

Glossary of Technical Terms and Foreign Expressions

Divine Complexity

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a posteriori	what is known from experience
a priori	what is known prior to experience
actuality	something real in the sense of a possibility chosen and acted upon
allegory	a method of interpretation which uncovers hidden senses of the literal text
alpha-privative	<i>Greek</i> , alpha prefix = un- or im- or in- in English, to deprive a term of its meaning, for example, invisible = not able to be seen.
anabasis	<i>Greek</i> , ascent
analogy/ical	a comparison that goes as A to B, so C to D.
analytic statement	a statement that explicates the meaning contained in a term or data
anhomoios	<i>Greek</i> , unlike, dissimilar
anomian	the party of radical Arians who taught that the Son was unlike the Father in being
antinomian	<i>Greek</i> , opposed to the Law.
apocalyptic	revealed, revelation
apodictic	a statement made on authority without supporting reasons or argumentation
apokatastasis	the doctrine that in the eschaton, all will be reconciled and restored to God
apologetics	the reasoned defense of beliefs.
apophatic/ism	negative theology, which attains a concept of God by purification of all unworthy association
apostolic	pertaining to the apostles and their teachings
aseity	<i>Latin</i> , literally, 'from oneself-ness;' the doctrine that God has His being from Himself, not any other.
atonement	the teaching about reconciliation with God
axiom	a first principle
biblicism	belief that the Bible speaks God's Word without human mediation either in its composition or its understanding
canon/ical	<i>Greek</i> , a rule or standard; the Bible taken as a standard or rule of faith
catechesis	basic instruction in faith
catechism	a manual of basic instruction in faith
catechumen	a learner preparing for baptism
catholic	pertaining to the whole
causality	the agency/ies by which effects are produced
christology/ical	the doctrine concerning Christ
Christus praesens	<i>Latin</i> , Christ as present
coherence	the agreement of things with each other
contrition	the sorrow over sin that accompanies repentance
cosmology	doctrine or theory of the world
creation	the act of origin
creed/al	a statement of things believed
critique	investigation of the justification of knowledge claims or claims to truth
deism	the belief that God, like an architect or engineer, established the initial conditions for the creation of the world, but then left the world to continue on its own
demythologization	the theological program of removing the mythological husk from the gospel to reveal its existential kernel

<i>deus ex machine</i>	<i>Latin</i> , literally, God out of a machine, referring to the mechanical devices used to fly a god onto a stage in a theatrical performance
<i>deus revelatus</i>	<i>Latin</i> , the revealed God as opposed to <i>deus absconditus</i> , the hidden God.
dialectic/al	the method of dialogue and disputation, going back and forth from assertion and negation is search of truth.
divine simplicity	the doctrine that God is by nature uncompounded and thus incapable of division or disintegration
docetic	the heretical teaching that Jesus only appeared to be human
<i>doctrina evangelii</i>	<i>Latin</i> , doctrine of the gospel
doctrine/al	synonymous with dogma
dogma	a doctrine, teaching, opinion or belief regarded as important for a community of belief
dogmatics	the study of the important beliefs of a community
dogmatism	the holding of doctrines, teaching, opinion or belief uncritically and without warrant
doxology/ical	pertaining to the worship or praise of God
dyad	a double reality
early Catholicism	the emergence of orthodoxy from primitive Christianity
ecstatic	the centering of the self outside of itself in another reality or person
enthusiasm	<i>Greek</i> , literally ‘being full of God;’ the heretical claim to have new revelations or inspirations going beyond the Word made flesh.
episcopacy	the office of bishop in early Christianity
epistemic	pertaining to knowledge
epistemic primacy	the set of beliefs which cannot be given up without the dissolution of a community of belief
epistemology/ical	philosophical theory of knowledge
equivocation	using a term in a double sense or with a double meaning
eschaton/ological	the end for which the world was created; pertaining to the last things
eternal generation	the doctrine that the begetting of the Son from the Father is without beginning or end.
eucharist/ic	<i>Greek</i> , literally, thanksgiving; the liturgical context of the celebration of the Lord’s Supper as remembrance and thanksgiving
evangelical	pertaining to the gospel
exegetis	the method of drawing out the meaning of text by explication
existential/ist/ism	the doctrine that existence is prior to essence, that is, that there are no predetermined meanings to life, that each individual existent must construct meaning for itself.
faith	trust in God as articulated in beliefs about God, Christ and so on.
fideism	faith in faith
<i>fiducia</i>	<i>Latin</i> , trust
<i>finitum (non)</i>	
<i>capax infiniti</i>	<i>Latin</i> , the finite is (not) capable of the infinite
first principles	the formal principles of any possible knowledge or the reasons or causes that any exists at all
fitting/ness	the harmony or congruence, not identity or correspondence of one thing to another
gnostic/ism	an early, rival religious movement claiming to have secret knowledge
gospel	the good news
grace	the favor of God and/or the gift of God of new life
<i>Grundtext</i>	<i>German</i> , a basic or foundational writing

harrowing (of hell)	the idea based on 1 Peter 3:18-23 that Christ descended to hell to set its prisoners free
Hellenization	the process of assimilating to Greek culture
Heresy	theological teaching which deviates from the gospel in sufficiently serious way to jeopardize salvation
hermeneutics/al	principles of interpretation of texts and of other minds
heterodoxy	a unorthodox teaching of a church acting in a sectarian way
homiletics/al	the art of preaching; pertaining to preaching
<i>homoios</i>	<i>Greek</i> , like, similar
<i>homoiousios</i>	<i>Greek</i> , of a similar substance, essence or being
<i>homoousios</i>	<i>Greek</i> , of the same substance, essence or being
<i>hypostasis</i>	<i>Greek</i> , reality, form of existence, person
icon/ic	<i>Greek</i> , image; the self-representation of the Triune God in Christ
idolatry	the substitution of human representations of the divine for God's self-revelation
immanence	the quality of being within
imminence	the quality of being near
(im)passible/ity	the quality of (not) being subject to suffering
<i>in nobis</i>	<i>Latin</i> , in us
incarnate/ion	<i>Latin</i> , in flesh-ment, the teaching of John 1:14.
incurvation	the egocentric stance of fallen humanity "curved" into itself
ineffability	the quality of being incapable of either perception or conception
inerrant	without possibility of error
infallible	without possibility of failing
joyful exchange	
<i>(admirabile commercium)</i>	the idea that Christ procures human salvation by taking on Himself human sin and woe and given to humans in turn His righteousness and life.
juridical	pertaining to the office of a judge
justification	the acceptance of the unworthy sinner by God
<i>katabasis</i>	<i>Greek</i> , descent
kataphatic/ism	revealed theology, which clarifies a concept of God by attention to the Word of God.
<i>kenosis</i>	<i>Greek</i> , emptying
<i>kerygma</i>	<i>Greek</i> , proclamation; the primitive Christian message
legalism/istic	reliance on the law for justification, which results in casuistic rationalization of behavior
liberal (Protestant)	the new Protestant theology that arose after modernity, seeking to reconcile Christianity with modern thought
<i>Logos</i>	<i>Greek</i> , word; personified as The Word, the second person of the Trinity
martyrological	with respect to martyrs; <i>Greek</i> : witness, hence those who witness to faith under threat of death
mediation theology	the liberal Protestant theological project of reconciling traditional Christian belief with modern consciousness
Messiah/nic	the Lord's Anointed, who would fulfill the promise given to King David, for a just ruler.
metaphysical	
materialism	the dogma that matter is the ultimate reality
metaphysics/al	loosely, beliefs about the ultimate nature of reality; more strictly, the first principles of knowledge which are necessary to any further knowledge claims.
modalism	the teaching that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are temporary masks of God

monad	a singular reality
narratability	capable of being truly described by a story that records action and passion in time
natural theology	the knowledge of God based upon unaided human reason critically reflecting upon the myths and narratives of revealed theology
Nestorian	the heretical teaching that the Son of God and the son of Mary are two different sons.
noetic	pertaining to mind
norma normans	<i>Latin</i> , the ‘norming norm,’ that is, the teaching of first order or primary theology, the gospel narrative as written in canonical Scripture
norma normata	<i>Latin</i> , the ‘normed norm,’ that is, the dogmas of second order theology, like the Trinity
omnipresent/ce	all present
omnipotent/ce	all powerful
omniscient/ce	all knowing
ontic	pertaining to what factually or actually is
ontology/ical	the doctrine concerning being
ontotheological	originally, with reference to the ontological proof of God’s existence (a necessary being necessarily exists); in contemporary usage, God as a convenient explanation of the world in the interest of human theoretical power and practical domination of being
orthodoxy	right teaching
ousia	<i>Greek</i> , substance, essence or being
parable	a story that makes a single point of comparison from a familiar reality to an unfamiliar one
paradox/ical	a rhetorical device of asserting seeming nonsense in order to call into question the predominant discourse and way of thinking
parousia	<i>Greek</i> , the coming (of Christ in glory)
performative language	speech that also acts
perichoresis	<i>Greek</i> , circulation, mutual interpenetration
persona	<i>Latin</i> , the public appearance or face of an individual
Platonic/ism	the philosophical teachings associated with and descending from Plato
pleroma	<i>Greek</i> , the fullness; the Godhead
polemical theology	fighting; theology at war with deviations from orthodox teaching
possibility	something that could be real if acted upon
pragmatist	
perspectivalism	the position that knowledge claims are practically justified by their utility for life from a definite and interested perspective rather than as objective representations of reality in principle accessible to any neutral observer.
primary theology	the Scriptural discourse about the God of the Gospel
pro me	<i>Latin</i> , for me
pro nobis	<i>Latin</i> , for us
prolegomena	introductory considerations
proleptic	an action which reveals the future by way of anticipation
promissory	performative speech which commits the speaker to the spoken for some good or benefit
prophecy	the telling of the Word of God, with the implication that the test of its authenticity is its predictive power
proprium	<i>Latin</i> , what is proper to someone or something
prosopeon/oi	<i>Greek</i> , the public face or appearance = <i>Latin</i> , <i>persona</i>
providence	God’s superintendence of events in nature and history

rationalism	reliance on reason alone
rationality	the use of human reason to understand and act intelligently
reason	the capacity of human intelligence to inquire and discover the reason of things
recapitulation	<i>Latin</i> etymology: to put the head back on; <i>Greek: anakephalaio</i> . The doctrine of redemption in Christ by his restoration of human nature to God.
reflective/Second order theology	the church's discourse about the Scriptural discourse
<i>regula fidei</i>	<i>Latin</i> , the rule or standard of faith
repentance	the doctrine that faith is accompanied by conversion of the heart to the love of God, fitting sorrow over sin and resolve to live as reconciled to God.
revelation/revealed theology	the imparting to humans of God's self-knowledge as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
righteousness	the faithfulness of God to His promises
secular humanism	a modern, post-Christian philosophy of life concerned with human welfare in this age only
soteriology/ical	the doctrine concerning salvation
speech-act	speech which in addition to conveying information also performs a task, such as promising or threatening.
subordinationism	the doctrine that the Father is really God, and the Son and Spirit are divine only by participation in the Father.
Substance	<i>Latin, substantia = Greek, ousia</i> ; being, essence, reality, substance
supercession/ism	the teaching that something has been overcome and left behind
synthetic statement	a statement that conjoins as true unrelated data
theology	strictly, teaching about God; loosely, Christian teachings also about the world, humanity, salvation etc. in relation to God.
<i>theos</i>	<i>Greek</i> , God.
<i>theosis</i>	<i>Greek</i> , divinization, becoming divine.
transcendence	the quality of being beyond
tritheism	the doctrine that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three, separate gods
unitarianism	the belief that the Father alone is true God.
unoriginate	without an exterior cause; self-caused.
voluntarism	the theological view that God's will determines truth and goodness.