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Abailard, Pierre. See ABELARD.

Abdera, School of. See ABDERITES.

Abderites, the Greek philosophers Leucippus and Democritus, the two earliest exponents of atomism. Even though Abdera, in Thrace (northern Greece), was home to three pre-Socratics – Leucippus, Democritus, and Protagoras – the term ‘Abderites’ and the phrase ‘School of Abdera’ are applied only to Leucippus and Democritus. We can thus distinguish between early Greek atomism and Epicureanism, which is the later version of atomism developed by Epicurus of Athens. This modern usage is in one respect inapt: the corresponding Greek term, *Abderitēs*, -*ai*, was used in antiquity as a synonym of ‘simpleton’ – not in disparagement of any of the three philosophers of Abdera but as a regional slur. See also ANCIENT ATOMISM, PRE-SOCRATICS.

A.P.D.M.

abduction, canons of reasoning for the discovery, as opposed to the justification, of scientific hypotheses or theories. Reichenbach distinguished the *context of justification* and the *context of discovery*, arguing that philosophy legitimately is concerned only with the former, which concerns verification and confirmation, whereas the latter is a matter for psychology. Thus he and other logical positivists claimed there are inductive logics of justification but not logics for discovery. Both hypothetico-deductive and Bayesian or other probabilistic inductive logics of justification have been proposed. Close examination of actual scientific practice increasingly reveals justificatory arguments and procedures that call into question the adequacy of such logics.

Norwood Russell Hanson distinguished the reasons for accepting a specific hypothesis from the reasons for suggesting that the correct hypothesis will be of a particular kind. For the latter he attempted to develop logics of *retroductive* or *abductive* reasoning that stressed analogical reasoning, but did not succeed in convincing many that these logics were different in kind from logics of justification. Today few regard the search for rigorous formal logics of discovery as

promising. Rather, the search has turned to looking for “logics” in some weaker sense. Heuristic procedures, strategies for discovery, and the like are explored. Others have focused on investigating rationality in the growth of scientific knowledge, say, by exploring conditions under which research traditions or programs are progressive or degenerating. Some have explored recourse to techniques from cognitive science or artificial intelligence. Claims of success generally are controversial.

See also CONFIRMATION, INDUCTION, REICHENBACH. F.S.

Abelard, Peter, in French, Pierre Abailard or Abélard (1079–1144), French theologian whose writings, particularly *Theologia Christiana*, constitute one of the more impressive attempts of the medieval period to use logical techniques to explicate Christian dogmas. He was born of a minor noble family in Brittany and studied logic and theology under some of the most notable teachers of the early twelfth century, including Roscelin, William of Champeaux, and Anselm of Laon. He rapidly eclipsed his teachers in logic and attracted students from all over Europe. His forays into theology were less enthusiastically received. Twice his views on the Trinity were condemned as heretical. Abelard led a dramatic life punctuated by bitter disputes with his opponents and a dangerous and celebrated love affair with Heloise (c.1117). Much of this story is told in his autobiographical work, *Historia calamitatum*.

Abelard’s two most important works in logic are his *Logica ingredientibus* and his *Dialectica*. In these treatises and others he is the first medieval Scholastic to make full use of Aristotle’s *On Interpretation* and Boethius’s commentaries on it to produce a sophisticated theory of the signification of words and sentences. The theory distinguishes the signification of an expression both from what the expression names and from the idea in the mind of the speaker associated with the expression. Abelard allows a role for mental images in thinking, but he carefully avoids claiming that these are what words signify. In this he is very much aware of the pitfalls of subjectivist theories of meaning. His positive doctrines on what words signify tie in closely with his

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views on the signification of propositions and universals. For Abelard propositions are sentences that are either true or false; what they say (their *dicta*) is what they signify and these *dicta* are the primary bearers of truth and falsity. Abelard developed a genuinely propositional logic, the first since the Stoics. A universal, on the other hand, is a common noun or adjective, and what it means is what the verb phrase part of a proposition signifies. This is a sort of truncated *dictum*, which Abelard variously called a *status*, nature, or property. Neither *status* nor *dicta* are things, Abelard said, but they are mind-independent objects of thought. Abelard was particularly devastating in his attacks on realist theories of universals, but his view that universals are words was not meant to deny the objectivity of our knowledge of the world.

Abelard's theories in logic and ontology went far beyond the traditional ideas that had been handed down from Aristotle through the mediation of the late ancient commentators, Boethius in particular. They could have formed the basis of a fundamentally new synthesis in Western logic, but when more of the Aristotelian corpus became available in Western Europe during the twelfth century, concentration shifted to assimilating this already fully elaborated system of ideas. Consequently, Abelard's influence on later Scholastic thought, though noticeable, is not nearly as great as one might expect, given the acuteness and originality of his insights.

See also BOETHIUS, ROSCELIN, SCHOLASTICISM. M.M.T.

abhidharma, the analytical and systematic presentation of the major conceptual categories constituting Buddhist doctrine; used as a label for both the texts that contain such presentations and the content of what is presented. Early *abhidharma* texts (up to about the second century A.D.) are catechetical in form, defining key doctrinal terms schematically through question and answer; later works are more discursive, often containing extensive discussions of controverted metaphysical issues such as the existence of past objects or the nature of reference. The goal of *abhidharma* is to make a complete inventory of existents and of the relations that may hold among them. **See also** BUDDHISM. P.J.G.

abhinivesha (Sanskrit, 'self-love' or 'will to live'). In Indian philosophy in general and in the Sankhya-Yoga system in particular, *abhinivesha* was regarded as an aspect of *avidya* (ignorance). Some other manifestations of *avidya* were said to

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be fear, attachment, and aversion, all of which were thought to generate karmic bondage and prevent one from attaining spiritual liberation. Lumped together with these, *abhinivesha* obviously has a negative connotation, even though in the Indian tradition it was not necessarily wrong, and even commendable at times, to exhibit self-love and a healthy will to live and prosper in the material world. So presumably the negative connotation of *abhinivesha* is an indication that what may be otherwise permissible can be improper or morally wrong if pursued in excess or for the wrong reason. **See also** AVIDYA. D.K.C.

abortion. See MORAL STATUS.

Abrabanel, Isaac ben Judah (1437–1508), Spanish Jewish philosopher and statesman. On the periphery between late medieval Spanish philosophy and Renaissance humanism, Abrabanel concerned himself with traditional medieval Jewish subjects such as creation, prophecy, and theodicy. His works include biblical commentaries as well as philosophical and theological treatises; his most significant writings constitute his critique of Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*, found in *Rosh Amanah* (1505) and *Mifalot Elohim* (1503). In criticizing the Aristotelians, Abrabanel was influenced by Isaac Arama. Endorsing the rabbinic concept of prophecy, Abrabanel attacks Maimonides' naturalistic views of prophecy: he argues that Moses is not to be distinguished from the other prophets and that the knowledge of the prophets is not merely scientific and metaphysical, but miraculously produced by God. This emphasis upon the miraculous as opposed to the natural is developed in his theory of history and politics. His views about the ideal state reflect humanist leanings. While Abrabanel does see the civilized state of humans as a rebellion against God resulting from the Fall, he is interested in the best kind of government under these circumstances. Accordingly, unity of society does not require a concentrated power but can be achieved through a collective will. This kind of government, Abrabanel claims, is advocated by the Torah and shown to be effective by the Italian republics of the period. With the coming of the Messiah, humankind will realize its spiritual potential, and when the corporeal universe vanishes, each soul will be able to contemplate eternally the essence of God. Abrabanel's political views influenced later Jewish messianic movements, and his biblical commentaries, translated into Latin,

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influenced later Christian humanist circles. **See also** ABRABANEL, JUDAH; MAIMONIDES. T.M.R.

Abrabanel, Judah, also called Leone Ebreo or Leo Hebraeus (c.1460–c.1523), Spanish Jewish philosopher, poet, and physician. The oldest son of Isaac Abrabanel, Judah Abrabanel was, philosophically, a representative of Italian Platonism. He wrote his predominantly Neoplatonic philosophical work *Dialoghi d'Amore* ("Dialogues of Love") in 1535. The original Italian manuscript was translated into French, Latin, Spanish, and Hebrew between 1551 and 1560. The interlocutors of this Platonic-style dialogue, Sophia and Philo, explore the nature of cosmic love. This love not only exists between God and creatures, but also operates in matter and form, the four elements, and the entire universe; it reflects both sensuous and intellectual beauty; in short it is transformed from a relation between God and the universe into a fundamental force around which all things are ordered. There is a mystical aspect to Abrabanel's account of love, and it is not surprising that reflections on mysticism, in addition to astrology, astronomy, and aesthetics, emerge throughout the work. Although primarily reflecting medieval Platonism and Neoplatonism, Abrabanel was also influenced by Marilio Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, Maimonides, and Ibn Gabirol. His dialogue was read by many philosophers, including Giordano Bruno and Spinoza. His concept of love may be found in lyrical poetry of the period in Italy, France, and Spain, as well as in Michelangelo's *Sonnets* and Torquato Tasso's *Minturno*. **See also** ABRABANEL, ISAAC. T.M.R.

absent qualia. **See** FUNCTIONALISM, PHILOSOPHY OF MIND.

absolute, the, as conceived by idealists, the one independent reality of which all things are an expression. Kant used the adjective (translated as) 'absolute' to characterize what is unconditionally valid. He claimed that pure reason searched for absolute grounds of the understanding that were ideals only, but that practical reason postulated the real existence of such grounds as necessary for morality. This apparent inconsistency led his successors to attempt to systematize his view of reason. To do this, Schelling introduced the term 'the Absolute' for the unconditioned ground (and hence identity) of subject and object. Schelling was criticized by Hegel, who defined the Absolute as spirit: the logical necessity that embodies itself in the world in order to

abstract entity

achieve self-knowledge and freedom during the course of history. Many prominent nineteenth-century British and American idealists, including Bosanquet, Royce, and Bradley, defended the existence of a quasi-Hegelian absolute. **See also** HEGEL, IDEALISM, SCHELLING. J.W.A.

absolute right. **See** RIGHTS.

absolute space. **See** SPACE.

Absolute Spirit. **See** HEGEL.

absolute threshold. **See** FECHNER.

absolute time. **See** TIME.

absolutism, ethical. **See** RELATIVISM.

abstract. **See** Appendix of Special Symbols.

abstracta. **See** ABSTRACT ENTITY, NATURALISM.

abstract entity, an object lacking spatiotemporal properties, but supposed to have being, to exist, or (in medieval Scholastic terminology) to subsist. Abstracta, sometimes collected under the category of universals, include mathematical objects, such as numbers, sets, and geometrical figures, propositions, properties, and relations. Abstract entities are said to be abstracted from particulars. The abstract triangle has only the properties common to all triangles, and none peculiar to any particular triangles; it has no definite color, size, or specific type, such as isosceles or scalene. Abstracta are admitted to an ontology by Quine's criterion if they must be supposed to exist (or subsist) in order to make the propositions of an accepted theory true. Properties and relations may be needed to account for resemblances among particulars, such as the redness shared by all red things. Propositions as the abstract contents or meanings of thoughts and expressions of thought are sometimes said to be necessary to explain translation between languages, and other semantic properties and relations.

Historically, abstract entities are associated with Plato's realist ontology of Ideas or Forms. For Plato, these are the abstract and only real entities, instantiated or participated in by spatiotemporal objects in the world of appearance or empirical phenomena. Aristotle denied the independent existence of abstract entities, and redefined a diluted sense of Plato's Forms as the secondary substances that inhere in primary substances or spatiotemporal particulars as the

abstraction

only genuine existents. The dispute persisted in medieval philosophy between realist metaphysicians, including Augustine and Aquinas, who accepted the existence of abstracta, and nominalists, such as Ockham, who maintained that similar objects may simply be referred to by the same name without participating in an abstract form. In modern philosophy, the problem of abstracta has been a point of contention between rationalism, which is generally committed to the existence of abstract entities, and empiricism, which rejects abstracta because they cannot be experienced by the senses. Berkeley and Hume argued against Locke’s theory of abstract ideas by observing that introspection shows all ideas to be particular, from which they concluded that we can have no adequate concept of an abstract entity; instead, when we reason about what we call abstracta we are actually thinking about particular ideas delegated by the mind to represent an entire class of resemblant particulars, from which we may freely substitute others if we mistakenly draw conclusions peculiar to the example chosen. Abstract propositions were defended by Bolzano and Frege in the nineteenth century as the meanings of thought in language and logic. Dispute persists about the need for and nature of abstract entities, but many philosophers believe they are indispensable in metaphysics.

See also ARISTOTLE, BERKELEY, FREGE, METAPHYSICAL REALISM, OCKHAM, PLATO, PROPERTY. D.J.

abstraction. See ABSTRACT ENTITY, BERKELEY.

abstraction, axiom of. See AXIOM OF COMPREHENSION.

abstraction, lambda-. See COMBINATORY LOGIC.

abstraction principles. See AXIOM OF COMPREHENSION.

abstract particular. See TROPE.

absurd. See CAMUS, EXISTENTIALISM.

absurdity. See CATEGORY, REDUCTIO AD ABSURDUM.

Abunaser. See AL-FĀRĀBĪ.

AC. See Appendix of Special Symbols.

Academic Skepticism. See SKEPTICISM, SKEPTICS.

Academy

Academy, the school established by Plato around 385 B.C. at his property outside Athens near the public park and gymnasium known by that name. Although it may not have maintained a continuous tradition, the many and varied philosophers of the Academy all considered themselves Plato’s successors, and all of them celebrated and studied his work. The school survived in some form until A.D. 529, when it was dissolved, along with the other pagan schools, by the Eastern Roman emperor Justinian I. The history of the Academy is divided by some authorities into that of the Old Academy (Plato, Speusippus, Xenocrates, and their followers) and the New Academy (the Skeptical Academy of the third and second centuries B.C.). Others speak of five phases in its history: Old (as before), Middle (Arcesilaus), New (Carneades), Fourth (Philo of Larisa), and Fifth (Antiochus of Ascalon).

For most of its history the Academy was devoted to elucidating doctrines associated with Plato that were not entirely explicit in the dialogues. These “unwritten doctrines” were apparently passed down to his immediate successors and are known to us mainly through the work of Aristotle: there are two opposed first principles, the One and the Indefinite Dyad (Great and Small); these generate Forms or Ideas (which may be identified with numbers), from which in turn come intermediate mathematical and, at the lowest level, perceptible things (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* I.6).

After Plato’s death in 347, the Academy passed to his nephew Speusippus (c.407–339), who led the school until his death. Although his written works have perished, his views on certain main points, along with some quotations, were recorded by surviving authors. Under the influence of late Pythagoreans, Speusippus anticipated Plotinus by holding that the One transcends being, goodness, and even Intellect, and that the Dyad (which he identifies with matter) is the cause of all beings. To explain the gradations of beings, he posited gradations of matter, and this gave rise to Aristotle’s charge that Speusippus saw the universe as a series of disjointed episodes. Speusippus abandoned the theory of Forms as ideal numbers, and gave heavier emphasis than other Platonists to the mathematics.

Xenocrates (396–314), who once went with Plato to Sicily, succeeded Speusippus and led the Academy until his own death. Although he was a prolific author, Xenocrates’ works have not survived, and he is known only through the work of other authors. He was induced by Aristotle’s objections to reject Speusippus’s views on some

accent, fallacy of

points, and he developed theories that were a major influence on Middle Platonism, as well as on Stoicism. In Xenocrates’ theory the One is Intellect, and the Forms are ideas in the mind of this divine principle; the One is not transcendent, but it resides in an intellectual space above the heavens. While the One is good, the Dyad is evil, and the sublunary world is identified with Hades. Having taken Forms to be mathematical entities, he had no use for intermediate mathematical. Forms he defined further as paradigmatic causes of regular natural phenomena, and soul as self-moving number.

Polemon (c.350–267) led the Academy from 314 to 267, and was chiefly known for his fine character, which set an example of self-control for his students. The Stoics probably derived their concept of *oikeiosis* (an accommodation to nature) from his teaching. After Polemon’s death, his colleague Crates led the Academy until the accession of Arcesilaus.

The New Academy arose when Arcesilaus became the leader of the school in about 265 B.C. and turned the dialectical tradition of Plato to the Skeptical aim of suspending belief. The debate between the New Academy and Stoicism dominated philosophical discussion for the next century and a half. On the Academic side the most prominent spokesman was Carneades (c.213–129 B.C.).

In the early years of the first century B.C., Philo of Larisa attempted to reconcile the Old and the New Academy. His pupil, the former Skeptic Antiochus of Ascalon, was enraged by this and broke away to refound the Old Academy in about 87 B.C. This was the beginning of Middle Platonism (c.80 B.C.–A.D. 220). Antiochus’s school was eclectic in combining elements of Platonism, Stoicism, and Aristotelian philosophy, and is known to us mainly through Cicero’s *Academica*. Middle Platonism revived the main themes of Speusippus and Xenocrates, but often used Stoic or neo-Pythagorean concepts to explain them. The influence of the Stoic Posidonius (135–50/51 B.C.) was strongly felt on the Academy in this period, and Platonism flourished at centers other than the Academy in Athens, most notably in Alexandria, with Eudorus (first century B.C.) and Philo of Alexandria (fl. A.D. 39).

After the death of Philo, the center of interest returned to Athens, where Plutarch of Chaeroneia (A.D. c.45–c.125) studied with Ammonius at the Academy, although Plutarch spent most of his career at his home in nearby Boeotia. His many philosophical treatises, which are rich sources for the history of philosophy, are gathered under the

accessibility between two worlds

title *Moralia*; his interest in ethics and moral education led him to write the *Parallel Lives* (paired biographies of famous Romans and Athenians), for which he is best known. After this period, the Academy ceased to be the name for a species of Platonic philosophy, although the school remained a center for Platonism, and was especially prominent under the leadership of the Neoplatonist Proclus (c.410–85).

See also MIDDLE PLATONISM, NEOPLATONISM, NEW ACADEMY, PLATO. P.Wo.

accent, fallacy of. See INFORMAL FALLACY.

acceptance, as commonly conceived in philosophical literature, either a type of propositional attitude or a family thereof.

(1) On the most common understanding, to accept a proposition *p* for a context *C* is to have adopted a policy of using *p* as a premise for deciding what to do or to think in *C*. This ‘premissing conception’ has been influenced by L. Jonathan Cohen. For example, a defense attorney is required to accept that her client is innocent within the juridical context. In the work of Dennett, ‘opinion’ denotes a narrower type of acceptance related merely to policies of utterance. The relation between acceptance and belief is controversial. Keith Frankish has argued that some acceptances qualify as beliefs. The more widespread view, however, is that acceptances differ from beliefs in virtue of occupying systematically different roles in motivating behavior and/or in virtue of having a different phenomenology.

(2) Some philosophers, e.g. Stalnaker, prefer to use ‘acceptance’ generically to denote a family of ways to treat a proposition as true. Here all kinds of beliefs and suppositions qualify as acceptances. This use is also fairly widespread.

(3) Among those who employ central alternative usages is Alston, who holds that to accept *p* is to engage in an activity leading to believing it. For Lehrer, to accept *p* is to believe it and endorse that belief. John Perry maintains that acceptance is a component of an attitude rather than an attitude in itself. In his preferred usage acceptance is the subjective psychological component of belief, in contrast to the content component of belief, which is a worldly state of affairs. Although central to specific philosophical debates, none of those usages have gained wider popularity. N.N.

accessibility, epistemic. See EPISTEMOLOGY.

accessibility between two worlds. See POSSIBLE WORLDS.

accident

accident, a feature or property of a substance (e.g., an organism or an artifact) without which the substance could still exist. According to a common essentialist view of persons, Socrates’ size, color, and integrity are among his accidents, while his humanity is not. For Descartes, thinking is the essence of the soul, while any particular thought a soul entertains is an accident. According to a common theology, God has no accidents, since all truths about him flow by necessity from his nature. These examples suggest the diversity of traditional uses of the notion of accident. There is no uniform conception; but the Cartesian view, according to which the accidents are modes of (ways of specifying) the essence of a substance, is representative. An important ambiguity concerns the identity of accidents: if Plato and Aristotle have the same weight, is that weight one accident (say, the property of weighing precisely 70 kilograms) or two (one accident for Plato, one for Aristotle)? Different theorists give different answers (and some have changed their minds). Issues about accidents have become peripheral in this century because of the decline of traditional concerns about substance. But the more general questions about necessity and contingency are very much alive. **See also** CONTINGENT, ESSENTIALISM, PROPERTY. S.J.W.

accident, fallacy of. See INFORMAL FALLACY.

accidental generalization. See LAWLIKE GENERALIZATION.

accidentalism, the metaphysical thesis that the occurrence of some events is either not necessitated or not causally determined or not predictable. Many determinists have maintained that although all events are caused, some nevertheless occur accidentally if only because the causal laws determining them might have been different. Some philosophers have argued that even if determinism is true, some events, such as a discovery, could not have been predicted, on grounds that to *predict* a discovery is to *make* the discovery.

The term may also designate a theory of individuation: that individuals of the same kind or species are numerically distinct in virtue of possessing some different accidental properties. Two horses are the same in essence but numerically distinct because one of them is black, e.g., while the other is white. Accidentalism presupposes the identity of indiscernibles but goes beyond it by claiming that accidental properties *account for* numerical diversity within a species. Peter

action, basic

Abelard criticized a version of accidentalism espoused by his teacher, William of Champeaux, on the ground that accidental properties depend for their existence on the distinct individuals in which they inhere, and so the properties cannot account for the distinctness of the individuals.
See also DETERMINISM, IDENTITY OF INDISCERNIBLES. W.E.M.

accidental property. See PROPERTY.

accidie (also *acedia*), apathy, listlessness, or ennui. This condition is problematic for the internalist thesis that, necessarily, any belief that one morally ought to do something is conceptually sufficient for having motivation to do it. Ann has long believed that she ought, morally, to assist her ailing mother, and she has dutifully acted accordingly. Seemingly, she may continue to believe this, even though, owing to a recent personal tragedy, she now suffers from accidie and is wholly lacking in motivation to assist her mother. **See also** AKRASIA, MOTIVATIONAL INTERNALISM, SOCRATIC PARADOXES. A.R.M.

accomplishment verb. See ACTION VERB.

achievement verb. See ACTION VERB.

Achilles paradox. See ZENO’S PARADOXES.

acosmism, a term formed on analogy to ‘atheism’, meaning the denial of the ultimate reality of the world. Ernst Platner used it in 1776 to describe Spinoza’s philosophy, arguing that Spinoza did not intend to deny “the existence of the God head, but the existence of the world.” Maimon, Fichte, Hegel, and others make the same claim. By the time of Feuerbach it was also used to characterize a basic feature of Christianity: the denial of the world or worldliness. **See also** FICHTE, HEGEL, SPINOZA. M.K.

acquaintance, knowledge by. See KNOWLEDGE BY ACQUAINTANCE.

acrasia. See AKRASIA.

act, propositional. See INTENTIONALITY.

act, voluntary. See ACTION THEORY.

act-content-object-psychology. See ACT-OBJECT PSYCHOLOGY.

action, basic. See ACTION THEORY.

action, philosophy of

action, philosophy of. See ACTION THEORY.

action at a distance. See FIELD THEORY.

action theory, the study of the ontological structure of human action, the process by which it originates, and the ways in which it is explained. Most human actions are acts of *commission*: they constitute a class of events in which a subject (the agent) brings about some change or changes. Thus, in moving one’s finger, one brings it about that one’s finger moves. When the change brought about is an ongoing process (e.g., the continuing appearance of words on a page), the behavior is called an *activity* (writing). An action of *omission* occurs when an agent refrains from performing an action of commission. Since actions of commission are events, the question of their ontology is in part a matter of the general ontology of change. An important issue here is whether what occurs when an action is performed should be viewed as abstract or concrete. On the first approach, actions are understood either as proposition-like entities (e.g., Booth’s moving a finger) or as a species of universal – namely, an *act-type* (moving a finger). What “occurred” when Booth moved his finger in Ford’s Theater on April 14, 1865, is held to be the abstract entity in question, and the entity is viewed as repeatable: precisely the same entity is held to have occurred on every other occasion of Booth’s moving his finger. When actions are viewed as concrete, on the other hand, Booth’s moving his finger in Ford’s Theater is understood to be a non-repeatable particular, and the movement of the finger counts as an *act-token*, which instantiates the corresponding act-type. Concrete actions are time-bound: each belongs to a single behavioral episode, and other instantiations of the same act-type count as distinct events.

A second important ontological issue concerns the fact that by moving his finger, Booth also fired a gun, and killed Lincoln. It is common for more than one thing to be accomplished in a single exercise of agency, and how such doings are related is a matter of debate. If actions are understood as abstract entities, the answer is essentially foregone: there must be as many different actions on Booth’s part as there are types exemplified. But if actions are viewed as particulars the same token can count as an instance of more than one type, and identity claims become possible. Here there is disagreement. *Fine-grained* theories of act individuation tend to confine identity claims to actions that differ only in ways describable through different modifications of

action theory

the same main verb – e.g., where Placido both sings and sings loudly. Otherwise, different types are held to require different tokens: Booth’s action of moving his finger is held to have generated or given rise to distinct actions of firing the gun and killing Lincoln, by virtue of having had as causal consequences the gun’s discharge and Lincoln’s death. The opposite, *coarse-grained* theory, however, views these causal relations as grounds for claiming Booth’s acts were precisely identical. On this view, for Booth to kill Lincoln was simply for him to do something that caused Lincoln’s death – which was in fact nothing more than to move his finger – and similarly for his firing the gun. There is also a compromise account, on which Booth’s actions are related as part to whole, each consisting in a longer segment of the causal chain that terminates with Lincoln’s death. The action of killing Lincoln consisted, on this view, in the entire sequence; but that of firing the gun terminated with the gun’s discharge, and that of moving the finger with the finger’s motion.

When, as in Booth’s case, more than one thing is accomplished in a single exercise of agency, some are done *by* doing others. But if all actions were performed by performing others, an infinite regress would result. There must, then, be a class of *basic actions* – i.e., actions fundamental to the performance of all others, but not themselves done by doing something else. There is disagreement, however, on which actions are basic. Some theories treat bodily movements, such as Booth’s moving his finger, as basic. Others point out that it is possible to engage in action but to accomplish less than a bodily movement, as when one tries to move a limb that is restrained or paralyzed, and fails. According to these accounts, bodily actions arise out of a still more basic mental activity, usually called *volition* or willing, which is held to constitute the standard means for performing all overt actions.

The question of how bodily actions originate is closely associated with that of what distinguishes them from involuntary and reflex bodily events, as well as from events in the inanimate world. There is general agreement that the crucial difference concerns the mental states that attend action, and in particular the fact that voluntary actions typically arise out of states of intending on the part of the agent. But the nature of the relation is difficult, and there is the complicating factor that intention is sometimes held to reduce to other mental states, such as the agent’s desires and beliefs. That issue aside, it would appear that unintentional actions arise out of more basic

act(ion)-token

actions that are intentional, as when one unintentionally breaks a shoelace by intentionally tugging on it. But how intention is first translated into action is much more problematic, especially when bodily movements are viewed as basic actions. One cannot, e.g., count Booth’s moving his finger as an intentional action simply because he intended to do so, or even on the ground (if it is true) that his intention caused his finger to move. The latter might have occurred through a strictly autonomic response had Booth been nervous enough, and then the moving of the finger would not have counted as an action at all, much less as intentional. Avoiding such “wayward causal chains” requires accounting for the agent’s voluntary control over what occurs in genuinely intentional action – a difficult task when bodily actions are held to be basic. Volitional accounts have greater success here, since they can hold that movements are intentional only when the agent’s intention is executed through volitional activity. But they must sidestep another threatened regress: if we call for an activity of willing to explain why Booth’s moving his finger counts as intentional action, we cannot do the same for willing itself. Yet on most accounts volition does have the characteristics of intentional behavior. Volitional theories of action must, then, provide an alternative account of how mental activity can be intentional.

Actions are explained by invoking the agent’s reasons for performing them. Characteristically, a reason may be understood to consist in a positive attitude of the agent toward one or another outcome, and a belief to the effect that the outcome may be achieved by performing the action in question (though the term is also used for the contents of such attitudes, often of just one of them). Thus Emily might spend the summer in France out of a desire to learn French, and a belief that spending time in France is the best way to do so. Disputed questions about reasons include how confident the agent must be that the action selected will in fact lead to the envisioned outcome, and whether obligation represents a source of motivation that can operate independently of the agent’s desires.

Frequently, more than one course of action is available to an agent. *Deliberation* is the process of searching out and weighing the reasons for and against such alternatives. When successfully concluded, deliberation usually issues in a decision, by which an intention to undertake one of the contemplated actions is formed. The intention is then carried out when the time for action comes. Much debate has centered on the question of

action verb

how reasons are related to decisions and actions. As with intention, an agent’s simply having a reason is not enough for the reason to explain her behavior: her desire to learn French notwithstanding, Emily might have gone to France simply because she was transferred there. Only when an agent does something *for* a reason does the reason explain what is done. It is frequently claimed that this bespeaks a causal relation between the agent’s strongest reason and her decision or action. This, however, suggests a determinist stance on the free will problem, leading some philosophers to balk. An alternative is to treat reason explanations as teleological explanations, wherein an action is held to be reasonable or justified in virtue of the goals toward which it was directed. But positions that treat reason explanations as non-causal require an alternative account of what it is to decide or act for one reason rather than another.

See also EVENT, FREE WILL PROBLEM, INTENTION, PRACTICAL REASONING, VOLITION. H.J.M.

act(ion)-token. See ACTION THEORY.

act(ion)-type. See ACTION THEORY, TYPE THEORY.

action verb, a verb applied to an agent and describing an activity, an action, or an attempt at or a culmination of an action. Verbs applying to agents may be distinguished in two basic ways: by whether they can take the progressive (continuous) form and by whether or not there is a specific moment of occurrence/completion of the action named by the verb. An *activity verb* is one describing something that goes on for a time but with no inherent endpoint, such as ‘drive’, ‘laugh’, or ‘meditate’. One can stop doing such a thing but one cannot complete doing it. Indeed, one can be said to have done it as soon as one has begun doing it. An *accomplishment verb* is one describing something that goes on for a time toward an inherent endpoint, such as ‘paint’ (a fence), ‘solve’ (a problem), or ‘climb’ (a mountain). Such a thing takes a certain time to do, and one cannot be said to have done it until it has been completed. An *achievement verb* is one describing either the culmination of an activity, such as ‘finish’ (a job) or ‘reach’ (a goal); the effecting of a change, such as ‘fire’ (an employee) or ‘drop’ (an egg); or undergoing a change, such as ‘hear’ (an explosion) or ‘forget’ (a name). An achievement does not go on for a period of time but may be the culmination of something that does. Ryle singled out achievement verbs and state verbs (see below) partly in order to disabuse

active euthanasia

philosophers of the idea that what psychological verbs name must invariably be inner acts or activities modeled on bodily actions or activities. A *task verb* is an activity verb that implies attempting to do something named by an achievement verb. For example, to seek is to attempt to find, to sniff is to attempt to smell, and to treat is to attempt to cure. A *state verb* is a verb (not an action verb) describing a condition, disposition, or habit rather than something that goes on or takes place. Examples include ‘own’, ‘weigh’, ‘want’, ‘hate’, ‘frequent’, and ‘teetotal’.

These differences were articulated by Zeno Vendler in *Linguistics and Philosophy* (1967). Taking them into account, linguists have classified verbs (and verb phrases) into four main aspectual classes, which they distinguish in respect to the availability and interpretation of the simple present tense, of the perfect tenses, of the progressive construction, and of various temporal adverbials, such as adverbs like ‘yesterday’, ‘finally’, and ‘often’, and prepositional phrases like ‘for a long time’ and ‘in a while’. Many verbs belong to more than one category by virtue of having several related uses. For example, ‘run’ is both an activity and an accomplishment verb, and ‘weigh’ is both a state and an accomplishment verb. Linguists single out a class of *causative verbs*, such as ‘force’, ‘inspire’, and ‘persuade’, some of which are achievement and some accomplishment verbs. Such causative verbs as ‘break’, ‘burn’, and ‘improve’ have a correlative intransitive use, so that, e.g., to break something is to cause it to break.

See also PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE, SPEECH ACT THEORY. K.B.

active euthanasia. See EUTHANASIA.

active power. See POWER.

activity verb. See ACTION VERB.

act-object distinction. See BRENTANO, MEINONG.

act-object psychology, also called act-content-object psychology, a philosophical theory that identifies in every psychological state a mental act, a lived-through phenomenological content, such as a mental image or description of properties, and an intended object that the mental act is about or toward which it is directed by virtue of its content. The distinction between the act, content, and object of thought originated with Alois Höfler’s *Logik* (1890), written in collaboration with Meinong. But the theory is historically

actualism

most often associated with its development in Kazimierz Twardowski’s *Zur Lehre vom Inhalt und Gegenstand der Vorstellung* (“On the Content and Object of Presentations,” 1894), despite Twardowski’s acknowledgment of his debt to Höfler.

Act-object psychology arose as a reaction to Franz Brentano’s immanent intentionality thesis in his influential *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt* (“Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint,” 1874), in which Brentano maintains that intentionality is “the mark of the mental,” by contrast with purely physical phenomena. Brentano requires that intended objects belong immanently to the mental acts that intend them – a philosophical commitment that laid Brentano open to charges of epistemological idealism and psychologism. Yet Brentano’s followers, who accepted the intentionality of thought but resisted what they came to see as its detachable idealism and psychologism, responded by distinguishing the act-immanent phenomenological content of a psychological state from its act-transcendent intended object, arguing that Brentano had wrongly and unnecessarily conflated mental content with the external objects of thought.

Twardowski goes so far as to claim that content and object can never be identical, an exclusion in turn that is vigorously challenged by Husserl in his *Logische Untersuchungen* (“Logical Investigations,” 1913, 1922), and by others in the phenomenological tradition who acknowledge the possibility that a self-reflexive thought can sometimes be about its own content as intended object, in which content and object are indistinguishable. Act-object psychology continues to be of interest to contemporary philosophy because of its relation to ongoing projects in phenomenology, and as a result of a resurgence of study of the concept of intentionality and qualia in philosophy of mind, cognitive psychology, and *Gegenstandstheorie*, or existent and non-existent intended object theory, in philosophical logic and semantics.

See also BRENTANO, HUSSERL, INTENTIONALITY, MEINONG, PHILOSOPHY OF MIND, POLISH LOGIC, QUALIA. D.J.

act of commission. See ACTION THEORY.

act of omission. See ACTION THEORY.

actual infinite. See ARISTOTLE.

actualism. See GENTILE.

actualist

actualist. See MODAL LOGIC.

actuality. See POSSIBLE WORLDS.

actualization, first. See ARISTOTLE.

actualization, second. See ARISTOTLE.

actual occasion. See WHITEHEAD.

actual reality. See REALITY.

act utilitarianism. See UTILITARIANISM.

Adam de Wodeham. See WODEHAM.

Adams, Marilyn McCord (b.1943), American philosopher noted for her work in the history of medieval philosophy and in philosophy of religion. Adams is the author of four major books and many articles in her areas of expertise. *William Ockham* (1987) is a comprehensive account of Ockham’s position in ontology, logic, epistemology, and natural philosophy, in comparison and contrast with the views of Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and Henry of Ghent, among others. In her major work on the problem of evil, *Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God* (1999), Adams argues that it is possible that God is good to all persons by ensuring each a life that is a great good to the person, thus not merely balancing off horrendous evil with goods that are at least as great, but contributing to a great good in that individual’s life. On her view, God may defeat all horrendous evil by empathically identifying with it. This idea is presented in a way designed to allow us to re-envision our suffering as a point of identification with God. In *Christ and Horrors: The Coherence of Christology* (2006), Adams develops her position on the problem of evil in a distinctively Christian way by formulating a view about the role of Christ in the defeat of evil.

In a recent historical work, *Some Later Medieval Theories of the Eucharist* (2010), Adams investigates thirteenth- and fourteenth-century transubstantiationist theories of the Eucharist, concentrating on Aquinas, Giles of Rome, Duns Scotus, and Ockham. Here she examines how their proposals for formulating the doctrine of transubstantiation provoked them to make significant revisions of Aristotelian theories about substance and accidents, causality and causal powers, kinds of change, and the structure and location of bodies. D.P.

Adelard of Bath

Adams, Robert Merrihew (b.1937), American philosopher who has made seminal contributions to ethics, philosophy of religion, metaphysics, and the history of philosophy. Adams is best known for developing a theistic framework for ethics (*Finite and Infinite Goods*, 1999) and a complementary account of virtues (*A Theory of Virtue*, 2006), for defending metaphysical idealism (“Idealism Vindicated,” in his *Persons: Human and Divine*, 2007), and for his scholarship on Leibniz (*Leibniz: Determinist, Theist, Idealist*, 1994). In metaphysics, Adams has defended primitive identity (“Primitive Thisness and Primitive Identity,” 1979) and actualism (“Theories of Actuality,” 1974), and as of this writing he has begun work on a “thick” concept of existence. In philosophy of religion, Adams rekindled debates on divine command theory, middle knowledge, the ontological argument, and the question whether God is obliged to create the best (*The Virtue of Faith and Other Essays in Philosophical Theology*, 1987). Following his retirement from Yale, a collection of papers by prominent philosophers engaging his work was published (*Metaphysics and the Good*, 2009). The volume includes an intellectual autobiography by Adams, which closes with a summary of his philosophical convictions: “I believe there is a metaphysically significant difference between appearance and reality; that there is a capital ‘R’ Reality that grounds everything that appears; that it is mental; that it is good; and that doing philosophy can be a way of loving it.”

Since earning his Ph.D. from Cornell in 1967, Adams has served on the faculties of the University of Michigan, UCLA, Yale, Oxford, and the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill. He has delivered the Gifford and Wilde Lectures and is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (1991) and the British Academy (2006). He is also a founder of the Society for Christian Philosophers. S.New.

adaptation. See DARWINISM.

adaptive system. See COMPUTER THEORY.

Adelard of Bath (c.1070–c.1145), English Benedictine monk notable for his contributions to the introduction of Arabic science in the West. After studying at Tours, he taught at Laon, then spent seven years traveling in Italy, possibly Spain, and Cilicia and Syria, before returning to England. In his dialogue *On the Same and the Different*, he remarks, concerning universals, that the names of individuals, species, and genera