

# Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy

Inviato da Paolo Quintili

## AUTORI

Beccaria, Berkeley, Butler, Cudworth, Descartes, Diderot, Encyclopedists, Epictetus, Epicurus, Hamilton, Helvétius, Hume, Jacobi, Leibniz, Locke, Lucretius, Luther, Maimon, Paley, Pascal, Rousseau, Shaftesbury, Spinoza.

## NOZIONI E PROBLEMI

Active Powers , A Priori and A Posteriori , Deism (english) , Deism (french) , Divine Command Theory , Dualism and Mind , Ethics , Faith and Reason , God (western philosophy) , God (Design Argument) , Liberalism , Miracles , Modern Skepticism , Molinism , Natural Theology , Pantheism , Stoicism , Time , Truth , Virtue Theory .

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## AUTORI

### CESARE BECCARIA (1738-1794)

B. was born the eldest son in an aristocratic family and educated at a Jesuit school.

### GEORGE BERKELEY (1685-1753)

Life and Writings. - Berkeley was born at Dysert Castle, near

Thomastown, Ireland, on March 12, 1685. He studied at Trinity College Dublin and received a B.A. (1704), M.A. and fellow (1707). He filled various college offices including tutor, Junior Dean, and Junior Greek Lecturer. He lived there in an atmosphere "charged with the elements of reaction against traditional scholasticism in physics and metaphysics.

#### JOSEPH BUTLER (1692-1752)

B. was born into a Presbyterian family at Wantage. He attended a dissenting academy, but then converted to the Church.

#### RALPH CUDWORTH (1617-1688)

Member of seventeenth century school of philosophers known as the "Cambridge Platonists"; b. at Aller, in Somersetshire (12 m. s.w. of Wells).

#### RENE DESCARTES (1596-1650)

D. is one of the most important Western philosophers of the past few centuries. During his lifetime, Descartes was just as famous as an original physicist, physiologist and mathematician. But it is as a highly original philosopher that he is most frequently read today. He attempted to restart philosophy in a fresh direction.

#### DENIS DIDEROT (1713-1784)

D. was the most prominent of the French Encyclopedists. He was educated by the Jesuits, and, refusing to enter one of the learned professions was turned adrift by his father and came to Paris.

## ENCYCLOPEDISTS

It is the name usually applied to the group of French philosophers and men of letters who collaborated in the production of the famous Encyclopédie (1751-1772).

## EPICTETUS (c.55 - c.135 C.E.)

Epictetus was an exponent of stoicism who flourished in the early second century C.E. about four hundred years after the Stoic school of Zeno of Citium was established in Athens.

## EPICURUS (c. 341-271 BCE)

Epicurus is one of the major philosophers in the Hellenistic period, the three centuries following the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BCE (and of Aristotle in 322 BCE). Epicurus developed an unsparingly materialistic metaphysics, empiricist epistemology, and hedonistic ethics.

## WILLIAM HAMILTON (1788-1856)

Life and Writings. \* Philosophy Views. Scottish philosopher, born at Glasgow March 8, 1788, died. at Edinburgh May 6, 1856. He studied first in Glasgow University, where his father had been professor of anatomy and botany; took a course in medicine at the University of Edinburgh in 1806-07; and in May, 1807, entered Balliol College, Oxford.

### CLAUDE ADRIEN HELVÉTIUS (1715-1771)

French philosopher; born in Paris January, 1715; died there Dec. 26, 1771. He studied at the College Louis-le Grand, and in 1738 received the lucrative post of farmer-general, which, however, he soon exchanged for the position of chamberlain to the queen.

### THOMAS HOBBS (1588-1679)

EARLY LIFE. Thomas Hobbes was born at Westport, adjoining Malmesbury in Wiltshire, on April 5, 1588. His father, the vicar of the parish (so John Aubrey tells us), "was one of the ignorant Sir Johns of Queen Elizabeth's time, could only read the prayers of the church and the homilies, and valued not learning, as not knowing the sweetness of it" .

### DAVID HUME (1711-1776)

Life and Writings. "Hume is our Politics, Hume is our Trade, Hume is our Philosophy, Hume is our Religion." This statement by 19th century British idealist philosopher James Hutchison Stirling reflects a unique position that David Hume holds in intellectual thought.

### FRIEDRICH HEINRICH JACOBI (1743-1819)

German philosopher; born at Dusseldorf January. 25, 1743; died at Munich March. 10, 1819. He studied at Frankfort and Geneva, and in 1764 became the head of his father's business in Dusseldorf. After his appointment to the council for the duchies of Julich and Berg in 1772 he devoted himself entirely to literature and philosophy.

**GOTTFRIED WILHELM LEIBNIZ (1646-1716)**

Metaphysics. Life. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz was born in Leipzig, Germany, on July 1, 1646. He was the son of a professor moral philosophy, and after university study in Leipzig and elsewhere, it would have been natural for him to go into academia.

**JOHN LOCKE (1632-1704)**

The philosopher was born at Wrington, a village in Somerset, on August 29, 1632. He was the son of a country solicitor and small landowner who, when the civil war broke out, served as a captain of horse in the parliamentary army. "I no sooner perceived myself in the world than I found myself in a storm," he wrote long afterwards, during the lull in the storm which followed the king's return.

**LUCRETIUS (C. 99 - C. 55 BCE)**

Lucretius (Titus Lucretius Carus) was a Roman poet and the author of the philosophical epic *De Rerum Natura* (On the Nature of the Universe), a comprehensive exposition of the Epicurean world-view.

**MARTIN LUTHER (1483-1546)**

German theologian, professor, pastor, and church reformer. Luther began the Protestant Reformation with the publication of his Ninety-Five Theses on October 31, 1517. In the Ninety-Five Theses he attacked the Church's sale of indulgences.

**SOLOMON MAIMON (1753-1800)**

The enigmatic philosopher, Solomon Maimon (1753-1800), is an important figure in the development of the movement referred to today as "German Idealism." Kant recognized Maimon as the critic who perhaps best understood his Critique of Pure Reason, and Fichte praises Maimon, wondering if later generations will look down on his own generation for having dismissed Maimon.

#### WILLIAM PALEY (1743-1805)

English theologian; born at Peterborough (37 m. n.e. of Northampton) July, 1743; died at Lincoln May 25, 1805.

#### BLAISE PASCAL (Pascal's Wager)

P. offers a pragmatic reason for believing in God: even under the assumption that God's existence is unlikely, the potential benefits of believing are so vast as to make betting on theism rational. Critics in turn have raised a number of now-classic challenges.

#### JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU (1712-1778)

French deistic philosopher and author; b. at Geneva June 28, 1712; d. at Ermenonville (28 m. n.e. of Paris) July 2, 1778. His mother died at his birth, and his father, a dissipated and violent-tempered man, paid little attention to the son's training, and finally deserted him. The latter developed a passion for reading, with a special fondness for Plutarch's Lives.

#### SHAFTESBURY, ANTHONY ASHLEY COOPER, EARL OF (1671- 1713)

Anthony Ashley Cooper was the grandson of the first Earl of Shaftesbury. He was Locke's patron, and was himself educated under Locke's supervision. His weak health prevented him from following an active political career, and his life was mainly devoted to

intellectual interests. After two or three unhappy years of school life at Winchester, he traveled abroad, chiefly in Italy, with a tutor.

## SPINOZA, BENEDICT (BARUCH) (1632- 1677)

Life - Benedict (Baruch) Spinoza (1632-1677) was the son of a Jewish merchant from Amsterdam. His father and grandfather were originally Spanish crypto-Jews -- that is, Jews who were forced to adopt Christianity in post-Islamic Spain, but secretly remained Jewish. He was educated in traditional Jewish Curriculum.

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## NOZIONI E PROBLEMI

### ACTIVE POWERS

In 18th and 19th century Scottish common sense philosophy, the term "active powers" refers to the capacities of impulse and desire which lead to or determine human action. It is distinguished from intellectual powers which involve the capacities of reasoning, judging and conceiving.

### A PRIORI AND A POSTERIORI

The terms "a priori" and "a posteriori" refer primarily to how or on what basis a proposition might be known. A proposition is knowable a priori if it is knowable independently of experience. A proposition is knowable a posteriori if it is knowable on the basis of experience.

## DEISM (ENGLISH)

LORD HERBERT OF CHERBURY. The beginnings of English Deism appear in the seventeenth century. Its main principles are to be found in the writings of this philosopher and diplomat (d. 1648).

## DEISM (FRENCH)

With other English influences Deism entered France, where, however, only its materialistic and revolutionary phases were seized upon.

## DIVINE COMMAND THEORY

The divine command theory is the view that moral actions are those which conform to God's will.

## DUALISM AND MIND

Dualists in the philosophy of mind emphasize the radical difference between mind and matter. They all deny that the mind is the same as the brain, and some deny that the mind is wholly a product of the brain. This article explores the various ways that dualists attempt to explain this radical difference between the mental and the physical world. A wide range of arguments for and against the various dualistic options are provided in the article.

## ETHICS

The field of ethics, also called moral philosophy, involves systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong behavior. Philosophers today usually divide ethical theories into three

general subject areas: metaethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics. Metaethics investigates where our ethical principles come from, and what they mean.

## FAITH AND REASON

Introduction. - Faith and reason are both sources of authority upon which beliefs can rest. Reason generally is understood as the principles for a methodological inquiry, whether intellectual, moral, aesthetic, or religious.

## GOD, WESTERN PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPTS OF

Ancient and Early Medieval. - Plato viewed as the highest of all things the good that was above all being and all knowledge, identified it with the divine nous, and attempted to raise the human spirit into the realm of ideas, into a likeness with the Godhead.

## GOD, DESIGN ARGUMENT FOR THE EXISTENCE OF

Design arguments are empirical arguments for God's existence. These arguments typically, though not always, proceed by identifying various empirical features of the world that constitute evidence of intelligent design and inferring God's existence as the best explanation for these features.

## LIBERALISM

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Many other links.

## MIRACLES

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Many other links.

## MODERN SKEPTICISM

Since the publication of Popkin's History of Skepticism, the strong influence of Greek skepticism on modern philosophy is now an accepted fact. In this and other publications Popkin traces the impact of skepticism on modern philosophy from 16th century editions of Sextus Empiricus to its ultimate resolution in the writings of the "new Pyrrho": David Hume. See the page by P. Suber: "Classical skepticism".

## MOLINISM

If Aristotle had not been a student of Plato, then would Aristotle have chosen to start his school at Lyceum? If you believe God knows the answer to this question, you probably believe God has middle knowledge. Middle knowledge is a form of knowledge first attributed to God by the sixteenth century Jesuit theologian Luis de Molina. It is best characterized as God's prevolitional knowledge of all true counterfactuals of creaturely freedom.

## NATURAL THEOLOGY

It is the favorite term in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries designating the knowledge of God drawn from nature.

## PANTHEISM

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Many other links.

## STOICISM

General Description. - The term "Stoicism" derives from the Greek word "stoa," referring to a colonnade, such as those built outside or inside temples, around dwelling-houses, gymnasia, and market-places.

## TIME

Time has been studied by philosophers and scientists for 2,500 years, and although time is much better understood today than long ago, many questions remain to be resolved.

## TRUTH

Philosophers are interested in a constellation of issues involving the concept of truth. A preliminary issue, although somewhat subsidiary, is to decide what sorts of things can be true.

## VIRTUE THEORY

It is the view that the foundation of morality is the development of good character traits, or virtues.

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