

Latin and Greek for Philosophers*

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The following definitions have been prepared to help you understand the meaning of the Latin words and phrases you will encounter in your study of philosophy. But first a word of caution: it would be a mistake to suppose that in mastering these definitions you will have acquired a sufficient grounding in the Latin language to employ these terms successfully in your own work. Here H. W. Fowler offers some good advice: ‘Those who use words or phrases belonging to languages with which they have little or no acquaintance do so at their peril. Even in *e.g.*, *i.e.*, and *et cetera*, there lurk unsuspected possibilities of exhibiting ignorance’ (*Modern English Usage*, p. 207). Use these definitions as an aid to understanding the Latin terms and phrases you encounter, but resist the temptation to begin sprinkling them about in your own writings and conversations.

Latin prepositions used in the following definitions:

a or *ab*: ‘from’

ex: ‘from’ or ‘out of’

sub: ‘under’

propter: ‘because of’

ad: ‘to’ or ‘toward’

per: ‘through’ or ‘by’

post: ‘after’

de: ‘from’ or ‘concerning’

in: ‘in’ or ‘on’

pro: ‘for’ or ‘in exchange for’

A fortiori: preposition + the ablative neuter singular of the comparative adjective *fortior/fortius* (literally: ‘from the stronger thing’): arguing to a conclusion from an already established stronger statement (e.g. ‘All animals are mortal, *a fortiori* all human beings are mortal’).

A posteriori: preposition + the ablative neuter singular of the comparative adjective *posterior/posteriorus* (literally: ‘from the later thing’): things known *a posteriori* are known on the basis of experience (e.g. ‘We can know only *a posteriori* that all swans are white’).

A priori: preposition + the ablative neuter singular of the comparative adjective *prior/prius* (literally: ‘from the earlier thing’): what is known to be true *a priori* can be known independently of (or prior to) empirical investigation or confirmation (e.g. ‘Kant held that we can know *a priori* that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points.’)

Ad hoc: preposition + the accusative neuter singular of the pronoun *hic/haec/hoc* (literally: ‘to this thing’): a proposed solution lacking in independent justification (e.g. ‘Aristotle’s view that *nous* is the kind of knowledge we have of the first principles seems entirely *ad hoc*.’)

Amicus Plato sed magis amica veritas: ‘Plato is a friend but truth is a greater friend’, based loosely on Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1096a.

Argumentum ad hominem: the nominative neuter noun *argumentum/argumenti* + plus preposition + the accusative masculine singular of the noun *homo/hominis* (literally: ‘argument toward the man’): an argument attacking the person rather than addressing the question.

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Barbara: A name employed as part of a mnemonic system devised by medieval students to remember the valid forms of the syllogism ('Barbara', 'Celarent', 'Darii', etc.). Since one of these syllogism consisted of three universal-affirmative (or 'a') propositions it was associated with a woman's name containing three a's). Aristotle held that Barbara was the most appropriate argument form for presenting a scientific explanation.

Causa sine qua non: the nominative feminine singular of *causa/causae* + preposition + the ablative feminine singular of the pronoun *qui/quae/quod* + adverb (literally: 'a cause without which not'): an indispensable cause.

Causa sui: the nominative feminine singular of *causa/causae* + the genitive singular of the pronoun *sui, sibi, se, se*: 'self caused' or 'cause of itself'. Associated with the view proposed by Spinoza and others that the reason for God's existence lies in its essence (thus sometimes associated with the Ontological Argument).

Ceteris paribus: the ablative neuter plural of the adjective *ceter-a-um* + plus the ablative neuter plural of the adjective *par-paris*, an ablative absolute (literally: 'if other things are equal' or 'other things being equal'): a phrase commonly used to consider the effects of a cause in isolation by assuming that other relevant conditions are absent (e.g. 'An increase in the price of oil will result, *ceteris paribus*, to people using their cars less often).

Cogito ergo sum: the first person singular present indicative active of *cogito/cogitare* + adverb + the first person singular present indicative of the verb to be: 'I think therefore I am'. From Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy* (1644); the first proposition Descartes encountered in his exercise of methodic doubt he believed could be known clearly and distinctly to be true.

Conatus: the nominative masculine singular of the perfect passive participle of *conor/conari*, a deponent verb meaning 'attempt' or 'endeavor'; derived from Greek *hormê* ('force' or 'first start'), term used by the Stoics and later philosophers in speaking of the innate tendency of things to exist or enhance themselves.

Contra: adverb: 'against'. To be distinguished from *Pace* (see below)

Credo quia absurdum est: the first person singular indicative active of *credo/credere* + conjunction + the nominative neuter singular of the adjective *absurdus-a-um* used as a noun + the third person present indicative of the verb to be: 'I believe because it is absurd'. Based loosely on a remark in Tertullian, *De Carne Christi* V, 4.

Credo ut intellegam: the first person singular indicative active of *credo/credere* + subordinating conjunction + the first person singular subjunctive present active of *intellego/intellegere*: 'I believe in order that I may understand', a view associated with St. Anselm of Canterbury, based on a saying of St. Augustine.

De dicto: preposition + the neuter ablative singular of *dictum/dicti*: 'concerning what is said'.

De re: preposition + the feminine ablative singular of *res/rei*: 'concerning the thing'.

The phrases *de dicto* and *de re* are often used to mark a kind of ambiguity found in intensional statements (statements concerning what a person knows, believes, wants, etc.—also known as attributions in an opaque context). When we say that ‘John believes that someone is out to get him’ we might mean either that John believes that someone (unspecified) means to do him some harm (the *de dicto* interpretation) or that there is some particular person John believes is out to do him some harm (the *de re* interpretation).

De facto: preposition + the neuter ablative singular of *factum/facti* (literally: ‘concerning what is done’): in accordance with the way things exist or events happen (‘John is the *de facto* head of the organization although he has not been authorized to take charge’).

De jure: preposition + the neuter ablative singular of *ius/iuris* (literally: ‘concerning the law’): in accordance with the law or some authorizing condition (‘John may be running the organization but he is not its leader *de jure*’).

Deus ex machina: the nominative masculine singular of *deus/dei* + preposition + the ablative feminine singular of *machina/machinae* (literally: ‘god from the machine’). From Horace, *Ars Poetica*, where it refers to a mechanical device used to transport the representation of a deity onto the stage; more generally it designates any attempt to resolve a problem by means of an unwarranted or un-natural contrivance.

Eo ipso: the ablative neuter singular of the pronoun *is, ea, id* + the ablative neuter singular of the pronoun *ipse/ipsa/ipsum*: ‘through or by the thing itself’ (as opposed to through some consequent factor or action). ‘The fact that one disagrees with a particular church doctrine does not *eo ipso* make one an unbeliever.’

Ergo: adverb: ‘therefore’.

Esse est percipi: the present infinitive of the verb to be + the third person singular present indicative of the verb to be + the present passive infinitive of *percipio/percipere* (literally: ‘to be is to be perceived’). For Bishop Berkeley, being perceived was a basic feature of all sensible objects.

Ex nihilo nihil fit: preposition + the ablative neuter singular of *nihil* plus the nominative neuter singular of *nihil* + third person indicative active of *fit/fieri*: ‘Nothing is produced or comes from nothing.’ One of those metaphysical principles supposedly evident to ‘the light of reason’; first stated in fragment B 8 of the ancient Greek thinker Parmenides of Elea.

Explanans/explanandum: the nominative neuter present active participle of *explano/explanare* and the nominative neuter singular future passive participle of *explano/explanare*: ‘the one explaining’ and ‘the thing needing to be explained’. In the plural: *explanantia/explananda*: ‘the things explaining’ and ‘the things needing to be explained’. (A clue: remember that the nd in *explanandum* marks the item needing to be explained.)

Ex vi terminorum: preposition + the ablative feminine singular of *vis/vis* ('force') + the masculine genitive plural of *terminus/termini* ('end', 'limit', 'term', 'expression'): 'out of the force or sense of the words' or more loosely: 'in virtue of the meaning of the words'. 'We can be certain *ex vi terminorum* that any bachelors we encounter on our trip will be unmarried.'

Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas: 'Happy is he who is able to know the causes of things'. From Vergil, *Georgics* 2.490, said with reference to Lucretius.

Fiat justitia ruat caelum: 'Let there be justice though the sky should fall'. (One of many versions.)

Floruit (fl.): the third person perfect indicative singular of *floreo/lorere*: 'he flourished'. Used to place a person in a historical period when the precise birth and death dates are not known (e.g. 'Heraclitus of Ephesus, fl. 504-500').

Hypotheses non fingo: the accusative plural of the Greek noun *hupothesis* + adverb + the first person singular present indicative of *fingo/fingere*: 'I do not feign (invent) hypotheses'. From the second edition of Newton's *Principia*.

Ignoratio elenchi: the nominative feminine singular of *ignoratio/ignorationis* + the genitive masculine singular of *elenchus/elenchi* (literally: 'ignorance of a refutation): mistakenly believing that an argument that has proved an irrelevant point has proved the point at issue.

In cauda venenum: preposition + the ablative feminine singular of *cauda/caudae* + the nominative singular neuter of *venenum/veneni*: 'the sting is in the tail'. Originally used to describe the scorpion, the phrase is sometimes used in connection with a text or speech that begins in a friendly way but ends with a stinging rejoinder (cf. Winston Churchill's remark: 'You can always count on the Americans to do the right thing—after they have exhausted all the other alternatives').

Ipse dixit: the nominative singular of intensive pronoun *ipse/ipsa/ipsum* + the third person singular indicative active of *dico/dicere*: 'He himself said it', based on the Greek *autos êpha*, a phrase associated with the Pythagorean practice of crediting all discoveries to the founder of their community.

Ipso facto: the ablative neuter singular of the adjective *ipse-a-um* + the ablative singular neuter of *factum/facti*: 'By the very fact'.

Ipsissima verba: the nominative neuter plural of the superlative adjective *ipsissimus-a-um* + the nominative neuter plural of *verbum/verbi*: 'the very words' or 'the words themselves'.

Lex talionis: the nominative feminine singular of *lex/legis* + the genitive feminine singular of *talio/talionis*: 'the law of retaliation'.

Locus classicus: the nominative masculine singular of *locus/loci* + the nominative masculine singular of the adjective *classicus-a-um*: the ‘classic place’ or original location (‘*Iliad* II 454-57 is the *locus classicus* of the view that gods know all things and mortals know nothing’).

Modus ponens: the nominative masculine singular of *modus/modi* + the nominative masculine singular of the present active participle *ponens/ponentis*: ‘by means of putting or placing’, from *pono/ponere*: ‘put, place, set out, assert’: the name of the valid argument form ‘If P then Q, P, therefore Q’. (Also known as *modus ponendo ponens*: ‘the way that asserts by asserting.’)

Modus tollens: the nominative masculine singular of *modus/modi* + the nominative masculine singular of the present active participle *tollens/tolentis*, from *tollo/tollere*: ‘take away’: ‘by means of taking away’; name of the valid argument form ‘If P then Q, not-Q, therefore not-P’. Also known as *modus tollendo tolens*: ‘the way that denies by denying.’

Mundus intelligibilis: the nominative masculine singular of *mundus/mundi* + the nominative singular of the adjective *intelligibilis-intelligibile*: ‘the intelligible world’, ‘the world known to the intellect’. For Kant, this was the noumenal world or things in themselves.

Mundus sensibilis: the nominative masculine singular of *mundus/mundi* + the nominative singular masculine of the adjective *sensibilis-e*: ‘the sensible world’, ‘the world known through sense perception’.

Mutatis mutandis: the ablative neuter plural of the perfect passive participle of the verb *muto/mutare* + the ablative neuter plural of the future passive participle of the verb *muto/mutare*, an ablative absolute: ‘those things being changed which have to be changed’ or more loosely: ‘making the appropriate changes’.

Natura naturans: the nominative feminine singular of *natura/naturae* + the present active participle of the verb *naturo/naturare* (literally: ‘nature naturing’): ‘nature doing what nature does’, associated with the philosophy of Spinoza.

Non sequitur: adverb + the third person singular present of the deponent verb *sequor/sequi*: literally: ‘It does not follow’; used to characterize an inference as invalid.

Obiter dictum: adverb + the nominative neuter singular of *dictum/dicti* (literally ‘something said by the way’): an incidental or collateral statement.

Obscurum per obscurius: the nominative neuter singular of the adjective *obscurus-a-um* + preposition + the accusative neuter singular of the comparative adjective *obscurior-ius*: the error of attempting to explain the obscure by means of the even more obscure.

Pace: the ablative feminine singular of *pax/pacis*: literally ‘by means of the peace of’; more loosely: ‘with all due respect to’, used to express polite disagreement with one who holds a competing view.

Per se: preposition + the accusative neuter singular of the third person pronoun *sui, sibi, se, se*: ‘through or by itself’. ‘Aristotle held that the essence of a thing is what that thing is in virtue of itself or *per se*.’

Petitio principii: the nominative singular feminine of *petitio/onis* + the genitive neuter singular of *principium/principii*: literally: ‘a request for the beginning’, used to accuse a speaker of begging the question, i.e. assuming the truth of that which needed to be proved.

Post hoc ergo propter hoc: ‘After this therefore because of this’, used to accuse a speaker of inferring a causal connection simply on the basis of temporal precedence.

Prima facie: the ablative feminine singular of the adjective *primus-a-um* + the ablative feminine singular of *facies/faciei*: ‘on its first appearance’ or ‘at first sight’. Often used in an ethical context (following Ross) to distinguish a duty from an absolute moral obligation.

Quale/qualia: the neuter singular and plural forms of *qualis/quale* (‘of what sort or kind’); used to characterize either a property (such as redness) independently of the object that possesses it, or the contents of subjective experience (sometimes spoken of as ‘raw feels’).

Quid pro quo: the nominative neuter singular of *quis/quid* + preposition + the ablative neuter singular of *quis/quid*: ‘something in exchange for something’.

Quod erat demonstrandum (QED): the nominative neuter singular of the pronoun *qui-quaе-quod* + the third person singular of the imperfect of the verb to be + the nominative neuter singular of the future passive participle of *demonstro/demonstrare*: ‘that which was to be demonstrated’. Traditionally used to mark the conclusion of a mathematical or philosophical proof.

Quot homines tot sententiae: ‘(There are) as many opinions as there are men’ (from the Roman playwright Terence).

Reductio ad absurdum: the nominative feminine singular of *reducio/reductionis* + preposition + the accusative neuter singular of the adjective *absurdum*: ‘reducing to absurdity’, a form of argument which seeks to disprove a proposition by showing that it implies an absurd consequence.

Salva veritate: the ablative singular feminine of the adjective *salvus-a-um* + the ablative feminine singular of *veritas/veritatis*: literally ‘with saved truth’. Two terms or statements can be interchanged *salva veritate* when one can replace the other without loss of truth value.

Solvitur ambulando: the third person singular present passive indicative + the ablative gerund from *ambulo/ambulare*: ‘It is solved by walking’; more broadly: ‘the problem is solved by a practical experiment’. Diogenes the Cynic is said to have introduced the idea of a *refutatio ambulando* in response to Zeno’s arguments against motion. After Zeno had presented the argument against motion Diogenes got up from his seat and walked out of the room.

Sub specie aeternitatis: preposition + the ablative feminine singular of *species/speciei* + the genitive feminine singular of *aeternitas/aeternitatis*: literally ‘under eternal appearance’: viewing some matter from an eternal or cosmic perspective.

Sui generis: the genitive neuter singular of the adjective *suus-a-um* + the genitive neuter singular of *genus/generis*: ‘of its own kind’ or ‘unique in its characteristics’.

Summum bonum: the nominative neuter of the adjective *summus-a-um* + the nominative neuter singular of the substantive of *bonus-a-um*: ‘the supreme or highest good’. Ethical theorists since Plato and Aristotle have sought to identify the ‘highest good’ or ultimate aim of all human action.

Tabula rasa: the nominative feminine singular of *tabula/tabulae* + the nominative feminine singular of the adjective *rasus-a-um*: ‘an erased or blank tablet’, a phrase used by Aristotle, Locke, and others in connection with the view that the human mind is wholly lacking in content prior to the onset of sense experience.

Tertium non datur: the nominative neuter singular of the substantive *tertius-a-um* + adverb + the third person singular present passive of *do/dare*: ‘the third thing is not given’ or ‘there is no third option’, often used in connection with the principle of the excluded middle.

Tertium quid: (as above) + the nominative neuter singular of *quis/quid*: ‘a third thing’, originally used in debates concerning the nature of Christ.

Tu quoque: the nominative masculine singular of the second person pronoun *tu* + adverb meaning ‘also’: ‘literally ‘you also’, used to accuse the speaker of acting inconsistently with his doctrine; a form of *ad hominem* argument.

Vade mecum: the second person singular present imperative of *vado/vadere* + the ablative singular of the first person pronoun joined with the governing preposition: literally: ‘go with me’, a handbook or manual. Compare ‘Fodor’s Guide to Mental Representation: the Intelligent Auntie’s Vade-Mecum’ (*Mind*, 1985).

Greek for Philosophers

Here are definitions or explanations of some ancient Greek terms and phrases (or some English terms and phrases derived from ancient Greek) you may encounter in your study of philosophy. (A superscript caret (^) serves to distinguish the long vowels *êta* (η) and *ômega* (ω) from *epsilon* (ε) and *omicron* (ο) respectively.)

Aesthetics: from the Greek *aisthêtikos* (adj.) relating to *aisthêsis*, which can mean either ‘sensation’ or ‘perception’. The use of the term to designate a branch of philosophical inquiry dates from the 18th century when the German philosopher Baumgarten assigned it the meaning of ‘sense of beauty’.

Agapê/philia/erôs: The three most common Greek words for love. *Agapê* (rarely found in the Greek of the classical period but common in the *New Testament*) is a caring concern; *philia* covers various forms of affection ranging from friendships to a mother’s love of her child to a miser’s love for gold; *erôs* is passionate desire, typically sexual in nature.

Aitia: ‘cause’ or ‘reason why’, related to the verb *aitiaomai*: ‘charge, accuse, blame’. Aristotle held there were four kinds of *aitiai*—material, formal, efficient, and final. In Plato’s *Phaedo* Socrates defends the view that only formal and final causes are deserving of the name, all other factors being mere necessary conditions.

Akrasia: ‘not having power’, ‘weakness of will’, ‘incontinence’. Socrates’ identification of knowledge with virtue raised the question of how a person can fail to do what he or she believes or knows to be the best course of action. Aristotle proposed a solution within the context of his theory of the practical syllogism.

Alêtheia: ‘truth’ (literally ‘the state of not being forgotten or concealed’). In Homer one who gives an *alêthes* (adj.) account speaks openly and withholds nothing. Heidegger mistakenly took this to mean that *alêtheia* originally designated ‘a kind of being that has come out of hiding’ (*Verborgenheit*).

Antinomy (from *anti*: ‘against’ + *nomos*: ‘law’), a pair of incompatible principles or theses each of which we have reason to accept. According to Kant, using the categories in any way other than as rules for the organizing of sense experience will generate a set of ‘antinomies of pure reason’.

Aretê: (Pronounced ar-eh-tay). By the 5th century BCE *aretê* had come to mean ‘virtue’ or better ‘excellence’, especially in the qualities that made for success in civic affairs. Plato devoted most of the *Meno* to a consideration of the question: ‘Can *aretê* be taught, or is it acquired by practice, or does it come to us as a gift from the gods?’ In Plato’s *Republic* ‘justice’ (*diakaiosunê*) became

the focus of attention, but *aretê* regained its central place in Greek moral thought when Aristotle defined the single highest human good as ‘activity in accordance with *aretê*’.

Atomic theory: In the 5th century BCE Leucippus and his associate Democritus introduced the idea of ‘the uncuttable thing’ (*to atomon*) in an attempt to reconcile a belief in plurality and change with the arguments for an indivisible and changeless reality devised by Parmenides of Elea. Thus, as Jonathan Barnes put it, ‘the first atoms came from Elea.’ The idea of an indivisible material building block was later taken up by Epicurus and Lucretius and established on a scientific basis by John Dalton and Ludwig Boltzman in the 19th century and Ernest Rutherford and Niels Bohr in the 20th.

Cosmology (from *kosmos*: ‘order’, ‘the ordered world’ + *logos*: ‘account’ or ‘reason’): ‘an account of the physical universe’. A scientific approach to cosmology begins with the Milesian thinkers (Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes) who were the first to offer accounts of the universe that were (loosely) based on experience and subject to critical evaluation, correction, and improvement. Greek *kosmos*, at least as used by the Pythagoreans and Heraclitus, conveyed the idea of an elegant or beautiful arrangement (cf. the English derivative ‘cosmetic’).

The demiurge (*ho dêmiourgos*); ‘the artist’ of Plato’s *Timaeus* who uses the Forms as a blueprint in fashioning the best possible universe from pre-existing matter (from *ho dêmos*: ‘the people’ + *ergon*: ‘work’, i.e. a public worker).

Deontological ethics: from *to deon*: ‘that which is binding or needful’ + *logos*: ‘word’, ‘account’ or ‘reason’. Deontological approaches focus on the question of what action is required or must be done, typically in order to comply with a rule or set of rules rather than on the basis of the consequences of performing the action.

Dialectic: from *hê dialektikê technê*: ‘the dialectical art’, ‘the art of debating or arguing’. In *Republic VI* I Plato identifies a form of dialectic that consists in the examination of philosophical concepts and theses without making use of any information gained from sense experience. In Aristotle, dialectical arguments seek to establish a conclusion using premises granted by one’s opponent and play an important role in the presentation and defense of scientific knowledge. Dialectic assumes a central importance in Hegel’s philosophy as the historical process through which one natural development is negated and yet to some extent preserved in its successor. Marxian ‘dialectical materialism’ represents a variation on the Hegelian theme.

Elenchos/elenchus: ‘examination by question and answer’, ‘testing’, ‘refutation’. Although the word makes its first appearance in Parmenides B 7.5 when the goddess directs the youth to ‘judge/decide the elenchus on the basis of the account spoken by me’, the best-known ancient practitioner of elenchus was the Socrates of Plato’s dialogues. The elenchus usually consisted in the assertion of a thesis by Socrates’ opponent, Socrates extracting a few seemingly innocuous concessions, then Socrates pointing out that one or more conclusions implied by those concessions contradict the original thesis.

Endoxic method: Aristotle typically began his discussions of philosophical questions by reviewing ‘the received opinions’ (*ta endoxa*) on a subject—‘the opinions of the many and the

wise'. At least in ethical contexts, a philosophical theory would also be evaluated on the basis of how well it accorded with the *endoxa*.

Epistemology: (from *epistēmē*: 'knowledge', especially 'scientific or explanatory knowledge' + *logos*: 'word', 'account', 'reason'): 'theory of knowledge'. Greek epistemology begins with some brief remarks by Xenophanes, Heraclitus, and Parmenides. It becomes a major topic of interest for Plato and Aristotle, and a major problem among the Skeptical philosophers of the Hellenistic period.

The *ergon* argument: (from *ergon*: 'work' or 'job'): In Book I of the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle argues that the supreme human good (aka *eudaimonia*) must be defined in connection with the exercise of the rational part(s) of our soul since this is the *ergon* or distinctive activity that serves to distinguish us from all other kinds of living creatures (perhaps an offshoot of the principle affirmed in Plato's *Republic* that a person's role in the ideal state will be determined by his or her special abilities).

Ethics (from *ēthikos*: 'relating to moral character'): ancient Greek ethics can be divided into five main phases: the largely normative teachings of the early Greek poets and philosophers (including Xenophanes and Heraclitus), the skeptical attack on objective moral values launched by the Sophists of 5th-century Athens, Socrates' questioning of conventional Athenian values and search for the essential nature of the virtues, the systematic theories developed by Plato and Aristotle, and the more-action oriented reflections of the Stoics, Epicureans, Cynics, and Skeptics.

Eudaimonia: (literally: 'being under the protection of a good *daimôn* or spirit'): usually but misleadingly translated into English as 'happiness'. The term is perhaps best understood in connection with the success or good fortune a person would enjoy when under the protection of a guardian angel; sometimes rendered as 'human flourishing'. *Eudaimonia* was the winner of the contest Aristotle organized to determine the single highest good of all the goods achievable by action.

'Focal meaning': *pros hen legomenon* or 'being spoken of toward one'. The philosopher-scholar G. E. L. Owen coined the phrase to characterize Aristotle's view of the way in which words such as 'health', 'medicine', and 'being' possess meaning. Although things can be said 'to be' in various senses (e.g. to be as a substance, as a quality, as a relation, etc.) there is one basic sense in connection with which all the other things are said to be. This basic or core sense is the 'focal' sense of the expression, and in the case of 'being' it is 'to be as a substance'. Owen held that it was Aristotle's discovery of the phenomenon of focal meaning that enabled him to think that there could be a single science of being (i.e. metaphysics).

Form: *eidos*. *Eidos* appears to have begun its life designating the 'visual appearance' or 'look' of a thing (from the Greek verb *eidō*: 'see') and to have acquired the meaning of 'kind' or 'form' of a thing in early medical writings (where people who had a certain 'look' were associated with suffering from a certain kind of ailment). In Plato's dialogues Socrates asks a number of his interlocutors to identify that single common characteristic (*eidos*) all its instances have in common. In dialogues such as the *Symposium*, *Republic*, and *Timaeus*, Plato characterizes Forms

(*eidê*) as the only true realities, with the things we encounter in sense experience representing merely imperfect and short-term copies of their ideal prototypes. Like Plato, Aristotle regarded the *eidos* of a thing as the proper object of knowledge but he rejected Plato's contention that *eidê* could exist as independent substances. At *Parts of Animals* 642a Aristotle describes his conception of immanent form, i.e. a fixed set of attributes inhering in a substance and constituting its 'what it is to be', as his major advance over his predecessors.

Greatness of soul: *megalopsuchia* (from *me-gas/megalê*: 'great' + *psuchê*: 'soul'). In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle speaks of greatness of soul as 'the crowning ornament of the virtues'. The great-souled man possesses all the individual virtues, a great deal of interest in the specific virtue of honor, and an unshakable confidence in his own excellence. He also 'moves at a sedate pace and speaks in a deep voice'. Some students of ancient Greek thought regard *megalopsuchia* as one of the less appealing aspects of ancient Greek ethical thought.

Hedonism (from *hedonê*: 'pleasure'): the view that pleasure is the chief or sole good to be pursued in human life, associated primarily with the ancient Greek thinker Epicurus (cf. also 'hedon': the unit of measure of pleasure in Jeremy Bentham's 'hedonic calculus'),

Hylomorphism (from *hylê*: 'wood', 'lumber', 'matter' + *morphê*: 'form' or 'shape'): usually associated with Aristotle's view that substances (including living beings) cannot be adequately understood either simply as material beings (as, for example, the ancient atomists had supposed) or simply as form (as the Platonists had held), but as compounds of matter and form. Aristotle's hylomorphic conception of substance is one of the most difficult and historically influential aspects of his philosophy.

'Justice writ large': The English phrase often associated with the reference to *dikaiosunê en tôi meidzoni* in Book II of Plato's *Republic*. Having failed to determine the nature of justice as a quality in persons, Socrates proposes that he, Glaucon, and Adeimantus, consider justice 'writ large' or justice as a quality present in cities or states.

The ladder of love: The usual way of characterizing the simile introduced by Socrates in his speech on 'passionate desire' (*erôs*) in Plato's *Symposium*. Although 'the ladder of love' (or 'the celestial ladder') became a commonplace in the writings of Neoplatonic philosophers and early Christian writers, it was a somewhat inaccurate representation of the Platonic original (which was *epanabamos*: 'a step on a staircase', literally 'a thing one steps on in going up'). Philosophically, it matters whether one views the pursuit of philosophical understanding as a 'ladder' (Greek: *klimax*) or as a staircase, since the former but not the latter must be a rather solitary enterprise.

Logic (from *hê logikê technê*: 'the art of reasoning'). Although philosophers before Aristotle devised arguments to support their claims, and Sophists such as Gorgias identified various forms of persuasive argument, logic as a systematic study of the valid forms of inference begins with Aristotle. Within several centuries the limitations of Aristotelian logic had become apparent (non-syllogistic argument forms were identified and investigated by the Stoics), but for roughly two thousand years Aristotelian logic provided the basic tools for the analysis of immediate, syllogistic, and modal inferences.

Logos: ‘word’, ‘account’, ‘reason’. *Logos* is arguably the single most important term in ancient Greek philosophy. In Parmenides it is the ‘account’ or ‘discourse’ through which the goddess announces Parmenides’ epistemology and metaphysics. For Heraclitus it is both his ‘message’ to the world and the larger rational order he sets out to explain. For Plato and Aristotle it is the ‘rational account’ the possession of which serves to distinguish knowledge from mere true belief or experience. The *logos* became the ‘word’ of the gospel of *John I 1* which was ‘in the beginning’.

Metaphysics: Since Aristotle, metaphysics has been identified as the study of being *qua* being, or an investigation into the conditions that must be satisfied by anything in so far as it can be said to be at all (to this extent, metaphysics coincides with ontology). Later philosophers defined metaphysical inquiry more broadly (e.g. Kant identified its three concerns as the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, and the freedom of the will). We owe the term metaphysics to the Roman scholar Andronicus of Rhodes who edited and organized the surviving Aristotelian treatises during the 1st century BCE. When after completing the editing of the *Physics* Andronicus came to a treatise that had no obvious unifying theme, he entitled it ‘the things after the *Physics*’—*ta meta ta phusika*.

Nous: ‘mind’, ‘intelligence’, ‘clever intelligence’, ‘insight’, ‘intuition’. *Nous* appears early on in Greek literature as the ‘intelligence’ that is either impressively shown or woefully lacking among the characters of Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. For Heraclitus, *nous* was the ‘deep understanding’ that could not be acquired through ‘the learning of many things’; for Anaxagoras *nous* was the intelligence responsible for the cosmic order; for Plato *nous* was the certain grasp of truth we gain in connection with thinking about the Forms of things; and for Aristotle *nous* was (among other things) the mind, the ‘moral insight’ possessed by those who have learned from long experience, the kind of ‘intuitive grasp’ we can have of the first principles of a science, the ‘active intellect’ or ‘maker mind’ described in *De Anima* III 4 and 5 as a condition of our knowledge of intelligible form, as well as the divine ‘mind’ that moves all things by being the object of thought and desire.

Ontology (from *ontos*, genitive of the Greek participle *ôn*: ‘being’ + *logos*: ‘word’, ‘account’, ‘reason’): the branch of philosophy that seeks to give an account of the nature and properties of being.

Paralogism: from *para*: ‘against’ or ‘beyond’ + *logismos*: ‘reasoning’: in general: ‘an invalid or fallacious argument’. In the section of the first *Critique* known as the Paralogisms Kant attacked the attempts by rational psychology to gain knowledge of the nature of the soul.

Pederasty (*paiderasteia*, literally: ‘boy love’): the formalized relationship known to have existed in different periods and regions of ancient Greece between an adult male lover (known as the *erastês*) and the younger male ‘beloved’ (the *eromenos*). Pederastic relationships were typically short-term *quid pro quo* arrangements in which the older male offered guidance to the younger (typically post-pubescent) male in return for sexual favors. Plato depicts a number of individuals who are in pederastic relationships, perhaps most notably in the *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*, but his depiction is not uncritical.

Philosophia (from *philia*: ‘love’ + *sophia*: ‘wisdom’): ‘the love or eager pursuit of wisdom or knowledge’, perhaps coined by the members of the Pythagorean communities.

Phronesis: ‘practical wisdom’, as opposed to *nous*: ‘insight’ and *epistêmê*: ‘scientific or explanatory knowledge’; related to *ho phronimos*: ‘the man of practical wisdom’.

Phusis: ‘nature’, ‘the nature of a thing’. One of the key terms in the development of ancient Greek thought, *phusis* began its life as a noun formed from the verb *phuô*: ‘grow’ or ‘come to be by nature’. Early Greek writers spoke of the *phusis* of some individual thing as ‘the specific nature it had developed’, but the Presocratic philosophers used the term in a novel way in speaking of ‘nature’ as the physical universe.

‘Platonic love’: the phrase *amor Platonicus* was coined by the Renaissance scholar Marsilio Ficino in speaking of the special bond of mind and heart between two men Plato had depicted in a number of his dialogues, especially in Socrates’ speech in praise of *erôs* in the *Symposium*. ‘Platonick love’ (which by this time had become heterosexual) became a popular theme among artists and writers of 17th century Europe. Today’s ‘Platonic relationship’ (i.e. a relationship between two people devoid of any physical or sexual dimension) is a distant cousin of the Platonic original.

Recollection. In the *Meno*, *Phaedo*, and *Phaedrus* Plato develops the Doctrine of Recollection (or *Anamnesis*), the view that what we ordinarily speak of as learning is in fact ‘recollecting’ or ‘being reminded’ of things the soul knew in some previous lifetime. Plato’s theory is perhaps best understood as an attempt to account for our ability to grasp concepts (rather than the truth about empirically knowable matters). In some respects Plato’s proposal anticipates the later doctrine of ‘innate ideas’ as well as contemporary varieties of nativism developed by Chomsky, Fodor, and others.

‘The Socratic method’: instruction in the form of question and answer, perhaps most usefully employed (as in law school) when a sizable shared body of information can be assumed. See also *elenchus*.

‘The Socratic paradox’: The view expressed in several Platonic dialogues that knowledge is both necessary and sufficient for virtue, or that all wrongdoing is a product of ignorance.

‘The Socratic problem’: the classic, perhaps insoluble difficulty created by the fact that we have only three contemporary portraits of Socrates—those provided by Plato, the historian Xenophon, and the comic playwright Aristophanes—and they offer us radically different accounts of what Socrates believed and taught.

Socrates’ disavowal of knowledge: Socrates famously claimed that he knew virtually nothing, but this claim sits uncomfortably with his identification of knowledge with virtue as well as with the various passages in which he claims to know some things (e.g. at *Apology* 29b when he says that he knows that disobedience to a superior is shameful and wrong). Students of Plato’s thought have sought to avoid this inconsistency either by distinguishing between ‘two senses of

know' (Vlastos), between knowing instances of virtue and knowing its essential nature (Leshner), or between 'expert' and 'ordinary knowledge' (Reeve).

'Saving the phenomena' (*sodzein ta phainomena*). The phrase appeared originally in a statement of Eudemus quoted by Simplicius on the authority of Sosigines. Plato is said to have challenged the mathematicians and astronomers in his Academy to 'save the phenomena'. This meant, specifically, to come up with an explanation of the apparently irregular motion of the 'wandering stars' (the five planets visible to the naked eye) that would enable the observed phenomena to be regarded as real rather than dismissed as deceptive appearance. The astronomer Eudoxus is credited with responding to Plato's challenge by reducing the apparently disorderly movement of the planets to a combination of regular circular motions, an approach which provided the basis for the Ptolemaic system of astronomy. The incident, real or fictional, illustrates Plato's preference for the more theoretical, especially more mathematical approach to the study of nature. The phrase reappears in a modern context in Pierre Duhem's instrumentalist view of scientific explanation.

Sophrosyne: 'moderation', one of the five cardinal Greek virtues (along with piety or holiness, justice, courage, and wisdom). Exemplified by the two sayings inscribed on the ancient temple to Apollo at Delphi: *gnôthi seauton* 'Know Thyself' and *mêden agan*: 'Nothing Too Much'. In 1962 the students at St. John's College in Annapolis (where Greek is required of all students) organized a popularity contest and crowned the winner 'Miss Sophrosyne of 1962'.

Substance and essence: 'Substance' came into English from the Latin *substantia* which served to translate the Greek *ousia*: ('being', 'substance', 'essence') and *hupokeimon* ('substance', 'underlying subject'). *Ousia* originally meant 'substance' in property or wealth (e.g. 'a person of substance'), but in Aristotle *ousia* became the term of choice for 'the basic reality' or 'that of which things are predicated but itself not predicated of other things'. In the *Metaphysics* Aristotle identified 'being as an *ousia*' as the basic or 'focal sense' of 'being', and held that the question asked since the time of the first philosophers, 'What is being?', was the same question as 'What is *ousia*?' The central books of the *Metaphysics* contain a convoluted and deeply perplexing account of the hallmarks of *ousia* along with a review of the most promising candidates. Book Lambda contains a famous and influential account of God (aka 'the divine mind', 'the unmoved mover' and 'the best thing') because God is a substance that in many ways is implicated in the existence of all other substances. Unhelpfully, Aristotle sometimes used *ousia* in speaking of the essence of a thing, its '*to ti ên einai*' or 'what it was to be' that thing. The relation between a thing and its essence is only one of a number of difficult questions raised and at least partially answered in the *Metaphysics*.

Sun, line, and cave: The three literary figures deployed by Plato in the central books of the *Republic* to explain his *a priori* theory of knowledge and its metaphysical foundations. All three embody the same basic analogy: the light from the sun and the objects that are directly and fully illuminated by that light relate to each other as the form of the Good relates to the objects of thought (the Forms). As a consequence, a 'full, direct, and sure grasp of the truth' (*saphêneia*) requires that we turn our attention away from the realm of shadows and reflected images (i.e. physical objects) and direct it toward the Forms.

Syllogism (from *sullogismos*: ‘connected reasoning’). Aristotle did not invent the term *sullogismos* but he was the first to develop a conception of valid inference on the basis of which he could distinguish valid from invalid syllogistic arguments. Although Aristotle’s account of the syllogism represented only part of his logical system, it is usually referred to as ‘Aristotelian logic’).

Teleology (from *telos*: ‘end’ or ‘goal’ + *logos*: ‘word’, ‘account’, ‘reason’. A teleological account or approach regards the end state or goal of a process as either the only or the most important explanatory factor. Both Plato and Aristotle attacked various materialist cosmologies and promoted strongly teleological conceptions of the natural world.

Theôria: ‘contemplation’ (literally: ‘a looking at’, from the verb *theôreô*: ‘look at’, ‘view’, ‘behold’). The Pythagoreans may have introduced the term in connection with their attempt to discover the mathematical principles that order phenomena, but both Plato (e.g. in the *Symposium*) and Aristotle (e.g. in *Nicomachean Ethics* X) identify the life of *theôria* as the best possible kind of life for a human being (see *eudaimonia* and the *ergon* argument above).

‘Thought thinking about thought’: Aristotle’s Greek is *kai estin hê noêsis noêseôs noêsis*: ‘And its thought is thought about thought’ (*Meta.* XII, 1074b34-35). Aristotle reaches this unusual characterization of the divine through a series of binary decisions, grounded in the conviction that since the divine must be the best being in the universe it must live the best kind of life (which is the life of thought). And since its thought must be the best kind of thought, it must be about the best kind of thing (which is itself); hence it must think about itself. And since thought is just what the divine is, the divine’s thought must be thought about thought. Not surprisingly, this conception of the nature and life of the divine posed no small difficulties for later thinkers who sought to reconcile Aristotelian philosophy with Christian doctrine.

‘The third man argument’ (TMA): Although the title comes from Aristotle (*Meta.* 990b), the classic statement of the TMA occurs in Plato’s *Parmenides* 132a-b, formulated in terms of the Form of Largeness. Since the Form of Largeness shares the property of being large along with all the other large things that participate in it, we must posit some ‘third thing’, a second Form of Large in virtue of which the first Form of Large and all other large things share the property of largeness. The argument became the focus of much discussion thanks to a famous paper by Gregory Vlastos. Vlastos attempted to formulate the argument as a deductively valid proof of an infinite regress, articulating all the essential but un-stated assumptions (such as that Forms are self-predicating and that nothing that has a character can be identical with that in virtue of which it has it). Vlastos’ own interpretation of the TMA was that it was a reflection of Plato’s honest perplexity about the viability of his Theory of Forms, but many other interpretations were subsequently proposed in response to Vlastos’ paper. The philosophically rich and stimulating papers published by Vlastos and Owen in the 1960’s and 1970’s sparked a renaissance in the study of ancient philosophy in the English-speaking world.

The unmoved mover: One of Aristotle’s alternative ways of referring to the divine mind, thought thinking thought, or ‘the best thing’. Aquinas drew his First and Second Ways directly from Aristotle’s argument in *Metaphysics* XII that the series of moving and moved things cannot go on forever. (The argument is sometimes referred to disparagingly as ‘the taxi cab argument’)

since when it gets to where it wants to go, it conveniently forgets about the general principle it used to get there.)

‘Zeno’s paradoxes’: Zeno of Elea (mid-5th century BCE) was a follower of Parmenides who developed a series of arguments intended (evidently) to reinforce the teachings of his master. On one interpretation, Parmenides had sought to show that plurality and movement were unreal (or at least that we can think of what-is only as existing in a complete, indivisible, changeless, and eternal way). Zeno argued that those who disagree with Parmenides in so far as they think that many things exist and that they can move about from place to place can be shown to be committed to various absurdities. Zeno’s best-known arguments are the ‘motion paradoxes’ (The Bi-section, Achilles, Arrow, and Moving Rows), although there is also a set of plurality paradoxes each of which trades on our normal and somewhat loose ways of speaking about parts and wholes. Although the paradoxes seem in some ways to be trick arguments, and are obviously belied by ordinary sense experience, it has proven difficult to kill them off. A number of recent studies maintain that resolving the questions raised by the paradoxes requires that we address some fundamental issues relating to our ways of thinking and speaking about time and movement. For a useful set of essays on the topic, see Wesley Salmon’s *Zeno’s Paradoxes* (Hackett 1970, 2001). ‘Paradox’ in this context relates not to the embrace of two conflicting but apparently true theses (e.g. a logical antinomy), but rather to ‘*paradoxos*’ in its ancient meaning: ‘that which is contrary to popular opinion’, ‘unexpected’, ‘strange’—the same sense in which Plato spoke of his most outlandish proposals for reforming existing societies as ‘three great waves of paradox’.