paul Ricoeur assert that God as Trinity embraces ‘inter-subjectivity’. This characterizes God in action in the Christian tradition, although not in Judaism or Islam.

God, existence of

God's existence is traditionally supported in Western philosophy by four types of argument. We consider three of these separately under 'Cosmological argument', 'Design argument' and 'Ontological argument' in Part 2, and 'Causality' and 'Contingency' in Part 3. Under the current heading we focus on broader questions. First, neither the cosmological argument nor the design argument are *a priori* truths, but represent inferences drawn from premises which may be challenged. However, they suggest that belief in the existence of God is *not unreasonable*, and is logically *possible* or even *probable*. These arguments are used in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Thus the cosmological and design arguments constitute *a posteriori* arguments. By contrast, the ontological argument is an *a priori* argument, which begins from our having the concept of the most perfect conceivable Being in our minds, or, as Alvin Plantinga calls this, a Being of maximal greatness and perfection. Critics regularly reply that to have such a *concept* still leaves the reasoning in the realm of mental or *conceptual* possibility, not the realm of *reality*. The moral argument for the existence of God was added to the traditional three by Kant, and depends largely on whether we accept his view of morality and ethical obligation as 'the categorical imperative'.

Before we consider these four arguments further, we must note that the very notion of ascribing *existence* to God has been challenged on two *theological* grounds. Paul Tillich (1886–1965) argued that to apply *existence* to God is thereby to demean or reduce him, placing him on the level of created and 'existent' beings, albeit the greatest and highest of them. God, he claimed, is '*above* existence'. Hence he declared, 'It is as atheistic to affirm the existence of God as it is to deny it. God is Being-itself, not *a* being.'[134] Søren Kierkegaard (1813–55) regarded arguments for the existence of God as a shameless affront. To quote him in full, he declared, 'To prove the existence of one who is present is the most shameless affront, since it is an attempt to make him [God] ridiculous . . . One proves God's existence by worship . . . not by proofs.'[135] The reason for this is not only the use of anthropomorphism (as in Tillich), but extreme caution about 'objectifying' God as a mere object of thought. God, Kierkegaard stated, is not a professor who teaches truths of propositions, so much as a Person who *addresses* human beings, demanding their obedience and subjective or active involvement and transformation.

The second philosophical kind of objection to ascribing *existence* to God

comes from issues of logic, as proposed by Bertrand Russell (1872–1970). Russell sought to reformulate the ascription of ‘existence’ (or lack of existence) to such fictitious entities as ‘the present King of France’, ‘a round square’ and ‘the golden mountain’, without somehow suggesting that such entities exist. To establish the truth or falsity of such statements, Russell introduced the notion of ‘existential quantifiers’, by which to explicate the logic of the sentences (see Part 2, Ontological argument). With this quantifier the logical form becomes ‘There is one thing, and only one, such that it is sovereign, personal and one God.’ ‘Existence’ has been *bracketed out*, because it is neither a quality nor a predicate. Definite descriptions remove the possibility of describing unreal objects. This, however, does not preclude the existence of God or anything else as long as it is understood as *having effects* or ‘making a difference’. This is exactly the way in which the existence of God is presupposed in the biblical writings and much modern philosophy.

Plato (428–348 BC) and Aristotle (384–322 BC) among the Greeks expounded a version of the cosmological argument. In *Laws* Book 10 Plato infers an Absolute who is the source of movement from the observed fact of movement in the world. This Being is the Unmoved Mover. Similarly Aristotle infers an *actual* Being from finite *potential* beings. Efficient causes lead to uncaused cause. The caused chain of potentiality cannot be limitless. Otherwise the whole chain of contingent causes would remain *contingent*, i.e. liable not to exist. Aristotle declared, ‘If there is nothing eternal, there can be no becoming . . . nothing can come from nothing’ (*Metaphysics*, 999B).

In Islam, al-Kindi (c. 813–71) and al-Ghazali reflected a revival of Aristotle, and in accordance with the *kalām* tradition in Islam, argued that an infinite regress would be impossible. Ibn Sina (i.e. Avicenna, 980–1037) and Ibn Rushd (i.e. Averroes, 1126–98) explicated this further, except that they both distanced themselves from the *kalām* tradition by claiming that the world could be eternal. The Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides (1135–1204) argued for the beginning of the world. This had been defended in earlier formulations of the cosmological argument.

Thomas Aquinas (1225–74) developed the Aristotelian, Islamic and Jewish argument for the Christian tradition in his *Summa Theologiae*.[136] In the section on the cosmological argument above, we point out that Aquinas drew inferences to the existence of God from change or movement, from caused causes, and from the contingent, in contrast to the necessary (the first three of the ‘five ways’). But, rightly, Aquinas stressed the key difference between moved movers

and an Unmoved Mover, between caused causes and an Uncaused Cause, and between contingent beings and a Necessary Being. Yet this also suggests that the *logical syllogism* breaks down. In a syllogism each term must have the same meaning in the major and minor premise and conclusion. Thus *if* the syllogism was

> Every effect has a cause;
> The world is an effect;
> Therefore the world has a cause,

this would be logically acceptable. But if we replace *cause* in the major premise for *uncaused cause* in the conclusion, the syllogism strictly fails, as David Hume, among others, pointed out.

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) was even more polemical in his critique of the cosmological argument. He wrote, 'In the cosmological argument, there are . . . so many pseudo-rational principles that speculative reason seems in this case to have brought to bear all the resources of the dialectical skill to produce the greatest possible transcendental *illusion*.'[137] In our own day, we noted under the entry 'cosmological argument', that Richard Taylor and William Rowe have eliminated the problematic notion of prior temporal sequence implied by *cause*, by replacing it with *dependency*. Yet even Aquinas recognized the limitations of the argument. He concluded that through argument we may 'know that God exists in a general and confused way', because this is 'implanted in us by nature' and by God . . . That God exists is an article of faith.'[138]

The design argument is said to depend on the validity of the cosmological argument. Yet in spite of his critique of the cosmological argument, Kant calls the teleological argument the oldest and most deserving of respect. Hick sees its 'earliest roots in the thought of Plato'.[139] One reason why Kant may have held such a positive approach is that he stressed the order and purpose of the world, rather than a *chronological* concept of *cause*.

Under 'design argument' in Part 2, I have already given a full account of different approaches. I have quoted Paley's classic exposition of it; considered the version in Aquinas, together with critiques by Hume; the Darwinians up to the neo-Darwinians Richard Dawkins and others; and the reformulations by Tennant, Matthews, Peacocke, Polkinghorne and Swinburne. I also examined Livingstone's account of theological attitudes to Darwin.

The ontological argument operates in the reverse direction to the cosmological and design arguments. It is *not* an *a posteriori* or *inferential* argument from

experience of the world, but rather a *deductive* argument from *a priori* ideas in the mind. It begins with concepts of perfection, logical necessity and necessity of being, and God as having maximal greatness. Some consider the argument convincing; others, that it embodies a fatal weakness. It has proved to be of immense fascination for philosophers since Anselm's classical formulations in his *Proslogion* (c. 1077–8) up to Alvin Plantinga's reformulation through modal logic (1965 to the present), and discussions of it by Charles Hartshorne (1997–2000), Norman Malcolm (1960), Hans Küng (1980), Hans Urs von Balthasar (1984) and others. Descartes and Leibniz attempted defences of it; Kant and Bertrand Russell have expounded its logical fallacies (see Part 2, Ontological argument').

In *Proslogion* 1–26 Anselm confessed that God truly 'is' in a distinctive way. In chapter 2 he declared, 'We believe that thou art a Being than which nothing greater can be thought.'[140] Unlike 'the fool' of Psalm 14, he says that God 'cannot be thought to exist in the understanding alone', for such a being would be 'the greatest' only as a mental construct.[141] A monk contemporary with Anselm, however, Gaunilo by name, replied that he could think of the 'greatest' conceivable island with inestimable wealth, but that would not make it exist, other than as a concept in the mind. Hence Anselm reformulated a second version of the argument in his chapter 4. In Plantinga's language, he conceived of God as uniquely *unsurpassable* in maximal greatness. If God is *uniquely* this, analogies cease to apply.

Kant, however, persisted with Gaunilo's objection: all Anselm could prove, he argued, was the existence of a *concept* of God, not the existence of God in reality. Descartes (1596–1650) unwittingly assisted Kant in his critique by formulating a version of the ontological argument in which it became clear that everything hung on the *definition* of God, rather than his existence. He declared, 'Existence can no more be separated from the essence of God, any more than the notion that the three angles of a triangle add up to two right angles can be separated from the essence of a triangle'.[142] But Descartes had unintentionally given the game away. He concluded that the existence of 'God' was simply true *by definition*. Kant therefore replied that Anselm had confused *existence* with a *predicate*, such as 'big' or 'heavy'. Bertrand Russell built on this criticism in the twentieth century (see Part 2, Ontological argument).

Hans Küng traces defences of the argument in Spinoza, Leibniz, Fichte and Hegel.[143] Yet the most hopeful way forward is Plantinga's restatement of Malcolm's defence in terms of modal logic. He postulates a Being of maximal

greatness, who as such exists in all *possible* worlds. He stops short of calling it a proof, but argues that the approach shows that to assert the existence of God is *not contrary to reason*.[144]

The moral argument for the existence of God emerged with Immanuel Kant. This argument, again, does not formally 'prove' God's existence, but proposes that the existence of God is a *postulate* of practical reason. It constitutes a *presupposition* of the moral categorical imperative, together with freedom and immortality.[145] Many philosophers see little force in Kant's arguments, unless we share Kant's metaphysical assumptions. Clearly a consequential view of ethics (e.g. those of Hobbes and Hume, the utilitarianism of Bentham, and the virtual nihilism of Nietzsche) could never be convinced by Kant's approach.

Three exceptions to this trend are Hastings Rashdall (1858–1924), H. P. Owen (1926–96) and Robert Adams (b. 1937). Rashdall wrote *The Theory of Good and Evil* in 1907, arguing that 'the good' constitutes an ideal of human life. Rashdall argued that morality was no mere human creation. He said, 'Moral law has a real existence,' and 'there is such a thing as absolute morality'.[146] He argued that most people have an inbuilt sense of right and wrong, regarding cruelty as repugnant. Owen worked closely with the philosopher H. D. Lewis. He published *The Moral Argument for Christian Theism* in 1965.[147] Adams expounded a modified 'divine command theory of ethical wrongness'.[148] The 'command' theory infers the existence of a commander. But in view of objections to it, Adams offers a 'modified' theory of command. He writes, 'An act is wrong if and only if it is contrary to God's will or command,' especially as he is a God of love.[149] It is perhaps easier to gain consensus about what is regarded as 'wrong' than about what is good or right. In the end, this approach has relatively few followers. The 'classical' arguments for the existence of God primarily remain three.

Good and evil

Good and evil are both treated seriously in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, although none of these hold the dualist view of an equipoise between good and evil forces. Such radical dualism is seen in Gnosticism and in many Eastern religions. Admittedly Christianity and Judaism distinguish sharply between light and darkness, truth and falsehood, wisdom and folly, and good and evil, but not as if to present two equal opposing, semi-equal, forces. In all these religions God stands above the world as Creator and Sustainer of all things.

Yet all three also acknowledge the reality of evil. In the Book of Job, Job

cries, ‘Let the day perish in which I was born . . . Why is light given to one in misery, and life to the bitter in soul, who long for death, but it does not come?’ (Job 3.3, 20–21). The books of Ecclesiastes, Lamentations and many of the psalms reflect similar despair. The psalmist laments, ‘My soul was embittered, when I was pricked in heart’ (Ps. 73.21). Rabbinic Judaism speaks of the inclination to evil (*yetser hā rā’*). It is puzzling that many people say, ‘Why do I deserve this? Where is God?’, when evil befalls, but very few ask, ‘Why do I deserve this?’, when God has brought good into their lives. Alvin Plantinga has observed that just because we do not *know* the reason for evil, this does not mean that there can be *no reason* for it. Why should human beings expect to understand *everything* about the ways and purposes of God? In all three religious traditions God has purposes which may *use* evil in the service of good.

Yet *good* is often used loosely in everyday language. People may speak of a good dinner, good music or a good knife, when they simply mean that it serves its purpose well, or that it is to be highly evaluated. In the present context, I refer to *moral* goodness, or goodness of will and character. Kant spoke of the good will in such a way, and Thomas Aquinas associated it with habit and virtue. Plato (c. 428–348 BC) and Aristotle (384–322 BC) undertook serious discussion of the nature of good. Both were protesting, like Socrates, about the relativism of the Sophists. Protagoras (c. 490 – c. 420 BC) the first of the Sophists, had declared, ‘Man is the measure of all things’ (*Fragment* 1), and promoted subjectivism, relativism and agnosticism (*Fragment* 4).

1 ‘Objective’ views of the good: Plato, Aristotle and Aquinas

In the *Republic* Book 1 Plato provides a vision of the good society. He discusses justice, wisdom and virtue. In Books 2 and 3 he proposes ‘guardians’ of the city state who will be brave, but gentle, showing ‘truth, courage and self-control’.[150] Justice is a ‘healthy habit of mind; injustice is a kind of unnatural discord’.[151] Women must be trained and educated exactly like men, and the highest study is the study of ‘the good’. In Plato’s thought virtues may depend on needs according to time and place, but the four ‘cardinal’ virtues remain wisdom, courage, moderation and justice. Wisdom is prompted by reason; courage is prompted by ‘spirit’ or emotion; moderation comes from self-control; justice is the principle of harmony or proportion.

Aristotle expanded the list of virtues to nine. In *Rhetoric* he wrote, ‘The forms of virtues are justice, courage, temperance, magnificence, magnanimity, liberality, gentleness, prudence, wisdom.’[152] On *good*, he declared, ‘The chief

good is that at which all things aim', i.e. it is intrinsic, not instrumental.[153] He also defined virtue as *well-being* (Gk, *eudaimonia*). This is a concept of *good*, in contrast to *right*. The latter implies a moral law, with which what is right accords. But *well-being* is not simply pleasure or wealth. The *good*, however, can be seen only in its practical application. Another word for virtue is the Greek *aretē*, which implies fitness for a practical end. It constitutes a *habit*, or extended disposition or stance. Further to this, Aristotle expounds virtue as well balanced, for example, he regards courage as the mean between cowardice and rashness. He comments, 'Virtue is the habit of choosing the relative mean.'[154] Aristotle's 'virtue ethics', it is said today, stands in contrast with notions of the good which stress rules, duties and obligations. He ultimately promotes a social ethic of self-realization or self-fulfilment.

In the second and third centuries AD and beyond, many of Plato's themes were carried forward by the neoplatonists and Plotinus (c. 205–70), then in part by Augustine, and in the modern era by William Inge (1860–1954), professor at Cambridge and Dean of St Paul's Cathedral. Meanwhile Thomas Aquinas (1225–74) carried forward much of the ethics of Aristotle. In *Summa Theologiae* II.II he added faith, hope and love to the virtues from Paul.[155] He included prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance or moderation.[156] On prudence he quotes Aristotle with approval.[157] He then appeals to Gregory's *Moralia* (2:49) to establish that prudence, moderation, fortitude and justice are 'four virtues'. He comments, 'Virtue is that which makes the possessor good.'[158] He adds that the proper end of each virtue is its conformity with natural and right reason.[159] Prudence is right reason applied to action.[160] On justice, he quotes Aristotle again.[161] Like Aristotle he regards virtues as having a social context, and regards virtue as a habit. He punctuates his work on virtues with appeals to Aristotle, and has an extended commentary on the evil of vices.

2 Subjective and utilitarian views of the good: Hobbes, Hume and Bentham

In the early modern era, Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) tended to define *good* merely as what was pleasant, expedient or useful, and human beings as, basically, egoists. Desires and aversions were virtually physical dictates. Many have described his ethics as no more than psychological hedonism. In *Leviathan* he described Aristotle's system as absurd, and even repugnant to government. Indeed Hobbes could see, in the end, only the monarch's use of force as a way of maintaining order and a semblance of 'good' for society. Power, he said, is the chief regulating principle in ethical judgement. 'Virtue' is any esteemed quality

that sets people above their fellows. Love is valuable only as a social influence. Benevolence is merely ‘a half-conscious mutual contract’ of expectation of a good return for favours done. Everyone is ‘vehemently in love with their own opinions’.[162]

David Hume (1711–76) stressed *consequential* ethics, like Hobbes, but in a more utilitarian way. His method was naturalistic and dependent on observation. Unlike the Aristotelian-Thomist tradition he believed that reason was the slave of the passions. *Good* is the action ‘of whose consequences most men approve’ and what is ‘fitted to be beneficial to society’.[163] We cannot infer ‘ought’ from descriptions of what ‘is’ (although some dispute this interpretation).[164] Although he is, like Hobbes, naturalistic, Hume modifies Hobbes by utilitarian concerns.

Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) more explicitly advocated *utilitarianism* as seeking ‘the greatest happiness of the greatest number’.[165] His criterion of ethics is whether something tends to augment or diminish this. He even attempted to measure happiness by ‘intensity, duration and extent’. Clearly, as in Hume, his ethics are consequential; i.e. he asks, ‘What are the consequences of this action?’ One problem is that of measurement. How does extreme pleasure for a handful of individuals rank against the low-level pleasure of the very many? In his politics, Bentham’s criterion is ‘the mass of the interests of individuals’. Incidentally he rejected all notions of ‘natural rights’.

J. S. Mill (1806–73) built on Bentham’s utilitarian ethics. He attempted to address the problem of criteria and measurement by distinguishing between ‘lower’ and ‘higher’ pleasures. One of his best-known ethical axioms is, ‘It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied’.[166] But to introduce qualitative difference between pleasures is to add another ethical criterion to utilitarianism. He regarded utility as the ultimate appeal on all ethical questions.

3 Deontological ethics and motivation: duty and obligation in Kant

Kant (1724–1804) believed that the empirical self was a chaos of desires and wishes. Yet human beings have above all a consciousness of freedom. In this situation of confusion, the good will is unique. The human awareness of ‘ought’ expresses the relation of objective moral law to a will that is subjectively imperfect. A motivation to obey the moral law is paramount. Kant declared, ‘It is not sufficient to do . . . morally good . . . it must be done for the sake of the law.’[167] In the same volume he declared, ‘Act only on that maxim which you can at the same time will to become a universal law’.[168] Kant described this moral law as the categorical imperative. The purely good will does duty *for duty’s sake*

only. In a different discussion, I have quoted the poet Schiller's stinging attack on this view in Kant. In imagination he says:

> 'Willingly serve I my friends, but I do it, alas! with affection.
> 'Hence I am cursed with the doubt, virtue I have not attained'.
> [Reply:] 'This is your only recourse, you must stubbornly seek to abhor them;
> 'Then you can do with disgust that which the law may enjoin.'[169]

Schiller probably exaggerates, but he makes a telling point. Many also criticize Kant for in effect substituting *rightness* for goodness.

Nevertheless it is helpful to move away from a merely consequential view of ethics, as if motive, altruism, obedience to conscience or law, i.e. deontology, were to be ignored. The good can no more dispense with deontology than it can ignore obligation.

4 Virtue ethics and other systems

Virtue ethics goes back to Plato, Aristotle and Aquinas. In the second half of the twentieth century it flourished again, partly in the light of Elizabeth Anscombe's essay 'Modern Moral Philosophy' (1958), and more especially in the light of Alasdair Macintyre's *After Virtue* (1981–5) and other subsequent books.[170] Anscombe argued that unless we hold a firm religious basis of belief in God, a virtue ethic would be the only viable approach. Macintyre pleaded for a greater attention to context, an emphasis on non-manipulative social relations, a 'recognition of the future of the Enlightenment project', attention to 'the narrative character of human life', and recognition of larger stories.[171]

5 Command ethics

'Command ethics' or divine command ethics have recently received positive attention from Richard Mouw and Philip Quinn, and the Decalogue and Israelite law plays a major part in Jewish and Christian traditions. In John Calvin, however, Christian motivation is more closely linked with gratitude for divine grace. At all events, the Christian tradition reflects an emphasis on *both consequential* ethics *and deontology*, as well as on *virtue ethics*. The *good* is too complex to be accounted for by a single theory.

Humanity

Humanity denotes the sum of human beings collectively. It is to be distinguished from the plural term *humanities*, which generally denotes the arts and social

sciences, as distinct from the natural sciences. German uses the term *Geisteswissenschaften*. *Humanity* is a more gender-neutral term than *mankind*, and thus has replaced that term in contemporary writings. In philosophy, as well as in theology, this suggests the range of issues about human beings collectively to which Thomas Aquinas (1225–74) gives attention in his *Summa Theologiae*, I, qu. 33–85. He discusses a dualism of body and soul; intellect, reason, wisdom and understanding, sense and sensuality, will, and free will and determinism.

Some of these issues go back to the ancient Greek philosophers. Thales (c. 624–546 BC) was more concerned with cosmology. But Heraclitus (c. 500 BC) showed concern for human ignorance, and Xenophanes (c. 570 – c. 475 BC), rejected immorality and undue anthropomorphism. Socrates (470–399 BC) declared that virtue comes from knowledge, and raised fundamental questions about ethics and politics. Plato (c. 428– 348 BC) was more explicit, considering the problem of knowledge and belief. He distinguished between *belief* (Gk, *doxa*) and *knowledge* (Gk, *epistēmē*), and expounded the famous analogy of the cave in the *Republic*, Books 6 and 7. Inside the cave, humans can perceive only mirror-images or shadows of pure forms, which stress the finitude and partiality of human knowledge. In the *Phaedrus* and the *Laws*, he argued for the immortality of the soul on the basis of the nature of 'the soul'.[172] In *Cratylus* he debated whether human language is based on convention or nature. He defines 'the good' in terms of social and political well-being. In the *Republic*, the 'good' is understood in terms of the four virtues of justice, truth, courage and self-control (see Part 2, Good and evil).[173]

Aristotle (c. 384–322 BC) contributed decisively to formal logic, but was also concerned with knowledge, politics and ethics in human society, and God as Unmoved Mover. For Aristotle, 'the good' is 'well-being' (Gk, *eudaimonia*), which transcends wealth, honour or pleasure, as he expresses this in his *Nicomachean Ethics* (c. 350 BC).[174] More concretely, virtue depends on habit, and most virtues lie between two extremes. For example, *courage* is the mean between rashness and cowardice; *moderation* is the mean between profligacy and apathy; *generosity* lies between extravagance and miserliness; *greatness of soul* is the mean between boastfulness and meanness. All this raises issues of human choice, free will and human nature.[175] He also regards virtue as depending on a community context, especially the *polis*, or city state. Ethics thus becomes a branch of politics. Strictly, intellectual virtues can be taught, while moral virtues are the result of habit. Hence the good character is a stable disposition learned mainly through practice. His references to praise, blame and responsibility

presuppose the possibility of human choice. Only external constraints make any action compulsory. All voluntary actions assume choice. Of the two words for *virtue*, Greek *phronēsis* (often *practical wisdom*) seems to consist of choosing, and acting upon, the path between two means: Greek *aretē*, *virtue*, seems to denote skill in performing appropriate actions. Above all, 'good' acts must be grounded in human nature, and result in well-being (*eudaimonia*).

In the Christian era, from the church fathers and Aquinas to the modern era, we may more clearly categorize the specific issues and qualities about humankind and human nature, which we have noted in Thomas Aquinas.

1 Body–soul dualism

A dualistic understanding of body and soul prevailed in many church fathers, Descartes and Locke, but never in the biblical writings, and seldom in contemporary philosophy and contemporary theology. In the second century, Athenagoras argued against the resurrection of the 'soul' because the soul did not constitute the whole of the human person. Tertullian, however, argued that without the soul a human being would be a mere carcass.[176] Origen (c. 185–254) also tended towards dualism, following Plato's view of human nature. Today Ernst Käsemann, however, conveys the biblical view of body and mind very well. He writes concerning *body* in the apostle Paul as:

> That piece of the world which we ourselves are . . . the earliest gift of our Creator to us. 'Body' . . . signifies man in his worldliness [i.e. as belonging to the world], and therefore in his ability to communicate . . . In the bodily obedience of the Christian . . . In the world of everyday the lordship of Christ finds visible expression, and only when visible expression takes personal shape does the whole thing become credible.[177]

Käsemann accurately reflects the wider biblical tradition. Pannenberg writes of the biblical unity of body and soul, and 'the biblical idea of psychosomatic unity'.[178] In the Old Testament the Hebrew word for *soul*, *nephesh*, can even denote a dead body, and Greek *psychē* (soul) often simply means *life*.

Thomas Aquinas provides a long discussion of 'the soul's union with the body'.[179] Body and soul are indeed 'united'. But he draws on Plato, Aristotle and the Islamic scholars Avicenna (Ibn Sina) and Averroes (Ibn Rushd).[180] The unity here remains a 'compound'. The soul (*anima*), he says, is 'an incorruptible form. So it is not suitable for it to be matched to a corruptible body'.[181] René Descartes (1596–1650), however, was the classic dualist of Western philosophy. Like Plato, he regarded the mind as an 'essence', or thought alone, in contrast to body, i.e. a dualism of thought and extension, which is foreign to the biblical tradition.

In our modern era, Gilbert Ryle (1900–76) attacked this view in his book *The Concept of Mind*.[182] I refer to it, he said, 'with deliberate abuse as "the dogma of the Ghost in the Machine" . . . It is one big mistake . . . a category mistake.'[183] A category mistake represents mental events as if they belonged to the same category as bodily events, whereas they are different kinds of entities. Ryle compares the use of zeugma; for example, 'she came home in a flood of tears and a sedan chair'.[184] Such dualism rests on conceptual or logical confusion. Almost anticipating Käsemann, he shows that the distinctive feature of the 'bodily' is the capacity to act in the *public world*, rather than the private world of thought. These are simply two aspects of the self. This is not psychological behaviourism. Indeed the vast majority of philosophers and theologians now understand the mind–body relation in this way.

2 Intellectual powers of human beings: knowledge, reason, understanding and wisdom

These capacities constitute the next section in Aquinas.[185] Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, we saw, distinguished knowledge from belief or opinion. The biblical writings stress the importance of *reason*, even though the illusion of the opposite is widespread. Paul frequently appeals to logical and rational thinking. He chides the church of Galatia for belief and action which is logically at variance with their foundational beliefs (Gal. 3.1–5). Who, he asks, 'has bewitched you' (3.1)? He tells the Thessalonians that converts must be 'admonished', i.e. put in their right mind (1 Thess.; 5.12, 14 use the Greek term *nouthetein*). Robert Jewett comments, '*Nous* (mind) is the agent of rationality'.[186] Yet the biblical writings also distinguish between reason, understanding and wisdom, even if all these capacities entail the use of argument. Pannenberg declares, '*Argumentation and the operation of the Spirit are not in competition with each other. In trusting the Spirit, Paul in no way spared himself thinking and arguing*.'[187] The differences between reason or knowledge and wisdom, however, are numerous, and I have set these out elsewhere.[188]

3 Sensuality and free will

These also raise traditional philosophical questions, and Aquinas explicitly includes these in his account of human nature.[189] Aquinas argues, 'Sensuality is defined as desire for the things of the body'.[190] He is quoting Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, which sum up many of the church fathers' views. In philosophy, empiricists often see sense-data of special importance. The biblical writings do

not disparage the enjoyment of food and drink, which has a prominent place in Judaism. Gerd Theissen has shown the importance of *heart* in the biblical writings, as often involving subconscious or unconscious drives and desires.[191] In the Christian tradition, Reinhold Niebuhr in *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (1941) expounds the aspect of sense or sensuousness as finitude. But he also emphasizes the negative aspect of human pride and 'inordinate love of all creaturely values', by which human beings sometimes seek to replace God.[192]

The problem of free will is notoriously controversial in both philosophy and theology (see Part 2, Free will). It is well known that whereas Pelagius (354–420) tended to define free will as an equipoise between good and evil, Augustine of Hippo (354–430) regarded it as dependent on special grace, and tended to define freedom as being free to express one's nature or character. Freedom to respond to the law, Augustine believed, depends on grace: 'Grace was given, in order that the law might be fulfilled.'[193] In Augustine's view humanity bears the consequences of the fall, and is characterized by a corrupt nature, unless God gives to it the grace of redemption. The Pelagian controversy continued for centuries, with John Cassian (c. 360 – c. 435) being called 'semi-Pelagian' by some, although this term may be unjustified. He asked, however, 'Where is there room for free will if God begins and ends everything?'[194]

After the close of the Patristic era, Gottschalk of Orbais (c. 808 – c. 869) strongly pressed an Augustinian emphasis on predestination, while Scotus Erigena (c. 815 – c. 877) opposed him. Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109) largely defended the Augustinian view. Aquinas in his section on free will quotes Paul's 'I do not the good I will' to argue that 'No free decision can [be fruitful] unless God initiates it.'[195] He concludes, 'choosing and willing are different acts'.[196] In the Reformation era, John Calvin (1509–64) broadly followed Augustine; James Arminius (1559–1609) is often set up as a polar opposite to Calvin. Although he did reject a strong doctrine of predestination, in many respects he endorsed Reformation theology, including the effects of the 'fall' in human nature.[197]

In philosophy also, definitions of freedom differ. Some advocate freedom as the liberty of indifference, virtually like Pelagius. Others stress the role of habit, will and character. But character may be overcome in free choice, as when someone says, 'I was not myself when I did that'. Most writers regard praise, blame and responsibility as presupposing a measure of freedom. Some forms of determinism rest on a chain of physical or physiological causes and effects. J. L. Mackie opposes the notion that if actions are predictable they are not truly free.

He envisages situations in which people agree on a prediction of an outcome, while the agents concerned pursue their intended actions entirely freely.[198] Colin Gunton argues for a good measure of freedom on the ground that even in theism God will respect 'human integrity' sufficiently to give human beings this space.[199]

Finally, many give the name *compatibilism* to the belief that freedom and responsibility may be consistent with some form of determinism. William James, for example, spoke of a 'soft determinism'. *Incompatibilism* denotes the view that 'hard' determinism precludes freedom, while at the extreme, radical libertarianism precludes any form of determinism. Probably the majority of philosophers are most comfortable with some form of compatibilism.

Much depends on how we define both 'free will' and determinism. It would be possible to discuss the nature of humanity at further length, but I have tried to select the most widely discussed aspects of being collectively human. Questions about power, sex and money would take us too far into areas of sociology and ethics. But, as the existentialists and postmodernists argue, the historicality or 'givenness' of such factors as race, class and gender inevitably also influence our view of humanity.

Life after death

Often referred to as 'post-mortal existence' or 'immortality of the soul', this topic provokes fierce debate in philosophy. Behaviourists, materialists and positivists dismiss it on the ground that human life depends entirely on a physical body and the brain. Eastern religions often regard 'immortality' simply as release of life (*moksha*) from a repeated cycle of bodily existence. The *Advaita* (non-dualist) tradition of Hindu philosophy often regards the self (*ātman*) as becoming assimilated with the All (*brāhman*) or ultimate reality. This had hitherto been hidden by illusion (*māyā*). Plato argued for the immortality of the soul on the ground that the soul belonged to the realm of eternal Ideas or Forms. Christianity and Judaism distinguish the resurrection of the *whole person* (in ancient language, the 'body'), from the immortality of an unknown entity called the *soul*. The New Testament declares a fresh divine act of new creation in the resurrection, in parallel with creation, partly on the basis of biblical witness to 'the living God', partly on the basis of the resurrection of Christ.

Apart from materialist, behaviourist and positivist objections to belief in life after death, a strong philosophical difficulty was articulated by Antony Flew in

his earlier thought, namely *the problematic nature* of the 'soul'. He once wrote, 'Unless I am my soul, the immortality of my soul will not be my immortality, and the news of the immortality of my soul would be of no more concern to me than the news that my appendix would be preserved eternally in a bottle'.[200] Flew's argument was that the immortality of the soul was not credible because it was not intelligible.

This impinges on the intelligibility of self-identity in a non-bodily condition. This point is made by Donald MacKinnon in a companion essay. Many philosophers, he says, urge, 'If we say we survive death, we do not know what we are saying.'[201] I can say 'I survive', but what is 'I'? Death, MacKinnon argues, is a clinical phenomenon. Or, as Wittgenstein observed in his earlier thought, death is 'not an event in life'; we do not live to 'experience' all that death involves, only the process of dying.[202] In this context it is difficult to see how 'near-death' experiences of a quasi-empirical nature can be relevant, in spite of their advocacy by Paul Badham and others. People have reported that when lying on their deathbed they have somehow perceived their body 'from outside', or have seen guardian angels or figures clothed in light, before they then 'returned'. But this merely emphasizes Wittgenstein's point that we cannot 'experience' death, only the process of dying. MacKinnon makes these points, and rightly concludes, 'Christian theology . . . speaks less of immortality than of resurrection, less of personal survival than of the life of the world to come.'[203]

We must briefly return to the positivist and materialist objection to life after death, since this has persisted throughout the history of philosophy. It occurred originally in the ancient Greek atomist Democritus (c. 460 – c. 370 BC). Ultimate reality, he believed, consisted only of the smallest possible physical particles, which operated in a mechanistic manner. Consciousness, perception and sensation are ultimately physical processes.

In the later history of philosophy Russell and the 'new atheists' constitute revivals of this approach. We must also mention Hume (1711–76), even if he states this view more dialectically. If experience appears to reveal that personal identity is no more than a succession of perceptions, impressions and emotions, the self retains *no stable core* which can survive death. He states, 'Nothing in this world is perpetual; everything, however seemingly firm, is in continual flux and change: the world itself gives symptoms of frailty and dissolution.' Hence it seems impossible to claim that such a 'self' is 'immortal and indissoluble'.[204] The reason why Hume does not quite fit the Democritus-Russell argument is that Hume also depends on the arguments from personal identity (see Part 3, Self).

Russell (1872–1970) also raises the issue of ‘the sense in which a man is the same person as he was yesterday’.[205] Personal identity, he argues, is only a matter of *appearance*. He appeals to ‘the scientific investigation of nature’, and even to Nietzsche’s nihilism.[206] (But see Part 3, Atheism, Scientism, Nihilism, Reductionism.)

We must also consider two positive arguments, neither of which would be widely accepted today. Plato (c. 428–348 BC) argues for the immortality of the soul on the ground that the soul is an ‘essence’ which belongs to the ‘eternal’ realm of Ideas or Forms, in contrast to the changes and contingencies of ‘body’. The two most widely known or quoted sources are from *Alcibiades I* and from *Phaedo*.[207] *Soul*, Socrates says, is ‘the real Alcibiades’. In *Phaedo*, he says that the body introduces turmoil and confusion, while death brings ‘release of the soul from the body’. Before death, ‘the soul is . . . dragged by the body into the region of the changeable, and wanders confused . . . Then she passes into the realm of purity . . . eternity and unchangeableness’. But in spite of Platonist influence on the church fathers, this is emphatically *not* the Christian view. The body is not so disparaged; and Christians rely on the resurrection, not survival.

We are left in this section with the dualism of Descartes (1596–1650) and Locke (1632–1704). Descartes regards the body as extended in space, and, in principle, divisible. The ‘soul’ is the thinking self, indivisible and not extended in space. The mind is a substance whose ‘essence’ is thought alone. Hence his belief in post-mortal existence is not vastly different from Plato’s. However, the biblical writings and contemporary theologians tend to reject a partitive view of human nature, in favour of a unitary or psychosomatic view (see Part 2, Humanity, and Part 3, Dualism, Self). John Locke considered personal identity in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book II.[208] He formulated the parable of the ‘soul’ of a prince, which entered the body of a cobbler. This was to illustrate the difference between introspective perceptions of self-identity, and public perceptions of it. However, the same objections to mind–body dualism as applied to Descartes apply to Locke. As we note elsewhere, the critique of Gilbert Ryle in *The Concept of Mind*, where he rejects ‘the Ghost in the Machine’, seems a decisive critique of dualism.[209]

H. H. Price (1899–1984) has suggested a hypothetical analogy which might enable us to envisage how a self without a body might experience its ‘world’. Price calls his essay a ‘Survival Hypothesis’. He asked what kind of experience a disembodied human mind might be supposed to have.[210] His answer concerns ‘imaging’ and dreams. These hardly depend on the possession of a body in the

present, even if they presuppose memories of bodily life in the past. Price does *not* claim that this hypothesis proves any truth. He merely uses the analogy to argue that 'feeling alive' without the body is conceivable and intelligible.

Resurrection is the alternative from the Christian and Jewish tradition. To understand the Christian doctrine of resurrection accurately we cannot ignore the Pauline and New Testament evidence. Several philosophers treat this tradition as seriously contributing to self-identity and transformation of the self. Stephen Davis, Peter Geach and John Hick, among others, provide examples.[211]

In 1 Corinthians 15, Romans 4.16–25, 2 Corinthians 1.9, 5.1–10 and 1 Thessalonians 4.14–17 it is crucial to Paul's arguments that the resurrection from the dead constitutes 'a sheer *gift* of God's *sovereign, creative grace*, and not the fruition of latent capacities in the human soul'.[212] The resurrection of the 'body' does not denote sheer physicality as such. The term denotes, as Käsemann argues, unique identity and ability to communicate with others in the *public, intersubjective* world (Gk, *sōma*, means *more* than *body*). In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul first expounds the derived status of the resurrection of the dead from Christ's resurrection. (We must here bear in mind that narratives of Christ's risen body in the Gospels are still about his raised body *within the conditions of this world*, i.e. before Christ's ascension.) *Some* modes of post-resurrection life, therefore, are capable of assuming a quasi-physical form *when this is necessary*. But the key point is that the God who created such an infinite variety of forms at the creation of the world, is fully able to create form without limit in the new resurrection mode of existence.

As today, Paul's converts at Corinth wanted to see how resurrection could be *credible, intelligible and conceivable*. Paul proposes the analogy of the transformation of the natural world in the transfiguring of the seed into a harvest (1 Cor. 15.35–41). God gives 'to each kind of seed its own body. Not all flesh is alike' (vv. 38–39). The glory of the future 'body' or mode of existence will vary. Yet, as Käsemann insisted, 'body' presupposes intersubjective communication, recognition and identity. Paul declares, 'It is sown an ordinary (Gk, *psychikon*) body; it is raised a Spiritual (Gk, *pneumatikon*) body (Gk, *sōma*)' (v. 44, my translation and capitalization). Without doubt, the contrast is between an *ordinary*, earthly, body and a mode of existence created, animated and characterized by the Holy Spirit of God. This accords with use of *psychē*, life, and *pneuma*, usually Spirit, especially in the Corinthian correspondence. Paul argues that the resurrection mode of existence is *credible* because it rests on God's power as creator; it is *intelligible*, because the transformation of seeds

with flowers and fruit can already be observed empirically; and it is *conceivable* because any kind of ongoing, living, form of life owes its basis to the creative Spirit of God.

Miracles

Miracles denote unusual but publicly observable events. Yet philosophers disagree about their cause, their validity and their purpose. Augustine and Aquinas rightly declared that they were not 'against' nature (*contra naturam*), but 'beyond nature' (*praeter naturam*).[213] David Hume did not do justice to *miracles* when he described them as 'violations' of the laws of nature.[214] Theists usually attribute their cause to an act of the omnipotent God (see Part 2, Divine action). In recent years many prefer to avoid the term 'supernatural act', *not* because they doubt God's agency 'above' or 'through' nature, but because the term *supernatural* tends to suggest an unhelpful dualism between two different ways of God's acting in the world.

Theists generally agree that the *purpose* of miracles is not to perform some unusual action for the sake of spectacle, but as signs (Gk, *sēmeia*) of God's wider purposes. Craig Keener admits, 'Philosophers debate the meaning of miracle'; but he also claims that Hume's definition of 'breaking laws of nature' is entirely circular. What is deemed to be *extraordinary*, *unusual* or a source of *wonder*, varies in degree, according to human judgement.[215]

In the biblical writings the Greek *sēmeion*, *sign*, regularly translates the Hebrew *'ōth* or *môpēth*, and also indicates omens, wonders or portents. Often, however, these were associated with *false* prophecy, and with destruction (Deut. 29.3). Sometimes, however, miracles may be granted to encourage or to confirm faith (Exod. 4.30; 7.3; Deut. 4.34). The Hebrew *'ōth* may denote a visible sign of the presence and power of God (2 Kgs 20.8–9). While John uses *sēmeion*, *sign*, more than a dozen times, the first three Gospels use *dynamis*, *a work of power*, which does not always signify *miracle*. It sometimes denotes *an effective deed*. Richardson points out that while Jesus sometimes refused to give a sign to those who demanded one *as a proof*, he 'nevertheless regarded his miracles as signs which would be understood by those who had responded to the proclamation of . . . the reign of God'.[216] Jesus insisted, 'Neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead' (Luke 16.31).

Aquinas admitted, 'Some miracles are not true, but imaginary deeds [which] delude men.'[217] Yet in the same paragraph he asserts, 'Others are true deeds, yet

have not the character of true miracles, because they are done by . . . natural cause.' To return to Hume, he makes two questionable assumptions. One concerns the reliability of evidence in the shape of eyewitness testimony; the other concerns the inevitability of 'uniform' (i.e. 'regular') experience up to the present. In his *Enquiries*, he refers both to the testimony of the earliest witnesses and to the transmission of the past in historical tradition.[218] He also regards laws of nature as reflected in 'experience' (which largely means *his* experience up to the present), as if these were fixed *prescriptive constraints* about what should *always* happen, even if times or conditions were to change.[219]

We have noted the circularity of this second argument. Swinburne quotes Alastair McKinnon as clinching this point. McKinnon says, 'The idea of suspension of natural law is contradictory . . . If we substitute the expression "the actual course of events", *miracle* would be defined as "an event involving the suspension of the actual course of events".'[220] As far as Hume's first major argument about the testimony and tradition is concerned, many specialists have undertaken careful research into this issue, and reached opposite conclusions from Hume. A classic study, based on such research, is Richard Baukham's remarkable work *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* (2006).[221]

A third argument against Hume and his like-minded sceptics has emerged over the last 50 or more years. Hume was writing in the era when he and the deists generally viewed the universe as a closed, static, system of unchangeable, mechanistic 'laws'. With the advent of quantum theory in 1926–7 all this changed. John Polkinghorne comments, 'Classical physics describes a world that is clear and determinate. Quantum physics describes a world that is cloudy and fitful.'[222] It is not merely 'cloudy and fitful': since Heisenberg and Dirac it concerns *probabilities*, not certainties, and it is dynamic, not static.

Much of this is well summed up in Karl Heim's book *The Transformation of the Scientific World View* (1953).[223] The decisive moment came with Werner Heisenberg (1901–76) and his publication of the *Uncertainty Principle* in 1927, on the relation between mass and velocity. Heim comments that at this point 'Human reflection in terms of the absolute object . . . has provisionally come to an end.'[224] Heisenberg's work was further developed by Max Born (1882–1970), who clearly emphasized the probabilistic character of quantum theory.[225] Next, Paul Dirac (1902–84) published *Principles of Quantum Mechanics* (1930), which Polkinghorne calls 'one of the intellectual classics of the twentieth century'.[226] Dirac demonstrated that an electron had *no single* position, but is found 'here' and 'there': a theoretically indivisible electron could simultaneously

appear in two places. Dirac supervised the first doctorate of Polkinghorne (b. 1930) at Cambridge. Polkinghorne observes, ‘The study of quantum physics teaches one . . . that the world is full of surprises . . . Quantum theory encourages us to keep fluid our conception of what is reasonable; it also teaches us to recognize that there is no universal epistemology . . . Insisting on a naively objective account of electrons can only lead to failure.’[227]

Quantum theory is one important episode in the story of the transformation from an ‘objective’ to an ‘open’ universe. The narrative began with Albert Einstein (1879–1955), passed through Max Born, Niels Bohr (1885–1962), Heisenberg and Dirac to the present day. Polkinghorne elsewhere comments that philosophers have not adequately taken into account ‘these holistic aspects of quantum theory’.[228] Yet elsewhere Polkinghorne refers to ‘a remarkable interplay of contingent chance . . . and lawful necessity . . . [in] a process by which systems of ever-increasing complexity would evolve’.[229]

Numerous other scientists and philosophers endorse Polkinghorne’s approach. Among the scientists, for example, Arthur Peacocke expounds the ‘dynamic newness’ of the universe.[230] Among the philosophers, Richard Swinburne is an incisive critic of Hume, and of those, like J. L. Mackie, who follow Hume.[231] Swinburne argues that there is nothing irrational about believing in revelation, especially since Judaism, Christianity and Islam all make this a primary source of belief and doctrine. Necessarily he again criticizes Hume’s notion of miracle as a ‘violation’ of laws of nature, and draws attention to the complexity of nature and the universe in modern sciences.[232]

Finally, at the level of the ordinary Christian, a Christian may imagine someone following Hume by assuming on the basis of their ‘experience’ up to the present that ‘dead men do not rise from the dead’. But this would be at variance with the belief of millions of Christians that Jesus Christ is a living agent interacting with their lives. The ‘resurrection’, they might say, is the biggest miracle of all. Over the last 50 years Wolfhart Pannenberg (1928–2014) has done more than anyone else to establish the credibility of the resurrection of Jesus in *Jesus: God and Man* (Eng., 1968), *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (1991–8), and other works.[233]

Morality

See also in Part 2, Good and evil, which inevitably overlaps with this discussion. In that section we distinguished among (1) an objective view of the good in

Plato, Aristotle and Aquinas; (2) subjective and utilitarian views in Hobbes, Hume and Bentham; (3) deontological ethics and duty in Kant; (4) virtue ethics in Anscombe and MacIntyre, and (5) 'command ethics' in Mouw and Quinn. Morality cannot escape these categories, as well as the need to take account both of deontology and consequential ethics. *Morality* is often a synonym for *ethics*. Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury (1671–1713), and George Santayana (1863–1952) distinguish them for strictly different reasons. Shaftesbury argued that we have a purely natural capacity to distinguish right and wrong, whereas ethics may be a more intellectual discipline. Santayana also regarded ethics as more rational, whereas morality was closely related to habit or custom. Sometimes 'post-rational' morality may have become an unfortunate legacy of earlier ethical value-systems.

In order to avoid repetition of the 'good and evil' discussion, we begin with a different general classification of types or schools of morality. Most writers distinguish between (1) teleological, naturalist, or self-realization morals or ethics, and (2) deontological or law-based morals. Each has disadvantages. The first type is exemplified in ancient Greek philosophy, neoplatonism, the Cambridge Platonists, and in the evolutionary ethics of Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) and Thomas H. Green (1836–82). Deontological ethics are often associated with the Decalogue (Exod. 20) in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and especially with the moral categorical imperative in Immanuel Kant (1724–1804).

But both categorizations face difficulties. At first sight the utilitarian morality of Hobbes, Hume, Bentham, Mill and Hutcheson seems to relate to self-realization in a social form, but Hutcheson, among others, also regards utilitarianism as ultimate, not necessarily innate. Similarly, Christianity inherits the Decalogue, although Anscombe, Helmut Thielicke (1908–66) and others insist that 'law' is not the primary motivation of the Christian. John Calvin insists on the continuing relevance of the law, but also argues that the basis of moral behaviour for the Christian is *gratitude* for the grace of God. Luther and Calvin, like Kant, underlined the necessity of moral struggle and discipline, yet Luther regarded the law as operating primarily outside the kingdom of God as a safeguard for society as a whole.

It becomes impossible to regard these classifications as clear-cut or watertight divisions. Nevertheless they do indicate two fundamental trends, especially if we select classic exponents of each, for example Socrates and Aristotle, and Immanuel Kant. Socrates regarded 'virtue' as knowledge, and vice as the result

of ignorance. Human nature, this implies, will always do the good, if the issues are fully explained and understood. It might appear that Aristotle (c. 384–322 BC) has an ultimate norm when he defines 'the chief good' as 'that at which all things aim'. But in the end the good promotes 'well-being' (Gk, *eudaimonia*) which is seen in its promotion of the well-being of the city state.

Eudaimonia constitutes for Aristotle the fulfilment of the function for which human beings exist. It ultimately springs from rational self-realization, and from a 'great-minded' character. Human beings have a natural capacity for moral virtues. Aristotle defined it as 'the investigation of the peculiar and characteristic function of man . . . assigned him by nature'.[234] According to Seth, eudaimonism is 'the organization of impulses into rational ends', which results in 'self-mastering and self-consistency'.[235] The good for humans is whatever a person aims at. Even if this does not accord with his immediate wishes; it is still rooted in his nature. In modern thought this aspect accords with T. H. Green. Ethics and morals, he argued, spring out of human development. The good of each individual in moral terms is *self-realization*.

In stark contrast to this Kant insists on the absolute primacy of the moral categorical imperative as the source of moral duty and obligation. He distinguishes between the autonomous and heteronymous will, i.e. between inner and external principles. Morality arises from duty, not from inner nature or calculation of consequences. Intermediate ethical contexts, such as the choice of *means*, may constitute a *hypothetical* imperative. *Ultimate* moral ends arise from the *categorical* imperative, which is absolute. Treat every person, he said, as an end in himself, and never only as a means. We have noted twice in this book Schiller's ironic question: If everything has to be carried out from duty *alone*, is it immoral to do good for *pleasure, or out of love*? These would be, for Kant, optional extras: duty and obligation remain the prime motivation and criterion of a moral act. Accountability and responsibility are not simply to the self, but to the moral law, or to God.

Probably the majority of moral systems occupy a point on the spectrum between Aristotle and Kant. In spite of his anticipating Aristotle about the role of human nature, one of Plato's prime concerns was to overcome the relativism bequeathed by the fifth-century Sophists. Protagoras notoriously declared that the human person was the measure of all things. Ultimately 'the Good' (or goodness) occupies the ideal world of Forms or Ideas, along with Truth and Beauty. Even Aristotle comes near to anticipating the saying of Jesus 'Love your neighbour as yourself' when he says, 'The good person is related to his friend as

to himself'.[236]

Joseph Butler (1692–1752) combines both 'divine command' morality and 'human nature' morality. As an Anglican bishop he said much about God as Creator. But he also said that God had so constituted human beings that the individual 'is, in the strictest and most proper sense, a law to himself. He has the rule of right within: what is wanting is only that he honestly attend to it'.[237] As well as his respect for the ordinances of God and revelation, Butler was concerned for the well-being of the self. The aim of 'self-love' is the production of happiness for the self and society. Butler believed that humankind 'having a moral nature, and moral faculties of perception and of action . . . unavoidably approves some actions . . . and disapproves others . . . from the words *right* and *wrong* . . . whether called conscience, moral reason, moral sense, or divine reason'.[238] Conscience thus has a unique authority within human nature.

This places Butler partly with Aristotle in that his morality reflects human nature, but in another sense with Kant, in that conscience can impel and direct, even if this is internal rather than external. With Kant, he rejects psychological egotism consciously against Thomas Hobbes. He described Hobbes as selfish. The sense of obligation has been put within humankind, although conscience, Butler admitted, is not infallible.

Where should we place utilitarianism in this spectrum? As against Kant, and alongside Aristotle, it is firmly consequential, not deontological. Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806–73) are the widely known advocates of utilitarianism. Bentham argued that nature has placed humanity under the sway of pleasure and pain. The principle of utility subjects everything to these two motives. To regard pleasure as the goal of morality is known as *hedonism*. This goes back to Epicurus (c. 341 – c. 271 BC). Bentham's hedonism was both ethical and psychological. In ethical terms, he argued, pleasure constitutes the only good. But in psychological terms, he also argued that seeking pleasure and avoiding pain determines everything that we do. This is psychological hedonism. 'Pleasure' includes what we eat or touch, and the acquisition of property. 'Ought' enters the discussion more especially in connexion with government: a government *ought* to ensure the conditions of the greatest happiness of the greatest number. In view of the vulnerability of 'the greatest' as a moral criterion, he attempted to establish a scale of pleasures. He entitled his major work *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789).

John Stuart Mill published his *Utilitarianism* in 1861; he held that 'higher'

pleasures were qualitatively different from ‘lower’ pleasures and defended the principle of utility. He argued that his utilitarian ethics were ‘objective’. He also followed Bentham’s psychological hedonism, but also defended the axiom of Socrates that it is ‘better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied’.[239] A common criticism of Mill, however, is that, ‘If the good or pleasure *is* what people aim at, how can it also be what they *ought* to aim at without collapsing *ought* into *is?*’ This sets Mill firmly apart from Kant. Mill, after all, was an empiricist.

Spencer’s evolutionary ethics also firmly belongs to empiricism. On the other hand, while Henry Sidgwick (1838–1900) aims at a morality of self-realization in common with Aristotle, he also rejects empiricism and defends the notion of ‘ought’. Most clearly of all, Christianity believes in the continuity of Old Testament law and New Testament gospel, as Irenaeus (c. 130 – c. 200) and his successors clearly insisted. Hence the Christian tradition would usually *both* reject the notion that ‘command ethics’ cannot be ‘morality’, *and* insist that love and gratitude for grace are an even more primary motivation for it. Christianity also values giving attention to consequential ethics (i.e. consequences for other people and the self) *and* the importance of duty, obligation, motive and deontological morality.

John Rawls (1921–2002) presents a liberal and egalitarian approach in his *A Theory of Justice* (1971). He argues that the concept of *fairness* should take the most prominent position in a liberal democracy.[240] Oliver O’Donovan (b. 1945) is very different in *The Desire of Nations* (1986), *The Ways of Judgment* (2005) and *Self, World and Time* (2013).[241] This last book discusses the relation between ethics and the humanities, especially philosophy and theology. O’Donovan is critical of earlier systems of moral reasoning, and makes new proposals mainly in the light of theology. He stresses the role of faith, hope and love, which he will expound further in the second and third volumes. He looks for ‘a new start, new methods, new goals’ particularly in the light of ‘late modernity’ and Christian foundations.

Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005) especially in *Oneself as Another* (Eng., 1992) and *The Just* (Eng., 2000) has reservations about Kant and moral law, but admits that without Kant morality is in danger of sliding into subjectivism.[242] Too much constraint ‘violates self-integrity’. From Aristotle, he values ‘the ethics of reciprocity’.[243] Solicitude, accountability and responsibility are crucial for self-identity. Merely empirical data are inadequate for moral norms and reasoning. Within this overarching frame, ‘goods’ have an ‘irreducible plurality’.[244] He

rightly retains a balance between contextualism and universalism. As in the example of O'Donovan, his reasoning is complex and detailed. But both thinkers have prime significance today.

Ontological argument

The ontological argument is used not only to support the existence of God, but also to argue for God's being perfect, omnipotent, omniscient or what Alvin Plantinga calls possessing 'maximal greatness'. Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109) provided the classic formulation of the argument in his *Proslogion* (or *Address*).[245] Karl Barth points out that the formulation emerged in the context of prayer and contemplation of God, in which the *Address* was not formally intended to be a 'philosophical proof', but an act of seeking God in worship.[246] Anselm based his prayer on Psalm 27.8: '"Seek his face!" Your face, LORD, do I seek.'

Over the years the ontological argument has invited and received the most sophisticated philosophical debate. In the modern era it has invited formulations of modal logic, i.e. not just descriptive logic concerning propositions or facts, but modal logic concerning the *possibility* of divine existence. Recent reformulations of the arguments have come from Plantinga, Malcolm, Peter van Invagen and Richard Rowe (see Introduction).[247] Meanwhile, J. N. Findlay attempts to argue that if God's 'non-existence must be wholly unthinkable in any circumstance', God's existence becomes senseless. It is merely using the term *exist* in a way which makes no real difference, and therefore is empty.[248]

In his first version of the formulation of the argument Anselm declared, 'We believe that Thou art a Being than whom none greater can be thought.'[249] God 'exists' in a way peculiar to him. Only 'the fool' in Psalm 14.1 would dare say 'There is no God.' But this cannot mean that God exists in the mind of understanding alone, i.e. as a mere concept or thought, because if this were the case 'greater than' would apply only in thought, not reality. God would not be 'greater than' the contents of my mind.

However, a contemporary of Anselm's, a monk called Gaunilo, rejected this argument at once. He argued that he could imagine, or think of, 'the greatest possible island', i.e. one of inestimable beauty, inexhaustible wealth, abundance of delicacies, and so on. But the excellence of the island, he claimed, does not infer that it existed in reality.

Anselm responded by reformulating his argument.[250] He withdrew the phrase

‘than which (or whom) none greater’, to concentrate on what Plantinga has called uniquely ‘maximal greatness’. He distinguished God from things ‘which have a beginning or end or are composed of parts’.[251]

René Descartes (1596–1650) aimed to support this argument, since God, he argued, did not belong to the realm of the empirical, fallible, realm, but to the realm of certainty and perfection. As a mathematician and logician he ascribed to belief in God *a priori* truth, as certain as 2 + 2 = 4, or ‘All bachelors are unmarried’. He argued, ‘Eternal existence pertains to [God’s] nature; [necessary] existence is a perfection; therefore God [necessarily] exists’.[252] He said explicitly, ‘Existence can no more be separated from the essence of God than that the truth that a triangle has three angles which add up to 180° can be separated from the essence of a triangle.’[253]

Ironically this let the cat out of the bag for Kant to formulate the most decisive objection to the argument. The analogy of the triangle is what gives the game away: ‘existence’ was simply true, this showed, *by definition*. The *a priori* approach regards *existence as a predicate*. To say that an object or entity *exists* is not the same kind of statement as asserting that it is *red* or *heavy*. Kant asserted, ‘Being is evidently not a real predicate . . . [i.e.] something that can be added to the conception of a thing.’[254] We should not say, ‘This orange is round and fresh, and it exists.’ Existence cannot be deduced from a formal concept.

Bertrand Russell (1872–1970) developed Kant’s critique convincingly in terms of substituting an *existential quantifier* for ‘exists’. In logical notation *existence* can be bracketed out. Thus the well-known philosophical example ‘The King of France is bald’ (when such a king is non-existent) can be rendered in formal philosophical logic: ‘For at least one king of France, the king of France is bald.’ In the notation of formal logic this would be (∃x) (Fx), using ∃ to denote an existential quantifier.[255]

Norman Malcolm is among those who nevertheless defend the ontological argument.[256] He rejects Anselm’s first formulation. Anselm then argues, he says, that ‘*The logical impossibility of nonexistence* is a perfection’.[257] He also replaces *greatest* by *unlimited*, and then concludes that God ‘cannot come into existence’ and ‘nothing could cause him to cease to exist’.[258] He both ‘necessarily exists’ and ‘exists contingently’. Malcolm then attacks the conclusion of Kant, Russell and Findlay, i.e. that necessary existence is self-contradictory and impossible, and defending Leibniz’s affirmation of the arguments.

Charles Hartshorne, Hans Küng, Alvin Plantinga and William Rowe expound *modal* versions of the argument. Küng and Plantinga admit that the argument

cannot furnish a knock-down *proof*, but in Küng's words, it offers 'food for thought', and shows (with Plantinga) that God's existence as 'the wholly other' is 'logically possible'.[259] Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905–88) also argues that God cannot be inferred from concepts in the world, but is a presupposition for all thought.[260] Plantinga (b. 1932) replaces Anselm's 'conceivable' with 'logically possible'. He concludes, 'It [the argument] established not the truth of theism, but its *rational acceptability*.'[261] He compares it with the logical objections to solipsism: we may not regard these as a knock-down proof, but we know in our hearts that solipsism has not a leg to stand on!

Religious experience

This is a problematic area, for at least three reasons: (1) the difficulty of reaching an agreed definition of *religion*; (2) the pluralism of what might claim to be a *religion*; and (3) the problem of arriving at a *value-neutral* understanding of what requires passionate self-involvement. *Religion* embraces the theistic faiths of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. To what extent do Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Sikhism and tribal or localized religions come under this category? In the *Vedanta* traditions of Hinduism, for example, space and time are often deemed to be illusory. The Ultimate (or 'god') may be beyond form, although in the *Bhagavad Gita* traditions of Hinduism, God is regarded as personal, all-good and all-loving. Sikhism often tries to find common ground between Muslims and Hindus. Some strands of Buddhism believe in an endless cycle of rebirth, while Judaism, Christianity and Islam hold primarily to a linear notion of time and divine purpose, even if there are also cyclical festivals within the year.

Wittgenstein criticized James Frazer's work *The Golden Bough* (1890) for purporting to 'explain' religious differences in different cultures in a way that suggested these were practised by 'men who think in a similar way to himself'; they then looked superficially like 'stupidities'.[262] A similar criticism might be mounted against the assumptions of such nineteenth-century thinkers as E. B. Tylor.

Two works to command wide assent are those of Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (1923), and Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (1923). Both works have universally come to be acknowledged as classics. Rudolf Otto (1869–1937) regarded 'the holy' as the numinous; i.e. it was neither rational nor only sensual.[263] He first rejects 'the bias towards rationalization',[264] and next

introduces the holy or sacred (*das Heilige*).[265] The elements within the numinous are 'creature-feeling', in which to be 'rapt in worship' plays a large part. He acknowledges the value of Schleiermacher's 'feeling of dependence' on God.[266] More than this, this experience can best be described as *mysterium tremendum*, i.e. an experience ranging from 'intoxicated frenzy' through 'grisly horror and shuddering' to experience of the 'beautiful and pure and glorious'.[267] The mystery is inexpressible. It may involve an emotion of fear and awe, or the 'uncanny', as when the angels cried, 'Holy, holy, holy' (Isa. 6.3). It also has an element of 'overpoweringness' and *majestas*.[268] This 'self-depreciation' is seen in the example of Abraham (Gen. 18.27). This involves both 'urgency' and the experience of 'the Wholly Other'.[269] All this includes 'the element of fascination'.[270]

Religious thinkers as diverse as Karl Barth, Paul Tillich and C. S. Lewis all approve of this emphasis on the 'Otherness' of God. They also tend to approve of 'the intimate interpenetration of the non-rational with the rational elements of religious consciousness, like the interweaving of warp and woof in a fabric'.[271] Otto rejects any notion of 'magic', as nothing but 'a suppressed and blurred form of the numinous'.[272] He expounds experiences of the numinous in the biblical writings and in Luther, as well as earliest manifestations and the experience today.

Martin Buber (1878–1965) was a Jewish philosopher, who was compelled to leave Nazi Germany in 1938, when he travelled to Jerusalem and continued his work in the Zionist cause. In his famous classic work *I and Thou* he insisted that our relation to God is *not* one of subject to object, but one of *subject to subject*.[273] The phrase I–Thou does not represent two words, as much as a combined word. Buber distinguished two attitudes to the world: I–Thou is one of *address*, meeting and interaction; I–it is that of the observer or spectator considering impersonal objects in the world. Buber comments, 'The primary words are not isolated words, but combined words. The one primary word is the combination *I–Thou*. The other primary word is the combination I–it; wherein . . . the words *He* or *She* can replace it.'[274] Buber adds that '*it*' is 'bounded by others', but that '*Thou* has no bounds'.[275]

'I–Thou', Buber declares, encourages dialogue, reciprocity, mutuality and respect for the Other. God is no mere 'object' of human thought, but above all One who commands. His former teacher, Wilhelm Dilthey, influenced Buber on the 'thou', with all the hermeneutical implications that follow this (see Part 1, Continental philosophy: *hermeneutics*). I encounter 'Thou' as a *subject*, who

addresses me. I–it, on the other hand, typifies a merely scientific relationship to objects or things. Buber develops his thought further in *Between Man and Man* (1947) and *Eclipse of God* (1952), and finds resonances with the Jewish thinkers Franz Rosenzweig (1886–1929) and Emmanuel Levinas (1906–95). In *Between Man and Man* Buber continues his theme of being addressed, especially by God.[276]

Emil Brunner (1889–1966) takes up these themes in *Truth as Encounter*.[277] Here he discusses idealism, realism and existentialism, and concludes by discussing encounter with the divine as a process. Thus Otto, Buber and Brunner all stress that religious experience is primarily to be understood as address, response and encounter with a personal 'Thou'. Attempts to discuss religious experience in terms of psychological states do not reach the heart of what makes this experience distinctive. It is beyond question that many believers of all faiths have experiences which involve a wide variety of psychological states. But these are merely accompaniments or perhaps channels of what unquestionably lies 'beyond', as something 'Other'. Few religious believers would find the claims of anti-theists about 'projections' or 'power' fully account for their religious experience, however insightful they might be about inauthentic experiences.

Religious knowledge

Strictly speaking, this denotes knowing God, or knowing whom one worships, in contrast to theological knowledge which denotes knowing *about* God. This is because *religion* denotes the stance of a person who is involved as a believer, whereas theology and philosophy denote *reflection on* that relationship. Karl Barth is among many who draw this distinction. But in popular or looser terms, religious knowledge often denotes the epistemological claims that are made by believers or religious people about their beliefs and practices. In schools and education it often denotes simply knowledge about religion.

If, in the stricter sense, religious knowledge avoids *reflective*, *inferential* or *a posteriori* knowledge, it would exclude the traditional arguments for the existence of God (except perhaps the ontological argument, which is *a priori*), and much philosophical reflection. The two avenues of *a priori* knowledge would remain quasi-intuitive knowledge, and perhaps 'basic beliefs', as expounded by Plantinga, Wolterstorff and reformed epistemology. 'Basic belief' however, still remains *rational* belief. Furthermore, Wolfhart Pannenberg rightly stresses that the *justification* of religious belief must be rational, for it to retain

credibility in the public arena. If faith retains no rational grounds, he writes, 'Faith is . . . perverted into blind credulity . . . An unconvincing message cannot attain the power to convince simply by appealing to the Holy Spirit . . . Paul in no way spared himself thinking and arguing.'[278]

Plantinga (b. 1932) argues that rational religious knowledge should be defended against such twentieth-century phenomena as logical positivism, and in the twenty-first century the 'new atheism' of Richard Dawkins (b. 1941) in such books as *The God Delusion* (2006) (see Part 3, Atheism). Plantinga aims to achieve this in *Warranted Christian Belief* (2000) and *Knowledge and Christian Belief* (2014), as well as numerous other books.[279] With Wolterstorff he expounded the process in *Faith and Rationality* (1984).[280] They attack any notion that religious beliefs are unjustified or that they are based solely on inferential reasoning. These beliefs do not depend on the truth of other beliefs for which 'evidence' is cited, but are 'basic beliefs' which stand on their own feet. They are not like the inferential beliefs of Descartes or Locke, which accept 'one proposition on the evidential basis of others'.[281] The wide range of approaches to faith and reason is well exemplified by Louis Pojman in his anthology; he has collected some seventeen diverse approaches, ranging from Pascal and Kierkegaard, through Clifford and James, to Martin and Plantinga.[282]

Plantinga points out that both Aquinas and Calvin believed that human beings know 'in a general and confused way that God exists', because it is 'implanted in us by nature'.[283] These beliefs, like other 'basic beliefs', are arrived at in a more immediate way than *a posteriori* inference.[284] Basic belief, Plantinga asserts, is 'properly basic with respect to warrant . . . *Theistic belief can be properly basic with respect to justification*.'[285] Apologetics or argument begins when basic beliefs need to be defended against attack. Plantinga calls these 'defeaters' or 'defeating propositions'. One example concerns the counter-argument of the problem of suffering or of evil, where the believer is entitled to engage in rational argument to counter-attack.[286]

The section of Pojman's anthology on 'Faith and Reason' enters fully into the picture here. The following seven examples provide a representative example of the range of thinkers whom he considers under this title. He first introduces the debate about *falsification* with reference to Antony Flew, R. M. Hare and Basil Mitchell.[287] (1) The *principle of falsification* became hotly debated in the 1950s and early 1960s following the attack on religious belief by A. J. Ayer and logical positivism. The debate about falsification provoked a backlash from a number of theists, who included Mitchell, Hick, Ramsey and many others. (2) C. S. Lewis

became a popular Christian apologist and literary theorist in the same or earlier era. (3) Earlier, on the non-theist side, W. K. Clifford propounded an evidential thesis in *The Ethics of Belief* (1877). Believing without sufficient evidence, he argued, is immoral. He used the analogy of a shipowner who sent his ship overseas when clearly it was not seaworthy. He was consequently blameworthy when the passengers drowned. He had acted against all the available *evidence*. This became a classic of the 'evidential' view of belief. (4) William James replied in *The Will to Believe* (1897) that one can have a right to believe, even if evidence for the belief is not decisive.

(5) Kierkegaard (1813–55) insisted that if faith could be proved or demonstrated by 'objective' reason, this would no longer genuinely be *faith*. Religious 'knowledge' relates not to reason or to rational argument, but to 'subjectivity' or a passion for the infinite (see Part 3, Fideism). He, above all, attacked the notion of faith as assent to doctrinal propositions.

(6) Norman Malcolm in some respects anticipated Plantinga in insisting that religious beliefs are not derived or inferred from other beliefs. It is the *framework* of our enquiry on which the justification for beliefs depends. Malcolm had been a follower of Wittgenstein, who wrote that a *system* provided the boundaries within which we ask questions and make judgments. Malcolm cites him in his article 'The Groundlessness of Belief'.[288] By 'groundlessness' Malcolm does *not* mean 'irrational'. (7) Michael Martin (1932–2015) is sympathetic to fideism and to Malcolm, but (like Pannenberg) insists that inferences must be drawn by *reason* in the interests of understanding what one believes, and subjecting them to defence or criticism.

Appropriately Pojman ends, again, with Plantinga. Plantinga includes the observation '"A" is properly basic for me only if "A" is self-evident or incorrigible or evident to the senses for me . . . The Christian will of course suppose that belief in God is entirely proper and rational . . . He does not accept this belief on the basis of other propositions.'[289]

In its loosest and most popular sense *religious knowledge* is scarcely distinguishable from *theology*, except that it usually seeks to avoid being intellectualized or doctrinal (hence it may include the study of religious practices), and may extend its scope beyond Judaism, Christianity and Islam. It will, however, certainly include biblical studies, systematic theology, church history, philosophy of religion and ethics, and may also include ethical or liturgical religious practices. It may also include Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism (see Part 3, Religious experience). Such a definition remains too broad

for use in higher education, but often occurs in schools as part of the curriculum.

Religious language

Religious language has been subjected to a variety of criticisms ever since Hobbes and Nietzsche. Most religious believers emphasize that it is *not* a special kind of language, but is ordinary language put to a particular *use*. But if this is so, how can the gap between ordinary language and the religious uses to which it is put seem problematic? Approximately seven kinds of replies, very roughly representing different but overlapping eras, may be distinguished.

(1) The traditional theistic response concerns *analogy*. This was propounded in classic form by Thomas Aquinas (1225–74). He discusses uses of analogy in *Summa Theologiae* I.I, question 13, articles 1–12. It can be argued that no language is adequate to express who and what God is. Hence, Aquinas says, 'No word can be used *literally* of God'.[290] Words can be used neither 'univocally' (i.e. with identical, literal, meaning) nor 'equivocally' (i.e. ambiguously).[291] They may, however, also be used 'analogically, for we cannot speak of God at all except in the language we use of creatures' (art. 5). Analogy suggests 'a certain parallelism between God and creatures'.[292] It is this notion of a kind of 'parallel' which troubled Barth in the twentieth century. He preferred to use 'an analogy of faith', rather than 'an analogy of being'.

(2) There have long been a group of philosophers who expressed incredulity or even cynicism about the *cognitive* validity of religious language. Hobbes expressed some scepticism, while Friedrich Nietzsche attacked it as deception and lies. Nietzsche declared, 'We shall never be rid of God as long as we still believe in grammar.'[293] He said, 'A priest or pope . . . actually lies with every word that he utters.'[294] In the 1930s and 1940s A. J. Ayer (1910–89) mounted an influential attack in his classic book *Language, Truth and Logic* (1936; revised ed., 1946). The core of his argument was the principle of *verification*, as the *criterion of meaning*.[295] He distinguished two types of propositions. *Analytical* statements are *a priori* propositions of logic, mathematics or definition. In effect, they are tautologies. The second type consists of normal empirical, observational or *evidential* propositions. If they cannot be empirically verified, Ayer said in his first edition, they are non-sense, or at very least, 'emotive'. In his second edition he modified this to the principle of *verifiability* or 'verification in principle' (i.e. if they are given the scientific or technological tools to test the verification).[296] Theology, ethics and religion are all eliminated as non-sense by this criterion.

In spite of its enormous influence among positivists, logical positivism was soon attacked by theists and other philosophers. Many saw through it as merely old-fashioned positivism disguised in linguistic dress. It merely pretends to be a serious linguistic theory. H. J. Paton endorsed Evans's comment that the principle of verification is like expecting 'a weighing machine to weigh itself; for it is neither an analytical statement nor an empirical one, inferred from observation'.[297] Another entirely different factor was the insistence of Wittgenstein that far from there being only *two* types of propositions, they were *virtually infinite*.

(3) The debate in linguistic philosophy then shifted from verification to the principle of *falsification* in the 1950s and 1960s. Karl Popper (1902–94) showed that the sciences grow by falsification of hypotheses in *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (Eng., 1959). In philosophy of religion John Wisdom and Antony Flew initiated discussions of falsification with their famous 'Parable of the Invisible Gardener'.[298] (Details are set out in Part 1, Analytic philosophy.) Wisdom, we noted, coined the parable of two people who return to a long-neglected garden after an absence. One argues that it remains sufficiently ordered and cultivated to suggest the work of a gardener; the other disagrees. So they set a series of tests, none of which reveals evidence of a gardener. The sceptic declares that if the gardener is invisible, intangible, inaudible, and so on, what remains of the assertion that a gardener has been at work? This is applied to the alleged ambiguity for evidence of God at work. This example of falsification triggered a long debate in which Frederick Ferré, R. M. Hare, Basil Mitchell, Austin Farrer, and many others took part on both sides. John Hick probably sums up the consensus when he asserts that the existence of God must, in some sense, 'make a difference', if it is to be credible. In linguistic terms it should make a cognitive and conceptual difference.

(4) Following in the wake of the later philosophy of Wittgenstein, Gilbert Ryle and many others focused on *conceptual clarification*. Ryle (1900–76) produced two classic works on the logical grammar of concepts, namely *The Concept of Mind* (1949) and *Dilemmas* (1953).[299] In the first he attacked the mind–body dualism of Descartes (1596–1650), calling it 'the dogma of the Ghost in the Machine'. It rests, he said, on a conceptual and linguistic confusion, which he called 'a category mistake'. It represents the facts of mental life 'as if they belonged to one logical type or category . . . when they actually belong to another'.[300] It is like confusing 'rising tide' and 'rising hopes', as if *rising* were meant in exactly the same way.[301]

In *Dilemmas* Ryle re-examined a number of traditional paradoxes. One was Zeno's paradox of Achilles and the tortoise. Against Zeno's conclusion that change is somehow unreal, Ryle distinguished between the *observer* perspective and the *participant* perspective. Using the analogy of cutting a cake, he drew a contrast between what is involved in 'cutting *off* portions' and 'cutting the cake *into* portions'.[302] (See Part 1, Analytic philosophy.) This 'paradox' is one of several that Ryle shows to be unreal.

The ultimate seminal inspiration behind Ryle and linguistic elucidation was *Ludwig Wittgenstein* (1889–1951), in his later thought. His major ideas are available in *The Philosophical Investigations* (Eng. and Ger., 1958), which represent his thinking mainly from 1936 to 1949.[303] He not only expounded language-*uses* (in contrast to language itself) and the *variety* of language-uses available to us, but he also demonstrated many particular logical and linguistic *clarifications* or 'logical grammar'. One of many fruitful examples for philosophy of religion is the contrast between language about pain and language about love, which he echoes in his *Zettel* (Eng. and Ger., 1967). One can intelligibly say, 'I am in pain – oh, it has gone away now', but one could hardly say, 'I am in love – oh, it has gone away now.'[304] Love, he concludes, is not just an emotion. Otherwise how could love be commanded? Further, he shows that 'I believe' has *performative* force: it is not merely a description of one's state of mind. This conceptual clarification is central to his thought, for he declared, 'Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language.'[305]

(5) *Ian T. Ramsey* (1915–72) made a major contribution to religious language by his work on *models and qualifiers*, first expounded in *Religious Language* (1957).[306] Ordinary words such as *wise*, *good* and *purpose* serve appropriately as *models* drawn from the empirical world; but they can be applied to God with suitable *qualifiers*, as in e.g. *infinitely* wise, *eternal* purpose or *first* cause.[307] He developed these ideas further in *Models for Divine Activity* (1973) and *Words about God* (1971).

(6) Meanwhile work had been carried on concerning *symbol* and *metaphor*. Paul Tillich (1886–1965) had insisted that God is not 'a being' who *exists*, but Being itself, or the Ground of Being. He is also 'Ultimate Concern'. This means that God is beyond description in *cognitive* terms. Religious symbols represent that which is *beyond the conceptual sphere*. For an understanding of *symbol* he draws on Jung. He wrote, 'Every symbol is two-edged. It opens up reality and it opens the soul'.[308]

From the cognitive side, Janet Martin Soskice (b. 1951) produced *Metaphor and Religious Language*.[309] She well demonstrated that metaphors could convey cognitive truth, and were not simply ornamental or illustrative. Earlier work had been undertaken by Max Black and others in *Models and Metaphors* (1962). Black wrote, 'A memorable metaphor has the power to bring two separate domains into cognitive and emotional relation.'[310] Most profoundly of all, Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005) stressed the heuristic, creative and exploratory power of metaphor in *Interpretation Theory* (1976) and *The Rule of Metaphor* (1978).[311]

(7) Following in the steps of John L. Austin, John Searle, François Recanati and many others explored *performative* utterance or *illocutions* to develop more systematic *speech-act theory.* The subject has now become huge for many philosophers and theologians writing on the subject. John L. Austin (1911–60) laid the groundwork for speech-act theory in his book *How to Do Things with Words* (1962), although Wittgenstein, as we noted, had already identified the performative force of 'I believe' and 'we mourn'.[312] Austin first introduced a series of useful classifications between different kinds of performative force: verdictives, which pronounce a verdict; commissives, which express the speaker's commitment; exercitives, which prescribe a sentence, and so on. In each case, Austin says, 'The term "performative" is the performing of an action'.[313] He also develops other terms. He writes, 'An "illocutionary" act [is the] performance of an act *in* saying something, as opposed to the performance of an act *of* saying something', which he calls a 'perlocutionary act'.[314]

Austin reminds us that performative utterances depend on accepted *conventions*. Thus: 'My seconds will call on you' may have had an illocutionary force in years gone by, but not today.[315] He asks, 'Can I baptize a dog?' Or what happens if I say, 'I baptize this infant 2704'?[316] The procedure must also be complete; e.g. someone says, 'I open this library', but the key snaps in the lock.[317] This is where the factual state of affairs which is presupposed becomes relevant: Austin says, 'For a certain performative utterance to be happy, certain statements have *to be true*.'[318] Austin does not advocate a non-cognitive view of language. 'I do' would not be a performative in a wedding service if one of the couples is already married. *Promising* is a clear and favoured example of a speech-act, if the speaker is sincere; it cannot be done vicariously.[319]

Promising is especially relevant to language in religion. *Promise,* for example, is relevant to the biblical covenant. Further, without mentioning the word *performative*, William Tyndale (c. 1494–1536) showed that the biblical writings suggest the performance of at least 14 types of actions, for example acts of

blessing, acts of acquittal, acts of appointment, promissory acts, and so forth.[320] D. D. Evans built on Austin's work in *The Logic of Self-Involvement* (1963), and then John Searle built on and modified Austin's work in a series of more systematic discussions, especially in *Speech Acts* (1969) and *Expression and Meaning* (1979).[321] Searle modified Austin's classifications for example, by replacing 'directive' for 'exercitive'. He then demonstrated suggestively 'the direction to fit' between words and the world respectively in descriptive reports and transformative speech-acts.[322]

I have attempted to expound the significance of this distinction for religious language in such examples as the forgiveness of sins by Jesus, while Nicholas Wolterstorff also applies speech-acts to 'counting as', 'causal efficacy' and promises in *Divine Discourse* (1995).[323] Richard Briggs applies this to forgiveness of sins and confession of faith in *Words in Action* (2001). I have included more material, especially on promising, in *Thiselton on Hermeneutics* (2006), while Dieter Neufeld has explored confession in 1 John in *Recovering Texts as Speech-Acts* (1994).[324]

Revelation

Revelation stands in contrast to human discovery. It denotes the belief that God speaks, and has disclosed himself. He addresses humankind, and has chosen not to remain isolated and silent. In the Book of Genesis God's first act after creation is to address humankind in person. Hence it is not surprising that revelation constitutes a central truth in Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Even in Hinduism different traditions trace their roots to the *Vedas* (c. 1500–800 BC), which have the status of sacred scripture (*sruti*). The 108 texts in Sanskrit of the *Upanishads* (c. 800–500 BC) also count as Vedic Scripture, even if their content is more explicitly philosophical. H. H. Farmer argues that in the theistic religions revelation underlines 'the essentially personal quality' of our relationship with God, and emphasizes 'the disjunction between *revelation* and *discovery*'.[325]

Karl Barth (1886–1968) stresses that Christianity stands or falls with God's self-revelation. Humankind does not construct 'God' by aspiring 'upward' from humanity to God. God first addresses humankind, and calls and redeems human beings. Barth declares, 'For me the Word of God is a *happening*, not a thing; [but] an event . . . a living reality.'[326] He continues, 'God is known through God, and through God alone.'[327] God's 'knowability' is neither a human capacity nor a

human right. Bultmann, Fuchs and Ebeling also speak of revelation as an event or a language event (*Sprachereignis*). It may appear that this excludes philosophical reflection. But as a *response* to address, reflection plays an important part in the process of revelation.

In contrast to what is being called 'a theology of the Word', Wolfhart Pannenberg (1928–2014), and in part Oscar Cullmann (1902–99), focus on revelation *in history*, but history of two kinds. Pannenberg focuses on *public* history.[328] He writes, 'History is the most comprehensive horizon of Christian theology. All theological questions and answers are meaningful only within the framework of history, which God has with humanity . . . and with the whole creation.'[329] He also stresses, 'The one history . . . binds together the eschatological community of Jesus Christ and ancient Israel.'[330] This theme repeats one of the key contentions of Irenaeus in the second century.

Cullmann and the school of 'biblical theology' emphasized the 'sacred history' (*Heilsgeschichte*) of Israel and the Church. He expounds these notions especially in two books.[331] This twofold division may be more apparent than real. For example, John Webster stresses the uniqueness of the biblical writings, but in his book *The Domain of the Word* (2012) he argues that the medium of human words does not undermine 'God's providential ordering of all things'.[332]

There is an almost infinite gradation between theologians about what revelation amounts to. James Barr has argued that the term *communication* would more accurately reflect biblical thought than the term *revelation*, which, he argues, is more limited.[333] F. Gerald Downing argues that the term *revelation* occurs relatively rarely in the biblical writings.[334] Thomas Aquinas distinguished between (1) revelation in the active sense of *God's deed* in imparting his self-communication and (2) the objective sense of a *deposit of truths* which resulted from it. He cites some relevant passages of Scripture; for example, Hebrews 1.1–2: 'God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son.'

So far much of our discussion has concerned the statements of theologians. But where does philosophy fit in? Three areas may clearly be identified where philosophical thinking and argument are positively needed.

(1) Plantinga makes it plain that although theistic beliefs and understandings of revelation may take the form of 'basic' truths which are independent of inference, nevertheless what he calls 'defeaters' (objections to the rational coherence of Christian faith) must be examined and debated.[335] Some 'defeaters' concern alleged contradictions within Scripture; others concern such issues as

the problem of suffering and evil; still others concern the influence of postmodernism and pluralism. As Pannenberg also insists, the public credibility of Christian truth-claims arising from revelation must be discussed fully, without special pleading. Irenaeus and the early Christian apologists make this same plea.

(2) If, as Calvin and Aquinas claim, initially humankind reads 'confused' intimations about God and his existence, it is part of the work of philosophy *to clarify these* against the background of *other traditions and branches of knowledge*. This should not only be, as Schleiermacher too readily argued, an examination of religious feelings. This would pay inordinate attention to the psychology of religion or to sociology, while revelation concerns communication from the transcendent God, not merely human aspirations to discover God.

(3) The era of *conceptual elucidation* in philosophy reflects the need to unravel misleading uses of logical grammar and language. Beliefs are sometimes formulated in confused forms. Believers are still frequently seduced by unhelpful uses of language and concepts. Earlier, Austin Farrer and more recently Wolterstorff, among many others, have pointed to the sheer numbers of theistic believers, while there may also be confusions in the expressions of their beliefs. Differences of interpretation and historically relative understandings must be clarified and assessed.[336] Wolterstorff's entire book *Divine Discourse* shows that it is entirely rational and intelligible to claim that God speaks. His explanation about deputized discourse helps to explain how the divine voice is mediated through human agents.

Different philosophical traditions make this same point. In the book *Speak That I May See Thee*, Harold Stahmer, with the help of Walter Ong, shows how *irrational* it would be *not* to expect God to address humankind in language.[337] Johann Georg Hamann (1730–88) also shows how speech is involved in the ultimate inseparability of human beings from the divine. The Jewish writers Martin Buber (1878–1966) and Franz Rosenzweig (1886–1929) argue, 'Revelation breaks into the world and transforms creation'.[338]

Many other religions make similar comments. In Islam, al-Kindi viewed the Qur'an as a paramount source of revelation. In Judaism, Moses Maimonides (1135–1204) affirmed revelation in the Hebrew Bible. In Hinduism, the *Upanishads* regard Vedic scripture as sacred, as we noted above. In the Catholic tradition, Karl Rahner (1904–84) affirms that the self-communication of God 'reaches the goal and climax in Jesus Christ'.[339] He cites Isaiah 55.8, 'My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,' to emphasize

the need for God's self-disclosure. Similarly Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905–88) in *The Glory of the Lord* addresses the necessity of revelation. He traces God's revelation of grace (Heb., *chesed*) through Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah and other prophets.[340]

On one side, the virtually united testimony of believers from a variety of traditions and religions all points to the need for revelation. God is not silent, but addresses humankind. On the other side, areas of fallibility and differences of interpretation abound. On these issues, philosophical reflection and philosophical clarification of language remain urgently required.

Part 3

KEY TERMS

Aesthetics (originally from Gk, *aisthēsis*, *sensation*) has denoted since the eighteenth century the study and theory of beauty, especially beauty in art. Plato associated beauty with symmetry and due proportion; Plotinus, with radiance or splendour. Aquinas regarded it as what gives pleasure to sight. Hegel viewed it as the communication of truth in sensuous form. Croce associated it with imagination; and Tolstoy, with the expression of emotion. After Hegel and Schlegel it increasingly denoted the philosophy of art. Kant included taste in his concept of aesthetics: it was not merely what is agreeable. The Catholic theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar follows Augustine in expounding God as the supreme beauty.

Agnosticism (from the Gk, *a-gnōsis*, *no knowledge*) must be distinguished from *atheism*. Atheism is the denial of God; agnosticism is the denial of *knowledge* of God. At first sight it seems less dogmatic and more open than atheism, since 'knowledge' could be positive or negative. But in practice it tries to short-cut the paradox of scepticism: How can I know that I cannot know? It simply insists that we *cannot* know. It is thus a denial of revelation, as well as the ability to draw inferences from what we know about the world, including other minds. T. H. Huxley (1825–95) is said to have coined the term *agnosticism* to denote the suspension of belief in God. It assumes that God is unknowable.

Alienation signifies estrangement or separation. It has particular uses in philosophy and in theology. In his economic and social philosophy Karl Marx (1818–83) used it in 1844 to denote the reduction of human beings to the status of property which could be owned or exploited, thereby separating one person from another. In any social and political philosophy it may represent antagonism between employers and workers, parents and children, or husband and wife. In theology the apostle Paul distinctively argued that humanity was alienated from God, and used the opposite term 'reconciliation' to denote the restoration of a close relationship of harmony between God and humanity.

Aristotelianism is the tradition of philosophy which is derived from Aristotle (c. 384–322 BC). Aristotle contributed massively to logic, to metaphysics and to ethics. He believed in the 'ordered' structure of the world, and laid the groundwork for natural theology. He studied at Plato's Academy for 20 years, and was tutor to Alexander the Great. In contrast to Plato's theory of Forms or Ideas, he began with the observation of particular objects, drawing inferences from objects (*a posteriori*; see Part 1, Empiricism). On causality he regarded

causes as being of four different types: material, efficient, formal and final. He inferred a Prime Mover or Uncaused Cause and immediate causes from the fact of caused causes within the world. Aristotelianism was influential not only in Greece, but in Islam through al-Kindi, al-Farabi and Averroes; in Judaism through Moses Maimonides; and in Christianity through Thomas Aquinas. Kant and Hegel drew on his teleology. In ethics Aristotle's emphasis on virtue (Gk, *aretē*, and *eudaimonia*, *well-being*) influenced twentieth-century virtue ethics, in contrast to deontology (or duty, as in Kant), or consequentialism or utilitarianism (as in Bentham and Mill). Value is the mean or centre of balance between two vices; for example, courage is the virtue between cowardice and rashness. Virtue ethics is influential today through Alasdair MacIntyre. Aristotle's logic includes his distinctive formulation of the syllogism as well as underlying the beginnings of mathematical logic in the eighteenth century. Many have regarded Aristotle as the most influential philosopher in the ancient world, if not in all history.

Aseity denotes an order of being that is 'from itself' (Lat., *a se esse*), i.e. independent of any cause beyond itself. It usually denotes the unique almightiness of God or Allah as Prime Mover. Thus it stands in contrast to all contingent or finite beings, or entities which God has created. In Paul Tillich's philosophical theology God is called Being-itself.

Atheism denotes the denial of the proposition that God exists. *Avowed* atheism asserts that God does not exist, and is often called theoretical atheism. *Practical* atheism assumes that the existence or non-existence of God makes no practical difference in life. Practical atheism goes back to the dawn of history, and is instantiated in 'the fool' in Psalm 14.1. Epicurus (341–270 BC), Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) and Voltaire (1694–1778) were usually regarded as practical atheists. Avowed atheism tended to emerge in the late eighteenth century with the French Enlightenment, for example in Paul von Holbach (d. 1789). In modern times Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–72), Karl Marx (1818–83) and Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) represent probably the most explicit of the classic atheists, even if today Richard Dawkins (b. 1941) and others are among the new brand of militant atheists who combine Darwinism with genetic theory (e.g. in *The Blind Watchmaker* (1986) and *The God Delusion* (2006)). In the case of Feuerbach, Marx and Freud, God is allegedly a human projection: in Feuerbach, a projection of an objectified Infinity; in Marx, a socio-economic device to serve the oppression of the proletariat; and in Freud, a psychological projection of a figure who is both punitive conscience (superego) and love. Counter-arguments from

Christian believers include the work of Jürgen Moltmann, Hans Küng, Wolfhart Pannenberg and Paul Ricoeur.

Causality has traditionally been defined as the necessary antecedent of its effects. Aristotle (c. 384–322 BC) distinguished between four types of cause. In the case of a sculpture or statue, for example, the *material* cause was its matter (Gk, *hylē*, e.g. marble); the *efficient* cause (Gk, *archē tēs kineseōs*) is the impact of the sculptor's tool; the *formal* cause (Gk, *ousia, being*) is the design-pattern or style; and the *final* cause (Gk, *telos, end* or *goal*) is the purpose for which the sculpture or statue has been made. David Hume (1711–76) argued that causality cannot strictly be *observed* empirically; all we can observe as *constant conjunction*. Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) regarded causality is an *a priori* category of the mind, which imposes understanding and *order* on what it perceives. Gottfried Leibniz (1646–1716) defined causality in mental terms as 'the Principle of Sufficient Reason'. More recently it is stressed that causality is not a *prescriptive* law, but a *descriptive* one, or even a progress report up to the present. In the cosmological argument for the existence of God, it is crucial to distinguish between caused causes in the world and God as Uncaused Cause (see Part 2, Cosmological argument).

Contingency applies to objects which might or might not exist, and to propositions which might or might not be true. It stands in contrast to what is logically *necessary*. The classic example in philosophy is the contingent proposition, 'It is raining', which depends on the meteorological situation of the day. By contrast, a necessary proposition would be 'The sum of the angles of a triangle amounts to 180°.' The latter is true in terms of logic, definition and necessity, and is not dependent on a given situation. For theists, all finite reality is contingent, and dependent on the will and providence of God.

Creationism denotes the belief that God created the universe through specific acts of divine creation. Often (but not always) it goes hand in hand with a literalist interpretation of Genesis 1.1—2.25. In the 1920s American creationism contested scientific theories, in the wake of fundamentalism. Most Christians, however, believe that God works through natural processes. Medical healing offers one example. Virtually all biblical scholars argue that Genesis 1—2 is not intended to present a strictly chronological account of creation. For example, 'light' is created (Gen. 1.3, 5) *before* the creation of the sun and the moon (1.14–18). Even John Calvin regarded the emphasis in Genesis as falling mainly upon

God's providence.

Critical realism asserts the existence of the external world, as simple realism does. Nevertheless it is not to be equated with the 'naive' realism of the empiricists, since it accords some conditioning by the mind. However, it also rejects the role of the mind in constructing and ordering reality, as in Kant and Fichte. Most of all, critical realists reject positivism, as if the mind knows only brute facts. Critical realism also rejects value-free enquiry. Critical realists seek to avoid sheer representationalism. They insist that there are mind-dependent aspects of knowledge of the external world.

Deconstruction seeks to find meaning *beyond* the actual words of a text. According to one of the greatest exponents of deconstruction, Jacques Derrida (1930–2004), reading and writing do not merely replicate, stabilize or embody a text; this would be 'logocentrism'. Often reading may *undermine* a text. The conscious text, he says, is 'not a transcription'; it is 'a weave of pure traces' (*Writing and Difference*, 1967). The deeper meaning is usually 'deferred'. Kevin Vanhoozer argues that the meaning is deferred endlessly, and that this ultimately destroys the text itself. It is unashamedly a postmodern movement.

Deism, in contrast to theism, expresses the belief that God cannot and does not intervene in the affairs of the world. It flourished in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Its origins began with Lord Edward Herbert of Cherbury (1583–1648), who believed in 'natural religion'. John Toland expounded deism in *Christianity Not Mysterious* (1696), and Matthew Tindal (1657–1733) expounded it in *Christianity as Old as Creation* (1730). It is rationalist, and rejects special revelation, and the notion of intercourse with God. Thomas Carlyle attacked it as promoting 'an absentee God, sitting idle . . . at the outside of the universe and seeing it go' (1834). It regarded divine action in the world as fictitious; such actions seemed to the deists to imply that God's creation was imperfect, and needed successive improvements.

Determinism denotes the belief that whatever occurs in the world has already been determined by antecedent causes or conditions. One version, occasionalism, ascribes all prior causes to God, making God directly responsible for all occurrences and states of affairs in the world. Nicolas Malebranche (1638–1715), French philosopher and Catholic priest, insisted that occasionalism followed from the sovereignty and omnipresence of God. Baruch Spinoza (1632–77) believed that determinism was a necessary inference from his

pantheism, while lack of belief in determinism was an illusion. Many Islamic philosophers promoted determinism. ‘Soft’ determinism allows for ‘compatibilism’. This is the claim that determinism does not conflict with belief in human free will. ‘Hard’ determinism (e.g. in Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) and Pierre Laplace (1749–1827)) excluded free will. J. L. Mackie and others hold that action can be both free and predictable. Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle in quantum mechanics (c. 1930) has suggested broader new directions for the debate. Most philosophers today reject the notion of a ‘closed’ future.

Dialectic originally referred broadly to conversation or dialogue, but more strictly regards logical processes as serving *exploration* rather than simply *assertion* or demonstration. It often seeks to move beyond paradox or contradiction. The desire to move beyond thesis and antithesis was initially formulated by Johann Fichte (1762–1814), and was more fully developed by Georg Hegel (1770–1831). Hegel believed that the dialectical process ‘raises’ (Ger., *erheben*) and ‘sublates’ (*aufheben*) finite entities into a ‘higher’ synthesis. The term *dialectic*, however, emerged still earlier in Zeno of Elea (490–430 BC), with his famous paradox of Achilles and the tortoise, and in Socrates (c. 470–399 BC), Plato (c. 428–348 BC) and Aristotle (c. 384– 322 BC). In modern times, dialectic featured in Kierkegaard (1813–55) as part of his ‘indirect communication’. Marx and Engels took over the term from Hegel for their philosophy of history, which they called dialectical materialism.

Dualism takes more than one form. In most cases it concerns the dualism between mind and body, where the dualism inherited from Descartes and others has, unfortunately, become popular and widespread. Gilbert Ryle (1900–76) proposed a solution in his classic work, *The Concept of Mind* (1949). He deliberately parodied the Cartesian dogma as ‘the dogma of the Ghost in the Machine’, which, he said, ‘represents facts of mental life as if they belonged to the one logical type’ (p. 17). Biblical scholars have increasingly rejected such dualism, stressing the unitary relationship between mind and body. The other main form of dualism is to regard acts of God and events in the world as two separate categories. Such an approach tends to exaggerate the difference between ‘natural’ and ‘supernatural’ events, as if God never chose to act directly through natural processes. Thus some regard miracles of healing as utterly separate from God’s use of medical means.

Empiricism: see Part 1.

Enlightenment, the (Ger., *Aufklärung*) was first explicitly defined by Immanuel Kant (1724–1804). He defined it as ‘man’s exodus from his self-incurred tutelage’, i.e. his tutelage to traditions, authorities and other people’s opinions (Kant, ‘What Is the Enlightenment?’ (1774, p. 17). Estimates of its dates vary. In England the Enlightenment is said to begin with deism in the seventeenth century; in France, with the encyclopedists led by Denis Diderot in the eighteenth century; and in Germany, with Reimarus (1694–1768) and Kant. Its positive impact was to encourage the use of reason and scientific method; its negative impact was to encourage the notion of a materialist world-view (see below, Rationalism).

Epistemology (from Gk, *epistēmē, knowledge*) denotes theories of knowledge. Before Kant, it explored such questions as ‘How can we know?’ and ‘What can we know?’ These traditionally evoked the responses of empiricism, rationalism and pragmatism. After Kant, it also included the *transcendental* question ‘How is knowledge *possible*?’ This also included exploring the very *nature and limits* of knowledge. Epistemology has become a subdiscipline of philosophy in contrast to ontology (the exploration of reality) and ethics.

Essence (from Lat., *essentia*, *esse*, *to be*) usually denotes the permanent, fixed and characteristic property of an entity, in contrast to its existence, appearance or partial aspects. Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology concerns especially the exploration of essences. But a philosophical tradition from Kierkegaard, through a number of existentialists, up to post-structuralism and postmodernism, suspects ‘essences’ as being illusory and often misleading. Wittgenstein thought that ‘essences’ misled us about language, in contrast to ‘particular cases’.

Eternity stands in contrast to decay and death. It can be defined in any of four ways. (1) Many have defined eternity in terms of *timelessness*. Parmenides, Plato, some streams in Hindu philosophy and some modern philosophers have opted for this. But Oscar Cullmann, Richard Swinburne and others insist that this would exclude continuing notions of purposive action and sequence, which must be included among biblical notions of the living God. (2) Some have suggested the notion of *infinitely extended time*. But this notion is anthropomorphic. Further, as Augustine observes, God did not create the world *in* time, but *with* time. Time-as-we-know-it is part of finite creation. (3) Many follow the classic formulation of Boethius (c. 480–525) that eternity denotes ‘the complete possession *all at once* (Lat., *totum simul*) of our ultimate life’. (4) Others have

more recently urged that it is possible to conceive of *additional dimensions or concepts of time or eternity* to those that we might imagine. This becomes plausible and compelling in view of a diversity of concepts of time both in the humanities and in the sciences. Literary theorists have developed a concept of narrative time in contrast to chronological time; philosophers have explored subjective time; scientists explore time in relation to the speed of light, especially for astronauts. This may be incomprehensible to us now, just as a third dimension would have been incomprehensible to those who could conceive only of two dimensions of reality. Probably the majority of philosophers would favour 3, but there is much to be said for 4 and perhaps little to be said for 1 and 2.

Ethics embraces at least four or five distinct traditions. It includes (1) *deontology* (or the ethics of duty and obligation, notably as in Kant); (2) *consequentialism and utilitarianism* (notably as in Bentham and Mill); (3) *intuitionism* (that *good* cannot be analysed, notably as in G. E. Moore); and (4) *virtue ethics* (notably as in Aristotle, Aquinas and recently in Alasdair MacIntyre). If more than one of these approaches can be combined, this is all to the good. (5) In *specifically Christian* ethics, ethical behaviour also constitutes a *response of gratitude* to the grace of God, as in John Calvin.

Evolution is popularly identified with the evolutionary theories of Charles R. Darwin (1809–82). Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) popularized the slogan ‘the survival of the fittest’, and T. H. Huxley (1825–95) regarded human beings as biomechanistic systems or, in effect, the neurophysiological entities of behaviourism. Most theologians and philosophers of religion, however, do not regard natural evolution as incompatible with purposive theism. F. R. Tennant (1886–1957) concluded in his *Philosophical Theology* (1930), ‘Gradualness of construction is in itself no proof of the absence of external design’ (vol. 2, p. 84). In more recent ‘neo-Darwinism’, evolutionary theories are combined with issues in genetics, as in Richard Dawkins (see Part 2, Evolution, and above, Atheism).

Existence appears to have a simple, common-sense, meaning, but in philosophy this is not the case. Paul Tillich restricted *exist* to contingent objects or entities, and declared, ‘To argue that God exists is to deny him’ (*Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, p. 227). Plato considered that essences or Forms lie beyond the realm of everyday empirical objects, which merely *exist*. Further, Bertrand Russell rightly argued that in logic *existence* is not a quality or predicate, but needs to be bracketed out from among other attributes by the use of existential quantifiers.

John Hick regarded *exist* as describing what 'makes a difference' in thought or practical life. Martin Heidegger restricted *exist* to mere objects in the world, in contrast to the being-there (Ger., *Dasein*) of human beings.

Fideism is usually used in a pejorative sense to denote the view that religious beliefs cannot be tested by reason or by criteria external to those beliefs. Kierkegaard (1813–55) clearly falls into this category. More controversially, the term is often applied to Tertullian (c. 150–225) and to Karl Barth (1886–1968). Barth insists on the primacy of divine self revelation: 'God is known by God alone,' and those to whom he wills to reveal himself. Most thinkers who believe in revelation also consider arguments which may offer rational corroboration of their belief. Wolfhart Pannenberg (1928–2014) and Alvin Plantinga (b. 1932) emphatically believe in God's self-revelation, but equally emphatically believe in the use of reason, logic and argument, especially in considering objections to religious belief.

Foundationalism denotes a set of beliefs which are considered to be *self-evident* either from reason (with many rationalists) or from the experience (with many empiricists). The key point is that this stands in contrast to beliefs which depend on a *chain of inferences* from other beliefs. In 'reformed epistemology' these are called 'basic' or 'immediate' beliefs, in contrast to inferred or mediate beliefs. Classical foundationalism occurs with René Descartes (1596–1650) on the rationalist side. He attempted 'to build upon a foundation that is wholly my own' (*Discourse on Method*, p. 38). He sought to 'demolish an old house', i.e. of inferred ideas (p. 50), and formulated the aphorism 'I think, therefore I am' (Lat., *cogito ergo sum*) as 'absolutely indubitable' (p. 53). Many argue that John Locke (1632–1704) appeals to 'sense-experience' in a parallel way. In strong or classical foundationalism, reasons for belief have come to an end.

Hermeneutics denotes the theories and the art of interpretation. It is applied especially to written texts, or sometimes to social institutions, which belong to another time and culture. (See *hermeneutics* in more detail in Part 1, Continental philosophy.)

Humanism at its broadest denotes a philosophical and ethical attitude that emphasizes the value and agency of human beings, both individually and collectively. But historically the term has been used differently to denote different meanings. In fifteenth-century Renaissance Europe it denoted an intellectual and educational movement which followed Lorenzo Valla in textual

analysis or philology. It used the slogan ‘back to the sources’, and Erasmus, and to some extent, Luther and Melanchthon, were humanists in this particular sense. Nevertheless since the nineteenth century it has become increasingly associated with rationalism and secularism. In the twentieth century it often denotes an anti-theist stance, in which humankind is thought to be all-sufficient. Auguste Comte (1789–1857) advocated positivist philosophy and ‘the worship of humanity’.

Idealism denotes that school of philosophers which regards ideas or the mind as more primarily constitutive of reality than the material world. Clearly rationalists, who include Leibniz (1646–1716), are idealists. It may be less obvious, however, that the classical British empiricists, Locke, Berkeley and Hume, were also idealists, because ‘experience’ filters ideas into the mind. In ancient Greek philosophy Plato (c. 428–348 BC) regarded Ideas or Forms as characterizing reality, in contrast to ‘copies’ or images which are only appearances. Apart from the British empiricists, Kant (1724–1804), Fichte (1762–1814), Hegel (1770–1831) and Schelling (1775–1854), feature as leading idealists. The label is so broad that it may sometimes seem overgeneralizing.

Immutability is usually applied to God, and denotes the assertion that God is *changeless*. In Plato it is implied by God’s changeless perfection in the world of Forms, in contrast to the changing properties of the contingent, imperfect, world. Similarly Thomas Aquinas inferred divine immutability from his belief that God is both ‘simple’ and ‘perfect’ (*Summa Theologiae*, I.I, qu. 3, art. 4, and qu. 9). He quotes Malachi 3.6, ‘I change not’, and asserts, ‘Only God is altogether unchangeable; creatures can all change’ (*Summa Theologiae*, I.I, qu. 9, art. 2; Lat. and Eng., vol. 2, pp. 130–1). Change would allegedly imply lack of perfection in some prior state. On the other hand, *change* must be defined more carefully. God does not change in character or promise: this would undermine his faithfulness. But in many other respects an immutable God would be lifeless and have no purposes, whereas the biblical writings constantly stress that God is the living God. Swinburne rightly argues that an immutable God would be disengaged from time, temporal succession and purpose (*The Coherence of Theism*, 1977, pp. 212–15). God is in continuous interaction with the world and with people. A ‘perfect’ baby may change to become a ‘perfect’ adult; but in applying this analogy to God we must avoid undue anthropomorphism. Pannenberg, Moltmann and Barth agree that order, purpose and succession are more important than static, timeless, immutability.

Impassibility in relation to God denotes the doctrine that God is incapable of suffering. In effect, this has been the orthodox tradition of the Christian church in the patristic, medieval and Reformation eras until the late nineteenth century. The term *impassibility*, however (from the Lat., *passio*, *suffering*, and *passibilis*, *capable of suffering*), may mean two or three distinct things. In philosophical theology it denotes the capacity to be acted upon *externally* or from without, and only secondarily the feeling or experience of pain. In this first sense, most agree that God *is* impassible: nothing can thwart his will. But in the second sense, there has been a strong reaction *against* the notion of impassibility. While the Greek fathers asserted, 'God is impassible, free from anger, destitute of desire' (e.g. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 4.23), in the late twentieth century Jürgen Moltmann, Eberhard Jüngel and others repudiated this doctrine. In 1980 Moltmann wrote, 'A God who cannot suffer cannot love either; a God who cannot love is a dead God' (*The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* (London: SCM, 1981), p. 38). God shares fully in the pain of the cross of Jesus. Paul Fides also published *The Creative Suffering of God* (Oxford: OUP, 1988). More than a technical creedal formulation is at stake here.

Linguistic analysis is now an older, perhaps slightly dated, term often associated with logical positivism and early Oxford philosophy, to denote a logical analysis of language. Nowadays the term *linguistic philosophy* tends to be used in its place, especially in view of Wittgenstein's critical comments about the alleged futility of 'analysis'. Gilbert Ryle spoke of conceptual analysis. At all events this term concerns the relation between uses of language and their underlying logic. (See Part 1, Analytic philosophy.)

Logic: formal logic determines valid inferences from one proposition or propositions to others, based upon the relations between the propositions. One of the earliest formulations was Aristotle's system of *propositions* and the syllogism. This remains a sub-area within modern logic. Leibniz (1646–1716) saw the need for a logical notation that transformed *sentences* into logical *propositions*, and which demonstrated their logical *form*. With the development of existential and universal quantifiers, a second area of *predicate calculus* emerged. Finally, modal logic emerged to demonstrate logical *possibilities*.

Materialism takes more than one form, but generally denotes a theory of reality in which only material objects or physical processes are judged to exist. It stands in contrast to idealism and to dualism. Behaviourism constitutes a psychological

version of materialism, which is associated especially with B. F. Skinner (1904–90). Positivism in philosophical and social forms of materialism is associated especially with Auguste Comte (1798–1857). It dates back to the atomistic materialism of some ancient Greek philosophy, and can then be traced through Diderot and the French Enlightenment, and the dialectical materialism of Marxist-Leninist philosophy, to the aggressive materialism of Richard Dawkins and the 'new atheists', who deny any spiritual reality to God or to human beings.

Metaphor draws on ordinary language to extend its established and conventional meaning by symbol or analogy to express more than 'literal' language could convey. Max Black provides a classic definition. He wrote, 'A memorable metaphor has the power to bring two separate domains into cognitive and emotional relation by using language directly appropriate to the one as a lens for seeing the other' (*Models and Metaphors*, 1962, p. 236). Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005) endorses this interactive account as a way of seeing and understanding things creatively. Metaphors as literary ornamentation have little significance for philosophy. Janet Martin Soskice has shown the power of metaphor to make cognitive truth-claims in science as well as in philosophy (1985). Negative evaluations of the seductive power of metaphors to produce misleading myths have been promoted by Nietzsche and Derrida. But the use of models with appropriate qualifiers has been effectively defended by Ian T. Ramsey (1957 and 1963).

Metaphysics as a philosophical term has its origins in the classification of Aristotle's works that came 'after' (Gk, *meta*) his *Physics* in the list of works. The term generally denotes philosophical systems which address the nature of reality, with the exception of materialism. They seek to distinguish what is ultimately real from everyday *appearances* of reality. Thus F. H. Bradley (1846–1924) produced the book *Logic, Appearance and Reality*. Positivists generally reject metaphysics as purely speculative. But questions about God, being and becoming, causality and mind cannot readily be excluded from authentic philosophy. Ontology (theories about reality), epistemology (theories about knowledge) and ethics remain the three traditional areas of philosophical enquiry.

Mind is intimately related to the brain. Yet this does not imply a physiological account of the mind. Hume regarded the mind as 'nothing but a bundle for collection of different perceptions' (*A Treatise of Human Nature*, 1, 4, para. 6).

Descartes was no more satisfactory, postulating a sharp dualism between mind and body. C. A. Campbell has robustly replied to Hume to establish a stable core to the self (*On Selfhood and Godhood*, 1957). Gilbert Ryle (1900–76), in *The Concept of Mind* (1949), has decisively replied to Descartes. A. M. Turing (1912–54) regarded the human mind as an abstract computing device akin to machine intelligence. Others have explored continuities and discontinuities with intelligence in chimpanzees (cf. Malcolm Jeeves, *The Emergence of Personhood*, 2016). Arguably either of these two directions might potentially amount to reductionism. A more positive stance is provided by Paul Ricoeur in *Oneself as Another*.

Modernism (or Modernity) is often dated between the nineteenth century and the end of the Second World War in 1945, or up to the present. It is not to be confused with *modern*, which sometimes stands in contrast to medieval and post-Reformation. In philosophical theology, modern thought is associated with Kant and Schleiermacher. Catholic Modernism is associated with Alfred Loisy (1857–1940). In Protestant thought it is associated with a whole-hearted acceptance of (often radical) biblical criticism and a relative indifference to historic Church doctrine. In philosophy some associate it with the 'philosophy of action' in Maurice Blondel (1861–1949), or alternatively with the pragmatism of William James (1842– 1910). It has no agreed programme, however, although on the whole it sits light with tradition and history, in favour of the spirit of the current age. It also stands in contrast to postmodernism.

Monism regards all reality as a unity, in contrast both to dualism and pluralism. It constitutes the philosophical parallel to pantheism in religious thought. Thinkers as different from each other as Parmenides, Spinoza and Bradley have all shared the term. Originally Christian Wolff introduced the term in contrast to mind–body dualism. In Hindu philosophy the *Advaita Vedanta* tradition is monist.

Monotheism denotes the belief in one God, in contrast to polytheism which usually denotes belief in a plurality of deities. Judaism, Christianity and Islam are the main monotheistic religions. Indeed many Islamic thinkers regard Christianity as compromising monotheism by holding to a doctrine of the Holy Trinity. But from the era of the early Church until today Christians deny that the belief in the Trinity constitutes tritheism. Paul emphatically embraces monotheism, which he inherited from pre-Pauline formulations (1 Cor. 8.4), and

both Gregory of Nazianzus (c. 330–90) and Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335–95) insist that *three* is not a *numerical* description when applied to the Trinity (Gregory of Nyssa, *Not Three Gods*), and asserts that God is *one*. *Three* may be applied as a numeral only to finite people or objects. Normally monotheists believe in the one God as transcendent and active, since monotheism also stands in contrast to pantheism and deism.

Mysticism denotes a *contemplative* consciousness of God, which is characterized by worship, adoration and meditation, and above all an experience of *immediacy*. It stands in contrast to wholly or mainly cognitive and rational approaches to God. Not surprisingly it is evaluated both positively and negatively. Many medieval mystics produced retrospective records of their experiences, including Julian of Norwich (1342–1416) in her *Revelations of Divine Showings*; Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153) in *On the Love of God*; Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179), and many others. Many written prayers from mystics can be inspiring. But on the negative side, Luther criticized this regular emphasis on journeys or ladders 'up' to God through meditative prayer, in contrast to reliance on God's free gift of grace 'downward'. Such religious practices did not guarantee access to God through Christ. Many expressed concern about reliance on *feelings*, and imagined 'pictures' or 'visions', which (as Wittgenstein observed) can be seriously misinterpreted or at least variously interpreted. Walter Hilton (c. 1343–96) was a mystic who wrote *The Scale of Perfection*, but also provided judicious safeguards against mystical excesses, including the need for 'study in Holy Scripture' (ch. 4). At best mysticism may provide examples of 'burning love' (Hilton, ch. 7), but at worst offer a highly subjective view, and a trend towards the dangers of pantheism.

Myth was defined by David Strauss as ideas expressed in the form of narrative. They allegedly convey what is believed to be true within a given community. Thus stories about deities in ancient Greece were once believed to be true in an earlier era, but not today. Myths are usually about deities, whereas legends concern human heroes. Emil Brunner regarded all myths as incompatible with monotheism. Definitions of myth vary hugely and remain highly debatable and controversial. Rudolf Bultmann notoriously regarded large portions of the Gospels as mythological, and proposed 'de-objectifying' or 'interpreting' them in an existentialist programme of demythologizing. He has met with fierce criticism, including the accusation of confusing myth with analogy and symbol. In Britain the philosophical theologian John Macquarrie and the philosopher

Ronald Hepburn are especially convincing in their criticisms. On balance, more is gained by avoiding such a controversial term than by attempting to use it.

Naturalism denotes the view that the entire knowable universe consists of natural objects, which exist entirely through natural cause and effect. A stone, plants and animals allegedly have the same natural cause as human beings. On the face of it, it looks like the extension of a purely scientific method to a purely scientific world-view. Some distinguish it from materialism, claiming that it is not ontology, but this distinction is difficult to maintain. The term flourished mainly in American universities in the 1930s and 1940s, the era of logical positivism in England. Naturalism in ethics was criticized by G. E. Moore, who attacked what he called 'the naturalistic fallacy'.

Natural theology denotes knowledge of God attained by human reason alone, without the aid of divine revelation. Thomas Aquinas (1225–74) distinguished natural theology from revealed theology. He suggested that it is not irrational to believe that God exists, and that reason may infer certain truths about God through the use of analogy. Karl Barth, however, opposed the very possibility of natural theology and its related use of analogy, notably in his 'Reply' to Brunner, simply entitled *No!* (1934). Brunner had appealed to a softer or modified view of natural theology, citing the possibility of repentance, the divine ordinances of marriage and the state, and Paul's appeal to knowledge of God in Romans 1.19–20. William Paley (1743–1805) provided a classic example of natural theology in his *Evidences of Christianity* (1794) and *Natural Theology* (1802), which defended the teleological argument for the existence of God.

Necessity in philosophy is attributed to a proposition when its denial would result in a logical contradiction. What is logically necessary, therefore, stands in contrast with what is logically contingent, where contingency denotes what might be or not be. Often logical necessity stands in contrast to empirical contingency or indeed also to empirical necessity. A useful illustration arises from the words *can* or *cannot* in relation to God. 'God cannot lie' or 'God cannot renege on his promises' are *logically* necessary uses of *cannot*, because their denial would contradict what God is, or has revealed of his nature.

Neoplatonism flourished especially from the time of Plotinus (c. 205–70) and Porphyry (c. 232–303), and postulates a chain of emanations between God and the world. Traces of its influence are found in several centuries of Greek philosophy, and in some of the church fathers from Clement of Alexandria and

Origen up to the sixth century. An emanation (Gk, *proödos*) flows from God (or the One), and encounters an ascending movement of return (Gk, *epistrophē*). It owes much to Plato and the Stoics, and influenced Philo. It also considered wider philosophical questions about the mind, the self, consciousness and ethics. Knowledge comes by degrees of completion. By contrast, Christianity asserts a sharp boundary between God and the world, and certainly rejects any notion of emanations. Neoplatonism, however, also developed in Islam, largely due to the influence of Porphyry. Al-Kindi and al-Farabi are said to reflect neoplatonic aspects of thought.

Nihilism (Lat., *nihil*, *nothing*) denotes a philosophy of negation, which denies any positive view of thought or life. It criticizes and rejects claims to knowledge, truth or ethical criteria, and regards each as the result of purely subjective wishes and decisions. In his latest period Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) constitutes a regular example or near-example of this. He regards truth as 'a mobile army of metaphors', and in *The Gay Science* declares that God is dead, and therefore 'everything is permitted'. Nietzsche emphatically attacks Christianity. Appeals to the will of God are 'a pure lie'. Truths, he adds, are 'illusions which we have forgotten are illusions'. All that exists, he says, are 'interpretations'. The term was first used in Russia in 1829, and was subsequently applied to politics and social relations, in some cases to advocate anarchy.

Nominalism (Lat., *nomen*, *name*) denotes the view that universals are not real entities. They reflect only names in language, whereas particular objects or entities are genuinely real. William of Ockham (c. 1287–1347) was a thoroughgoing nominalist. In the medieval period the debate about nominalism became intense. 'Conceptualism' denoted the view that universals denote mental entities, but have no existence in the external world. Some ascribe nominalism to Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) and possibly Nelson Goodman (1906–98).

Omnipotence traditionally ascribes to God the quality of being *all-powerful* (from Lat. *omnis*, 'all', and *potestas* and *potentia*, 'power'). However, in the logical sense of *cannot*, God cannot lie, God cannot make a stone so heavy that he cannot lift it, God cannot change the past and God cannot revoke what he has promised. This is because he cannot perform what would *logically contradict* other propositions describing his revealed character and his nature. For this and other reasons G. van den Brink and Peter Geach suggest that we should use the term *Almighty* (Gk, *pantokratōr*) rather than the word *omnipotent*, which is

derived from the Latin. The Greek term is used in the Bible in 2 Corinthians 6.18; Revelation 1.8; 4.8; 11.17; 15.3; 19.6, 15; 21.22. ‘Almighty’, van den Brink adds, also denotes ‘power for’, rather than ‘power over’. At all events, whatever term we use, *omnipotent* denotes almightiness with the exception of performing *logical contradictions* (such as creating a round square), or violating the internal constraints of the character of the faithful God. Most theologians carefully reject any notion that this term signifies brute force, and Richard Swinburne is among the many who stress the impossibility of a concept of omnipotence which allows internal and logical contradictions (*The Coherence of Theism*, 1977, pp. 149–62).

Omnipresence, as applied to God, at first sight means simply that God is everywhere. Jeremiah declares, ‘“Do I not fill heaven and earth?” says the LORD’ (Jer. 23.24). The psalmist asks, ‘Where can I go from your Spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?’ (Ps. 139.7). God is even in Sheol or the underworld (Ps. 139.8). Israelite monotheism stands in contrast to the local deities who preside over given places. Yet theism is not pantheism: God is not ‘all’. In fact as Spirit, it is grotesque to conceive of him as extended in space; he is the *transcendent condition of the very existence of space*; he created space. Omnipresence denotes, therefore, *not limited by space*. God’s *activity* is experienced everywhere. Aquinas discusses God’s omnipresence in *Summa Theologiae*, I, qu. 8, where he speaks of God’s ‘action taking place’ without limit (art. 1), and omnipresence as ‘activity within the acting subject’ (art. 3). God’s presence and action are not limited by space.

Omniscience denotes the belief that nothing whatever that exists is beyond God’s knowledge. In Judaism and Christianity the psalmist asserts this in Psalm 139, including God’s knowledge of the speaker when he was an unborn foetus (v. 16). Islam asserts that Allah is ‘all-knowing’ (Qur’an, Surah 34). By contrast human knowledge is partial (1 Cor. 13.9). The one logical puzzle concerns God’s knowledge of the future. If God knows every future event and human decision, would not this promote determinism, and leave no room for free will? Like omnipotence, however, omniscience cannot include what is logically self-contradictory. Aquinas, and recently Swinburne and Plantinga, examines this issue. God foresees, they argue, everything that will be *necessary* either through divine decree or promise, or by causal necessity. But what humans might or might not choose to do otherwise *does not yet exist*, except *as contingent* possibility. Ryle argues, ‘true propositions’ (rather than a generalizing

abstraction *everything*) clarify the issue. God knows all *true* propositions; what is contingent *does not (yet) exist to be known*. There is no problem about God's knowledge of the smallest detail, for the greater the Mind, the greater the knowledge of detail. Analogies with human knowledge simply fail.

Ontology (from Gk, *ta onta, things that are*) denotes the study and philosophy of *reality*. The term was appropriately used by Leibniz (1646–1716). Together with epistemology, ethics and logic, it combines to cover the field of philosophy. The area goes back to the ancient Greeks, and includes Duns Scotus (c. 1266–1308) and Hegel (1770–1831). Martin Heidegger regarded Western philosophy as having 'fallen out of Being', but ultimately abandoned the search for ontology in his philosophy.

Panentheism is deliberately contrasted with pantheism. Panentheism is the belief that God penetrates the whole universe, but is not coextensive with it. Pantheism identifies God with the all, or the universe as a whole.

Pantheism broadly denotes the view that God is *everything* (Gk, *pan, all*), but is also more complex than this. In many ways it is the opposite of deism, and must also be distinguished from theism, which asserts a personal, active, God. Pantheism more accurately denotes the belief that God is identical with the whole of the universe, rather than with each part individually. Baruch Spinoza (1632–77) was a classic advocate of pantheism or monism. Different interpreters have called him an *atheist* and 'God-intoxicated', since he regarded God as 'the whole of reality', and yet also identified God with nature, as in his famous phrase *Deus sive Natura*. Many argue that pantheism leaves the problem of evil and human free will unsolved, and also faces difficulties over the neoplatonic concept of divine emanations. Traditions within Buddhism and Hinduism tend towards pantheism.

Perfection denotes *completion* or more usually *lack of any flaw* (from Lat. *perfectio, completion* or *perfection*). The concept is usually applied to God. But older views tend to associate this with changelessness. Xenophanes (c. 570 – c. 470 BC) conceived of God as unmoving, changeless and all-perceiving. Plato (c. 428–348 BC) insisted that any change in God could only be for the worse. Aristotle (384–322 BC) went further. While potentiality, he argued, belongs to finite human beings and to objects, God is characterized by pure *actuality*. Actuality permits no alteration. Thomas Aquinas (1225–74) inherited perhaps too much from Aristotle. He includes among divine attributes 'God's simpleness'

(i.e. his non-composite nature), God's goodness and 'God's perfection' (*Summa Theologiae*, I.I, qu. 3 and 4). In question 4 he quotes Jesus, 'Your heavenly Father is perfect', which the editors interpret as 'actual and flawless' (Eng., Appendix 13, p. 218). However, in *modern* thought perfection may include *progression and change* (as in 'from one degree of glory to another', 2 Cor. 3.18). It is possible, for example, to conceive of 'a perfect young person' becoming a 'perfect elderly person'. Perfection is relative to each stage of the divine purpose (see above, Immutability). This, Swinburne observes, characterizes the *biblical* God, although not the God of Aristotle or Aquinas.

Pespectivalism arises from the claim that two views, which might otherwise appear contradictory, can both be true from two different perspectives. John Locke (1632–1704) suggested that secondary qualities, such as colours, sounds and tastes, are not objectively given, but may be interpreted and understood differently by different minds (*An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book 2, ch. 8, sect. 10). Johann Chladenius (1710–59) is also known in hermeneutics for his notion of a 'point of view' or 'perspective' (Ger., *Sehe-Punkt*), which may give two accounts of the same object, and thus give rise to hermeneutics. But the most famous example of perspectivalism is Wittgenstein's example of Jastrow's duck-rabbit. He calls this 'the dawning of an aspect'. He notes that Jastrow's drawing 'can be seen as a rabbit's head [looking upwards] or as a duck's beak [looking to the left]' (*Philosophical Investigations*, 1958, p. 194). Thus Wittgenstein observes, it is all part of 'seeing . . . as' and 'interpretation' (*Investigations*, pp. 195–226, and *Zettel*, 1967, sects. 213–17). Heidegger also views interpretation in terms of 'seeing . . . as'. As Hick observes, *how* we see an object depends partly on the role which we expect it to perform within a system. It is also central to the work of D. D. Evans. He comments, 'Looking on *x* as *y* involves placing *x* within a structure . . . or scheme'; and he appeals to Wittgenstein's use of 'the trick-drawing as a rabbit, and then as a duck' (*The Logic of Self-Involvement*, 1963, p. 127; cf. pp. 126–41).

Platonism denotes the variety of philosophies shaped by Plato's thought. But such a definition may be too broad to allow for specificity, and Platonism in this broad sense tended to ignore some aspects of Plato's own thought, including his politics. In general Platonism opposed what came to be called materialism and positivism. In the ancient world examples can be found in Philo of Alexandria (c. 25 BC – AD 50) and the neoplatonists Plotinus (c. 205–270), Porphyry (c. 232–

304) and Plutarch (c. 45–125). But these tended to blur the contrast between Plato and Aristotle. Many of the church fathers, including Origen and Augustine, were influenced by the Platonic tradition. In the Middle Ages, Plato influenced Anselm and Bonaventure. Nicholas of Cusa (1404–64) shares Plato's emphasis on the transcendence of God, while the Cambridge Platonists of the seventeenth century shared with Plato an emphasis on the role of reason in religion.

Pluralism in philosophy denotes the view that the world consists of a plurality of entities. Its meaning stands in contrast to monism (see above). It is thought that Anaxagoras (c. 499 – c. 420 BC) of Ionia constituted a classic example. He wrote that the world was composed of infinitely small particles. In modern times some cite William James (1842–1910) for his insistence that the world is not unified, and his attack on monism. But in religion and theology pluralism has a different meaning. It usually denotes the acceptance of many religious views as true, or as equally deserving respect. This approach may appear tolerant, but in philosophy it tends towards *relativism*. Some wrongly imagine that pluralism constitutes a modern problem. They forget that the Christian Church faced religious pluralism for the first three centuries of its existence in the form of Greek and Roman polytheism.

Positivism denotes the view that restricts reality to what is evidential, empirical, observational and material. It confuses scientific *method* with a mechanistic *world-view*. The term was introduced by Claude Henri Saint-Simon (1760–1826), but is more usually associated with Auguste Comte (1798–1857). Comte regarded theology and metaphysics as mere phases in the march of history, which would pass into a positive, scientific stage of philosophy. The approach was temporarily revived in Marxism, and in the logical positivism of the 1940s and 1950s, when it was clothed in linguistic dress as a theory of language.

Postmodernism (or postmodernity) at its best constitutes a reaction against 'positivist, technocratic and rationalist universal modernism' (David Harvey). It protests against the standardization of knowledge after the Enlightenment, which gives privilege to natural science as the model for all knowledge. It reflects a *mood* rather than a chronological *period*. For many, postmodernism has a dark side. Jean-François Lyotard (1924–98) welcomes the term *pagan* as signifying a plurality of religions, plurality of deities and plurality of philosophies. In *The Differend* (1990) he declares that it is impossible to arbitrate *rationally* between two opposing views. Allegedly they are 'incommensurable'. Rhetoric, he argues,

will always favour the stronger against the weaker. French postmodernity is characteristically represented by Michel Foucault (1926–84), who throws off authorities, and regards all knowledge as relating to *power*; and Jaques Derrida (1930–2004), who regards textual meaning as indeterminate. Richard Rorty (1931–2007) and Stanley Fish (b. 1938) represent American postmodernism. They regard the truth of literary texts as relative to readers and to their local community.

Process thought emphasizes *becoming* and *change*, in contrast to *being* and *state*. In modern times the key exponent was Alfred N. Whitehead (1861–1947), a British mathematician, philosopher and logician. He collaborated with Bertrand Russell, and formulated speculative metaphysics in *Process and Reality* (1929). The emphasis on becoming, rather than being, emerged in ancient Greece with Heraclitus (c. 540 – c. 475 BC), and found expression in Hegel (1770–1831). It extends to the philosophy of religion in Charles Hartshorne, John B. Cobb, Edgar Brightman and distinctively in Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955). Whitehead was influenced by the *evolutionary* attitudes of the nineteenth century. Many philosophers share some of Whitehead's core themes. Henri Bergson (1859–1941) wrote of 'becoming' as 'reality itself', and asked why we define the present 'in an arbitrary manner as *that which is*, whereas the present is simply *what is being made*'. Time, he argued, is more than a series of static present moments.

Rationalism: see Part 1.

Reductionism denotes the reduction of human *consciousness* to the level of *matter*. R. W. Sellars (1880–1973) explored 'levels' of meaning in philosophy. More recently this has been explored in philosophical theology by the Catholic thinker Bernard Lonergan (1904–84) and the Protestant thinker John Polkinghorne (b. 1930). Within the sciences some tried to reduce biology to physics and chemistry. Within the arts, it would be absurd to reduce sophisticated music to varying wavelengths shown on an oscilloscope. Within religion it is equally reductionist to seek to provide psychological explanations alone for all profound religious experiences.

Realism (from Lat., *res*, a thing) denotes belief in the reality of the external world. It stands in contrast with idealism, which stresses the activity of the mind in shaping (Kant) or constructing (Fichte) the world. It also rejects solipsism (the view that only the 'I' exists). In medieval thought it also stands in contrast to

nominalism (see above). Yet most philosophers since Kant allow some place to the mind in perceiving and interpreting the world. A. O. Lovejoy, R. W. Sellars and Bernard Lonergan use the term *critical realism* to accommodate this point.

Relativism denies the existence of absolute values. Some endorse relativism because judgments are held to have no meaning in isolation, or to be subject to indefinite modification. It is thus applied to theories of the nature of knowledge and reality. In ancient Greek philosophy Protagoras (c. 490 – c. 410 BC) argued for relativism, declaring, 'Man is the measure of all things'. Richard Rorty (1931–2007) denied the term relativist, but promoted it in practice as a form of postmodernism. Moral relativists claim that there is no absolute right or wrong.

Scepticism can vary in degree from the belief that nothing can be known (Gorgias, c. 483 – c. 380 BC) to the relativistic notion that human beings are the measure of all things (Protagoras c. 490 – c. 420 BC). Sextus Empiricus (c. 160–210) is generally regarded as the codifier of ancient Greek scepticism. More sophisticated sceptics were well aware of the contradiction of extreme scepticism: *if a person knows nothing, how can they know that they cannot know*? Sextus Empiricus therefore urged mere suspension of judgement, and attacked the 'dogmatism' of the Stoics. Apart from the ancient Greeks, scepticism also became important in the Renaissance, when it played an entirely different role. Erasmus (1466–1536), a meticulous and devout religious scholar, was sceptical in the sense that he regarded human affairs as so obscure that nothing can be known *clearly*. In this respect he opposed Luther's confident belief-system, which entailed certainty for living. David Hume (1711–76) was sceptical about a number of specific philosophical claims, including the stable identity of the self.

Scholasticism denotes primarily a method used in Western medieval philosophy, especially from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries. Abelard (1079–1142), Peter Lombard (1100–60) and Thomas Aquinas (1225–74) provide prime examples. Abelard and Peter Lombard collected opposing texts from the church fathers, which they called 'Sentences'. This forms a favourite model for raising questions and seeking to resolve these respective claims. Aquinas consistently explores a thesis, objections to it, and conclusions. Scholastic methods were applied to philosophy, theology and law. The method contributes to the founding of the great universities in Paris and Oxford in the thirteenth century. Duns Scotus (c. 1266–1308) and William of Ockham (c. 1287–1347) offer further

examples.

Scientism denotes the elevation of a correct scientific *method* to become an incorrect *totalizing world-view*. This would imply that the natural sciences give an adequate account of *everything*. It aims to give undue privilege and authority to scientific method. Thomas Sorrell appears to have coined the term in his book *Scientism: Philosophy and the Infatuation with Science* (1994, pp. 1–3 and throughout). He defines it as 'putting a higher value on natural science in comparison with other branches of learning'. (See Part 1, Analytic philosopy: logical positivism; Part 3, Atheism; Postmodernism.)

Self denotes human individuals in all their depth and complexity, with special emphasis on continuity amid change and stable identity. Philosophers from earliest times, including Plato, Descartes and Locke, have debated selfhood, often with a dualist perspective on mind and body. Notoriously, Hume denied the notion of a stable self-identity. C. A. Campbell made some progress in *On Selfhood and Godhood* (1957). Gilbert Ryle successfully attacked the mind–body dualism of Descartes. P. F. Strawson explored this further in *Individuals* (1959), distinguishing between P (personal) predicates and M (material predicates). But Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005) has probably gone further than anyone else in his book *Oneself as Another* (1992). He moves beyond Descartes, Locke, Strawson, Anscombe and others, to argue, 'Personal identity can be articulated only in the temporal dimensions of human existence' (p. 114), and with respect to such experiences as 'keeping one's word and promising' (pp. 123–4). His key concepts are narrative identity, intersubjectivity and accountability. He concludes, '"The Other" is part of human selfhood'.

Semiotics denotes the science or study of *signs*, in contrast to semantics, which is normally the study of *meanings*. Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913) is associated with semiotics in Europe, just as C. S. Peirce (1839–1914)is in America. Roland Barthes (1915–80) greatly extended the term and concept, challenging (with many others) any 'natural' relation between signs and the signified, and he and Jacques Derrida (1930–2004) placed the term in the context of speech and narrative in postmodernism and deconstruction, as Jacques Lacan, Simone de Beauvoir and Julia Kristeva have also done. In the context of how one thing can mean another, semiotics is also relevant to speech-act theory, as Nicholas Wolterstorff has clearly shown in his concept of 'count-generation' in *Divine Discourse* (1995).

Simplicity has at least two distinct meanings. One concerns the simplicity of *God*. Thomas Aquinas devotes some 16 pages of the *Summa Theologiae* to arguing for this quality in God (I.I, qu. 3; Eng. and Lat., vol. 2, pp. 19–49). Today the term might be equivalent to 'non-composite', used of an entity. The other meaning concerns simplicity in general *argument*, especially in scientific theories. It follows the principle of Ockham's razor, to adopt the most plausible hypothesis of an argument without unnecessary additional enquiry. Simplicity, as applied to God (Lat., *simplicitas*) is explained by Aquinas as being implied by the words 'God is Spirit' (John 4.24), and that God does not change, or 'has no potentiality whatever', only actuality; he is beyond comprehension (*Summa Theologiae*, I.I, qu. 3, art. 1, Eng., vol. 2, pp. 21–3). Today many would challenge the notion of changelessness in God (see above, Immutability).

Solipsism denotes the belief that nothing exists outside one's own mind (from Lat., *solus, alone*, and *ipse, oneself*). Allegedly a person's mind constructs everything that is seen or known. Wittgenstein and Plantinga both point out the theoretical difficulty of refuting solipsism, but regard it as unacceptable by sheer common sense. Wittgenstein suggests that what the solipsist *means* is understandable but that it could be correct only exclusively within 'my world'. Plantinga notes the difference between technical logical irrefutability and common-sense denial of its possibility.

Soul overlaps with *mind* in some thinkers, but it is generally understood to denote more than mere brain, its neurological processes, or intelligence. Plato regarded it is an essential part of the self, which survives the dissolution of the body. It may even have survived from a previous existence (Plato, *Phaedo,* 73a–78a; *Meno,* 81b–86b). In the Christian tradition many of the church fathers and Thomas Aquinas envisaged the 'soul' as existing independently of the body. Some Eastern religions hold a doctrine of the reincarnation of the soul, while in Hindu philosophy the *Advaita Vedanta* tradition regards the soul as in due course to be assimilated with the One, or ultimate reality. However, this has little to do with the biblical writings, where the Hebrew word for soul, *nephesh*, can even denote a dead body, while the Greek term *psychē* can mean either more rarely *soul* or, much more frequently, *life*. By contrast Paul and the New Testament look forward not to the immortality of a bare soul, but to the resurrection of the whole human person. Any dualism of body and soul is to be firmly rejected (see above, Dualism; Life after death).

Spirit (see Soul, above, for general issues concerning mind–body dualism). Few works on philosophy have special chapters or entries on *spirit*. The older notion of the human body as 'body, soul and spirit', known in theology as a trichotomy, scarcely survived beyond the nineteenth century. If *soul* and *spirit* occur in the biblical writings, this is normally due to Hebrew synonymous parallelism. However, three distinct uses in the modern world deserve note. (1) In Christian theology the *Holy Spirit* denotes the third person of the Holy Trinity, who is essentially the transcendent Spirit of God. He is best characterized as suprapersonal. (2) Many African and Eastern cultures today still hold a cosmology in which 'spirits' constitute active supernatural agents. This provides difficulties in translation for 'Spirit of God', when many spirits are considered to be evil, malignant or mischievous, and often not fully personal. They are frequently localized, as being associated with certain rivers, mountains, caves, animals and people. Ogbu Kalu (1942–2009) has chronicled much of Nigerian and African culture, and Daniel Olukoya recounts how the spirit world may allegedly enter life through dreams, witchcraft and water-spirits. (3) Spirit or mind (Ger., *Geist*) became a key theme in Hegel (1770–1831). This can denote the Absolute or Ultimate as the *telos* or goal of all things, but also may denote a finite spirit.

Structuralism: see Part 1, Continental philosophy.

Substance (from Gk, *hypostasis*, *underlying reality*, and Lat., *substare*) in philosophy usually denotes the underlying, supporting substratum of what changes or is contingent. But sometimes in theology it may mean simply *being* (Gk, *ousia*), as in the creeds, where Christ is 'of one substance/being with the Father'. The classic meaning in the former sense comes from Thomas Aquinas in his doctrine of transubstantiation. He claims that the *substance* of the Eucharistic elements remains the body and blood of Christ, whereas the *accidents* (the visible and tangible appearance) appear to remain bread and wine. The *substance* (*substantia*), he claims, is the underlying *reality*; the visible and tangible qualities (*accidentia*) concern only mere *appearances*. Aquinas writes, 'The complete substance (*tota substantia*) of the bread is converted into the complete substance of Christ's body' (*Summa Theologiae*, III, qu. 75, art. 4; Eng. and Lat., vol. 58, p. 73). The body of Christ retains its substance, even if it appears under the accidents of bread and wine. The Council of Trent (1551) endorsed this doctrine. Luther rejected it on the ground that the concepts came not from the Bible, but from Aristotle. Descartes, followed by Spinoza and

Leibniz, defined the term more broadly, even to include the being of God. In this sense *substance* denotes simply *being*.

Teleology (from Gk, *telos*, *end* or *goal*) denotes the study of design and purpose in the world, especially for an explanation of its existence (see Part 2, Design argument).

Theism generally denotes belief in a personal, active, God. The term arose in the seventeenth century to exclude atheism, deism and pantheism. Judaism, Christianity and probably Islam are theistic religions. In addition to believing in the sovereignty and transcendence (or beyondness) of God, theorists normally believe in God's immanence in the world and in God's omnipresence. Moltmann prefers the biblical term belief in *the living God* to theism, on the ground that theism too readily suggests a static, immutable, invulnerable God. Whether Hindu and Buddhist traditions are genuinely theistic depends on how broadly we define 'personal, active God'.

Theodicy attempts to justify the ways of God in the face of suffering or evil. If God is both sovereign and loving, why does he permit evil and suffering to occur in the world? The biblical material acknowledges deep experiences of suffering in Job, Ecclesiastes, the Psalms and the suffering and death of Jesus. Epicurus (341–271 BC) was among the first to formulate the dilemma, as expressed in the form found in David Hume (1711–76): 'Is [God] willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is impotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Whence, then, is evil?' A multitude of theists and apologists mount theodicies in reply, including Augustine, Aquinas, Leibniz, and more recently Swinburne, Hick and Plantinga. Most argue that God's constant intervention would reduce people to robots. Plantinga insists that just because we may not know the reason, this does not imply that there is no reason in God's inscrutable wisdom.

Theology (from Gk, *theos*, 'God', and *logos*, 'discourse') strictly denotes discourse about God. More broadly it denotes an *intellectual and conceptual* exploration of the coherence of theism, especially in the field of systematic theology. It sometimes stands in contrast to *religion*, in the sense that to be religious presupposes an attitude of practical and self-involved devotion, while in theory theology could include unbelievers as theologians. Aristotle identified it with his 'first philosophy'. It includes especially the exploration of language about God, apologetics, biblical studies, doctrine, aspects of church history and

other areas. In the Christian tradition the theologies of Augustine, Aquinas and the Reformers, and in the modern era Barth, Balthasar, Tillich and Pannenberg (among others), deserve special note.

Transcendence usually applies to God, to denote that God is, above all, beyond the universe and humankind. The term must not be confused with *transcendental*, which Kant used to denote the preconditions for the very *possibility* of knowledge. God is not simply humankind magnified to infinity. Barth declared that we cannot say *God* by saying *man* in a loud voice! At opposite ends of the theological spectrum both Barth and Tillich stress God's transcendence. Tillich insisted that God is 'not a God whom we can easily bear' (*The Shaking of the Foundations*, 1957, p. 50), and that we reduce God by calling him the greatest of allegedly comparable beings. God is Other, or in Barth's language 'Wholly Other'. Isaiah's vision of the holy God in Isaiah 6 points in this direction: even the angels cover their faces in reverence. Abraham regards himself as 'dust and ashes' before God (Gen. 18.27).

Truth traditionally since Aristotle (1) denotes the *correspondence* between claims to truth of a proposition and the state of affairs to which it refers. Plato, Aristotle and Aquinas all view truth in this way (e.g. Plato, *Sophist*, 263A–B). In the words of Aquinas, 'Truth (*veritas*) is the correspondence or adequacy (Lat., *adequatio*) between the mind and the thing itself' (*Summa Theologiae*, I.I, qu. 16, art. 1). The early Wittgenstein held this view, but (2) in his later work stressed *system* or *coherence*. According to the coherence theory of truth, something is true only if it holds together with all other true propositions within a system of belief or knowledge. Leibniz, Spinoza, Hegel and Bradley promoted this approach, because all emphasized reality as 'the whole'. Some opt for (3) a third theory, namely that of *pragmatism*. Truth emerges only if something works successfully, or is useful for the community. Some cite the saying of Jesus, 'You will know them by their fruits' (Matt. 7.20). Peirce, James, Dewey and Rorty promote a pragmatic theory. All three theories have strengths, but all raise problems and have disadvantages. (4) Strawson argued that to say 'It is true that . . .' is to add an act of personal endorsement. (5) Kierkegaard rejected propositional truth-content in favour of 'subjectivity' or active self-involvement. Truth, Pannenberg declared, must 'prove itself anew', especially in Christian theology (*Basic Questions in Theology*, vol. 2, p. 8).

Underdetermination normally denotes the conclusion after investigation that

one or more alternative and often rival theories could equally well account for the same conclusion. The evidence is then regarded as insufficient to determine a clear conclusion. In practice *overdetermination* tends to amount to virtually the same thing: it means that evidence may account for multiple causes or explanations. The latter term is especially used in Freud and in psychology. We must be cautious, however, about too readily inferring that a conclusion is 'incommensurable' (i.e. having no rational criterion to decide between two claims to truth).

Utopia denotes an ideal society. The term was coined by Thomas More in 1516. Usually it refers to an ideal that cannot be realized in practice.

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