

guage, Truth and Logic (1936) popularized LOGICAL POSITIVISM in the Anglophone world. Figures who were peripheral to the Vienna Circle but who participated in discussions and probably attended some meetings included some with very different philosophical views, for instance, Kurt Gödel (1906–1978) and Karl Popper (1902–1994). The Nazis suppressed the Verein Ernst Mach in 1934 after correctly seeing its views and activities as antithetical to their racial and political agenda. Unsurprisingly, many members of the circle were then forced to emigrate. With Schlick's murder in Vienna in 1936, the circle effectively ended. However, logical positivism, eventually transformed into a more liberalized version generally known as logical empiricism, came to dominate a significant part of Anglophone philosophy, particularly in the United States until the 1960s. As such the Vienna Circle's influence lasted much longer than the circle itself, and some of its positions continue to influence the philosophy of science today.

SEE ALSO EMPIRICISM, LOGICAL; LOGICAL POSITIVISM.

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VIOLENCE

Although definitions vary, violence is widely defined as the intentional use of excessive and/or illegitimate physical force employed with the intention to injure persons

(either individuals or groups/communities) or property. In this vein, violence can occur both on the level of individuals (e.g., murder, rape, torture) and between nations (e.g., war, genocide). In certain instances, natural events (e.g., storms, earthquakes) are spoken of as violent. The absence of intention in these cases makes it difficult for us to classify acts of nature as violent per se. Here we are speaking metaphorically even if the results of a given occurrence in nature are destructive and fatal. Contemporary theory has also turned to illuminating instances of violence that are bereft of physical uses of force within the material world and instead operate either at the level of norms or institutions. These varieties of violence are regarded as symbolic/normative violence and systemic/institutional violence. The following entry is an elaboration on philosophical definitions and ethical assessments of violence.

Classic Definition and Discussion of Violence. The Aristotelian definition of violence, used by St. THOMAS AQUINAS throughout his works, is an explication of a particular definition of violence wherein (1) the violent principle is extrinsic and (2) the thing suffering the violence contributes nothing. Involved in this discussion of violence are two principles: the constraining and the constrained. The latter, though always passive relative to the agent inflicting violence, may suffer violence either as an active or as a passive principle. If it is an active principle, it suffers violence when, by an extrinsic agent, it is forced to act contrary to its own inclination or is prevented from acting according to it. This inclination is the intrinsic source of a given entity's activity: will for rational life, sensory desire for sentient life, the tendency of the form or nature in the case of both vegetative life and the spontaneous, non-vital activities of bodies. If it is a passive principle (i.e., one that requires an external agent to bring it into act), it suffers violence when it is moved to an act (i.e., a form or determination) opposed to the one to which it is naturally, though passively, inclined; or when it is prevented from receiving, from a corresponding natural agent, its proper act to which it has a natural passive inclination. Such a natural passive inclination would be found in primary matter already disposed to a certain act or in the secondary receptive principles of any natural substance. The agent or patient to which violence is done contributes nothing, because there is opposition to the intrinsic, voluntary or natural, active or passive inclination. Because inclination necessarily involves an end, violence, in this strict sense, cannot be understood without reference to final causality.

It is to be noted that in inanimate nature, because purpose is not always clearly discernible, the distinction between natural and violent movements becomes much less sharp than in the sphere of human activity or even of living beings in general. Also, the distinction is less

easily seen in the case of a passive principle than in the case of an active one. It is sometimes only with reference to the order of the universe as a whole that the activities and the corresponding receptivities of inanimate nature can be seen as contributing in some way to a purpose. Note also that what is violent in one respect could be natural in another; for example, corruption, though violent for the individual, is within the intention of universal nature. (For an extended discussion, see Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* 1110b 15 cf. 1110a 2; for a discussion of violent movement, see *Phys.* 230a 18–231a 20, 255a 1–256a 4, *Cael.* 269a 7–269b 17, 300a 21–301b 32.)

Objective Violence. More contemporary treatments have witnessed a turn to illuminating what some philosophers have called objective violence: namely, a manifestation of violence that is enacted without physical means. Two forms of objective violence can be distinguished from one another: systemic/institutional violence and symbolic/normative violence. Systemic/institutional violence refers to violence operative at the level of institutions of power that structure the social world. This form of violence is used to describe unjust social/political/economic systems that prolong, exacerbate, and legitimate social inequalities. In the wake of Michel Foucault's studies and the more recent contributions of philosophers like Judith Butler, symbolic/normative violence has come to be treated as a violence entrenched in the very function of norms, in so far as norms are taken to structure a world in which moral worth is differentially allocated in accord with the cultural acceptability and normative validation of one's identity. The contemporary turn to objective forms of violence comes with theoretical risks: The parsing of physical/material/concrete manifestations of violence, on the one hand, and objective/symbolic/structural violence, on the other hand, has led some theorists to construct narratives of causality between the two or to argue for a priority of one over and against the other. In some cases, such parsing and theorizing can do more harm than good. (For an extended discussion, see Foucault [1990], Foucault [1995], Butler [2004], Žižek [2008], Galtung [1969].)

Ethical Assessments of Violence. Just as the definitions of and philosophical approaches to violence differ between thinkers and traditions, ethical assessments of violence have been plentiful and varied throughout philosophy's history. Whereas some have taken violence to be wrong per se (for example, deontological approaches to morality deem actions inherently right or wrong independent of their consequences), others have worked toward isolating and articulating certain situations in which violent action might be justified.

Before briefly discussing the more common ethical assessments of violence from the Western philosophical tradition, it is interesting to note that philosophers have spilled quite a bit of ink arguing for the intractability and/or constitutive role of violence in human nature and, consequently, human sociality. For example, in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831) illuminates what he takes to be the inherent aggression at the heart of all intersubjectivity. Traces of this line of thought are found throughout much of post-Hegelian philosophy, especially, for example, in twentieth-century French existentialist and feminist thought. Similarly, William JAMES (1842–1910), in his “Remarks at a Peace Banquet” (1904), almost echoes Hegel in his suggestion that war, and the violence that constitutes it, is human nature at its uttermost (one should note that James pursued a pragmatic form of pacifism in his writings). In both of the above instances, violence is taken to be an unavoidable reality of human existence.

Philosophies of nonviolence or pacifism differ in their ethical assessments of violence and prescribed responses to it. Whereas a strict or absolute pacifism holds that violence is always morally impermissible, pragmatic forms of pacifism are characterized by their rejection of certain types of force dependent on the context and circumstances of the actions in question. Arguments for pacifist or nonviolent positions are often derived from beliefs regarding the inherent dignity and value of human lives that violent action deleteriously neglects and violates. As mentioned above, they are often deontological in nature in that they deem an action morally permissible or impermissible regardless of its consequences. Controversially, the prohibition of violent action, according to some, extends even as far as to a restriction on acts of violence performed in self-defense. This can seem problematic if one believes that persons have a fundamental right to protect their lives. Furthermore, the social viability of pacifist and nonviolent positions, on the scale of nations especially, may be a concern.

Philosophies of violence that justify the use of violence in certain contexts do not do so in order to argue for violence as morally permissible in and of itself. Rather, they are attempts to justify and allow for violent action in specific cases in which violent action can be understood to be the preferable means to achieving a sufficiently good end. As stated above, one could think of arguments supporting violence's moral permissibility in cases of self-defense. Much like the writings of Frantz Fanon (1925–1961), philosophies growing out of an opposition to colonialism occasionally argue for the necessity of using violent means in order not only to redress the material evils born of colonialism but also to

eradicate the oppressive state of mind imposed on an occupied people by a colonial power.

Another example of such an ethical and justificatory assessment of the use of force would be the theory of just war. The Thomistic understanding of the conditions under which a war could be deemed just require that (1) war must be waged for a morally acceptable reason; (2) the decision to engage in war must be made by a recognized and properly sanctioned authority; and (3) there must be a morally legitimate goal (i.e., the rectification of a wrong, the restoration of peace, and so on). The Catholic Church in recent decades has expanded upon Aquinas's thought by adding that the need to engage in a defensive war can be considered legitimate only if (1) other means to ending conflict have been rendered either ineffective or impractical; (2) there is a reasonable chance of success; and (3) the force used in a war against an aggressor does not outweigh the evil that the war is being waged in order to eliminate (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2243 and 2309). This account distinguishes carefully between legitimate uses of force and illegitimate uses (i.e., violence). The Catholic Church, therefore, condemns "violence" as "evil" and "unacceptable," but accepts a possible moral recourse to military force under "strict conditions" (cf. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 496 and 500).

Violence's Challenge to Theory. A key challenge posed to theorists working on issues pertaining to violence concerns the relationship between knowledge about violence and corresponding action. Two key questions for theorists to keep in mind are: How does one speak and think about violence without reproducing and perpetuating it? And how can one apply knowledge about violence to espouse and prescribe strategies that work toward either reducing its presence in the material world or deflecting and weakening its effects? (For an extended discussion, see Lawrence and Karim [2007].)

SEE ALSO ACTION AND PASSION; FORCE AND MORAL RESPONSIBILITY; IMPETUS.

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VIRTUE

Virtue is a habitual, well-established state of a person's natural faculties that disposes him or her to one or another kind of excellence of action, perception, deliberation, judgment, desire, or emotion.

Scripture. The Old Testament Hebrew term that comes closest to expressing the general notion of virtue is *Sadiq*, which denotes the state of being righteous in God's sight (Gn 15:6; Dt 6:25; Dt 24:13). In the SEPTUAGINT, the Greek term *aretê* is found in 2 Maccabees 10:28, 15:12, and 15:17, where it has the sense of valor or constancy. In Wisdom, it is used in reference to virtue generally (4:1, 5:13) and is applied to TEMPERANCE, PRUDENCE, JUSTICE, and COURAGE (8:7). See also Proverbs 14:15; Leviticus, 19:15; Psalms 118:14; and Sirach 5:2, 18:30, and 37:27–31.

In the New Testament, *aretê* occurs twice (Phil 4:8; 2 Pt 1:5), but terms for specific personal excellences, as measured by the standard of the New Covenant, are found in many places in the Epistles: LOVE (*agapē*, 1 Cor 13), FAITH (*pistis*, Rom 4), HOPE (*elpis*, Rom 5:4),