

Logos

Logos (UK: /ˈloʊɡɒs, ˈlɒɡɒs/, US: /ˈloʊɡoʊs/; Ancient Greek: λόγος, romanized: *lógos*; from λέγω, *légō*, lit. 'I say') is a term in Western philosophy, psychology, rhetoric, and religion derived from a Greek word variously meaning "ground", "plea", "opinion", "expectation", "word", "speech", "account", "reason", "proportion", and "discourse".^{[1][2]} It became a technical term in Western philosophy beginning with Heraclitus (c. 535 – c. 475 BC), who used the term for a principle of order and knowledge.^[3]



Greek spelling of *logos*

Ancient Greek philosophers used the term in different ways. The sophists used the term to mean discourse. Aristotle applied the term to refer to "reasoned discourse"^[4] or "the argument" in the field of rhetoric, and considered it one of the three modes of persuasion alongside *ethos* and *pathos*.^[5] Pyrrhonist philosophers used the term to refer to dogmatic accounts of non-evident matters. The Stoics spoke of the *logos spermatikos* (the generative principle of the Universe) which foreshadows related concepts in neoplatonism.^[6]

Within Hellenistic Judaism, Philo (c. 20 BC – c. 50 AD) adopted the term into Jewish philosophy.^[7] Philo distinguished between *logos prophorikos* ("the uttered word") and the *logos endiathetos* ("the word remaining within").^[8]

The Gospel of John identifies the Christian Logos, through which all things are made, as divine (*theos*),^[9] and further identifies Jesus Christ as the incarnate Logos. Early translators of the Greek New Testament such as Jerome (in the 4th century AD) were frustrated by the inadequacy of any single Latin word to convey the meaning of the word *logos* as used to describe Jesus Christ in the Gospel of John. The Vulgate Bible usage of *in principio erat verbum* was thus constrained to use the (perhaps inadequate) noun *verbum* for "word", but later Romance language translations had the advantage of nouns such as *le Verbe* in French. Reformation translators took another approach. Martin Luther rejected *Zeitwort* (verb) in favor of *Wort* (word), for instance, although later commentators repeatedly turned to a more dynamic use involving *the living word* as felt by Jerome and Augustine.^[10] The term is also used in Sufism, and the analytical psychology of Carl Jung.

Despite the conventional translation as "word", *logos* is not used for a word in the grammatical sense—for that, the term *lexis* (λέξις, *léxis*) was used.^[11] However, both *logos* and *lexis* derive from the same verb *légō* (λέγω), meaning "(I) count, tell, say, speak".^{[1][11][12]}

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Ancient Greek philosophy

Heraclitus

The writing of Heraclitus (c. 535 – c. 475 BC) was the first place where the word *logos* was given special attention in ancient Greek philosophy,^[13] although Heraclitus seems to use the word with a meaning not significantly different from the way in which it was used in ordinary Greek of his time.^[14] For Heraclitus, *logos* provided the link between rational discourse and the world's rational structure.^[15]

This *logos* holds always but humans always prove unable to ever understand it, both before hearing it and when they have first heard it. For though all things come to be in accordance with this *logos*, humans are like the inexperienced when they experience such words and deeds as I set out, distinguishing each in accordance with its nature and saying how it is. But other people fail to notice what they do when awake, just as they forget what they do while asleep.

— Diels–Kranz, 22B1

For this reason it is necessary to follow what is common. But although the *logos* is common, most people live as if they had their own private understanding.

— Diels–Kranz, 22B2

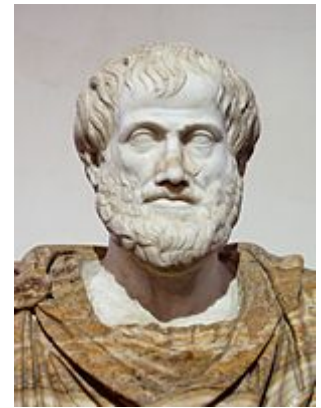
Listening not to me but to the *logos* it is wise to agree that all things are one.

— Diels–Kranz, 22B50^[16]

What *logos* means here is not certain; it may mean "reason" or "explanation" in the sense of an objective cosmic law, or it may signify nothing more than "saying" or "wisdom".^[17] Yet, an independent existence of a universal *logos* was clearly suggested by Heraclitus.^[18]

Aristotle's rhetorical logos

Following one of the other meanings of the word, Aristotle gave *logos* a different technical definition in the *Rhetoric*, using it as meaning argument from reason, one of the three modes of persuasion. The other two modes are *pathos* (πάθος, *páthos*), which refers to persuasion by means of emotional appeal, "putting the hearer into a certain frame of mind";^[19] and *ethos* (ἦθος, *êthos*), persuasion through convincing listeners of one's "moral character".^[19] According to Aristotle, *logos* relates to "the speech itself, in so far as it proves or seems to prove".^{[19][20]} In the words of Paul Rahe:



Aristotle, 384–322 BC.

For Aristotle, *logos* is something more refined than the capacity to make private feelings public: it enables the human being to perform as no other animal can; it makes it possible for him to perceive and make clear to others through reasoned discourse the difference between what is advantageous and what is harmful, between what is just and what is unjust, and between what is good and what is evil.^[4]

Logos, *pathos*, and *ethos* can all be appropriate at different times.^[21] Arguments from reason (logical arguments) have some advantages, namely that data are (ostensibly) difficult to manipulate, so it is harder to argue against such an argument; and such arguments make the speaker look prepared and knowledgeable to the audience, enhancing *ethos*. On the other hand, trust in the speaker—built through *ethos*—enhances the appeal of arguments from reason.^[22]

Robert Wardy suggests that what Aristotle rejects in supporting the use of *logos* "is not emotional appeal per se, but rather emotional appeals that have no 'bearing on the issue', in that the *pathē* [πάθη, *páthē*] they stimulate lack, or at any rate are not shown to possess, any intrinsic connection with the point at issue—as if an advocate were to try to whip an antisemitic audience into a fury because the accused is Jewish; or as if another in drumming up support for a politician were to exploit his listeners's reverential feelings for the politician's ancestors".^[23]

Aristotle comments on the three modes by stating:

Of the modes of persuasion furnished by the spoken word there are three kinds.

The first kind depends on the personal character of the speaker;
the second on putting the audience into a certain frame of mind;
the third on the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words of the speech itself.

— Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 350 BC

^[24]

Pyrrhonists

The Pyrrhonist philosopher Sextus Empiricus defined the Pyrrhonist usage of *logos* as "When we say 'To every logos an equal logos is opposed,' by 'every logos' we mean 'every logos that has been considered by us,' and we use 'logos' not in its ordinary sense but for that which establishes something dogmatically, that is to say, concerning the non-evident, and which establishes it in any way at all, not necessarily by means of premises and conclusion."^[25]

Stoics

Stoic philosophy began with Zeno of Citium c. 300 BC, in which the *logos* was the active reason pervading and animating the Universe. It was conceived as material and is usually identified with God or Nature. The Stoics also referred to the *seminal logos* ("logos spermatikos"), or the law of generation in the Universe, which was the principle of the active reason working in inanimate matter. Humans, too, each possess a portion of the divine *logos*.^[26]

The Stoics took all activity to imply a *logos* or spiritual principle. As the operative principle of the world, the *logos* was *anima mundi* to them, a concept which later influenced Philo of Alexandria, although he derived the contents of the term from Plato.^[27] In his Introduction to the 1964 edition of Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*, the Anglican priest Maxwell Staniforth wrote that "*Logos* ... had long been one of the leading terms of Stoicism, chosen originally for the purpose of explaining how deity came into relation with the universe".^[28]

Isocrates' logos

Public discourse on ancient Greek rhetoric has historically emphasized Aristotle's appeals to *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*, while less attention has been directed to Isocrates' teachings about philosophy and *logos*,^[29] and their partnership in generating an ethical, mindful *polis*. Isocrates does not provide a single definition of *logos* in his work, but Isocratean *logos* characteristically focuses on speech, reason, and civic discourse.^[29] He was concerned with establishing the "common good" of Athenian citizens, which he believed could be achieved through the pursuit of philosophy and the application of *logos*.^[29]

In Hellenistic Judaism

Philo of Alexandria

Philo (c. 20 BC – c. 50 AD), a Hellenized Jew, used the term *logos* to mean an intermediary divine being or demiurge.^[7] Philo followed the Platonic distinction between imperfect matter and perfect Form, and therefore intermediary beings were necessary to bridge the enormous gap between God and the material world.^[30] The *logos* was the highest of these intermediary beings, and was called by Philo "the first-born of God".^[30] Philo also wrote that "the Logos of the living God is the bond of everything, holding all things together and binding all the parts, and prevents them from being dissolved and separated".^[31]

Plato's Theory of Forms was located within the *logos*, but the *logos* also acted on behalf of God in the physical world.^[30] In particular, the Angel of the Lord in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) was identified with the *logos* by Philo, who also said that the *logos* was God's instrument in the creation of the Universe.^[30]

Christianity

In Christology, the *Logos* (Greek: Λόγος, lit. "Word", "Discourse", or "Reason")^[32] is a name or title of Jesus Christ, seen as the pre-existent second person of the Trinity. The concept derives from John 1:1, which in the Douay–Rheims, King James, New International, and other versions of the Bible, reads:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.^{[33][34][35]}

In the translations, "Word" is used for Λόγος, although the term is often used transliterated but untranslated in theological discourse.

Neoplatonism

Neoplatonist philosophers such as Plotinus (c. 204/5 – 270 AD) used *logos* in ways that drew on Plato and the Stoics,^[36] but the term *logos* was interpreted in different ways throughout Neoplatonism, and similarities to Philo's concept of *logos* appear to be accidental.^[37] The *logos* was a key element in the meditations of Plotinus^[38] regarded as the first neoplatonist. Plotinus referred back to Heraclitus and as far back as Thales^[39] in interpreting *logos* as the principle of meditation, existing as the interrelationship between the hypostases—the soul, the intellect (*nous*), and the One.^[40]

Plotinus used a trinity concept that consisted of "The One", the "Spirit", and "Soul". The comparison with the Christian Trinity is inescapable, but for Plotinus these were not equal and "The One" was at the highest level, with the "Soul" at the lowest.^[41] For Plotinus, the relationship between the three elements of his trinity is conducted by the outpouring of *logos* from the higher principle, and *eros* (loving) upward from the lower principle.^[42] Plotinus relied heavily on the concept of *logos*, but no explicit references to Christian thought can be found in his works, although there are significant traces of them in his doctrine. Plotinus specifically avoided using the term *logos* to refer to the second person of his trinity.^[43] However, Plotinus influenced Gaius Marius Victorinus, who then influenced Augustine of Hippo.^[44] Centuries later, Carl Jung acknowledged the influence of Plotinus in his writings.^[45]

Victorinus differentiated between the *logos* interior to God and the *logos* related to the world by creation and salvation.^[46]

Augustine of Hippo, often seen as the father of medieval philosophy, was also greatly influenced by Plato and is famous for his re-interpretation of Aristotle and Plato in the light of early Christian thought.^[47] A young Augustine experimented with, but failed to achieve ecstasy using the meditations of Plotinus.^[48] In his Confessions, Augustine described *logos* as the *Divine Eternal Word*,^[49] by which he, in part, was able to motivate the early Christian thought throughout the Hellenized world (of which the Latin speaking West was a part)^[50] Augustine's *logos* *had taken body* in Christ, the man in whom the *logos* (i.e. *veritas* or *sapientia*) was present as in no other man.^[51]

Islam

The concept of the *logos* also exists in Islam, where it was definitively articulated primarily in the writings of the classical Sunni mystics and Islamic philosophers, as well as by certain Shi'a thinkers, during the Islamic Golden Age.^{[52][53]} In Sunni Islam, the concept of the *logos* has been given many different names by the denomination's metaphysicians, mystics, and philosophers, including *ʿaql* ("Intellect"), *al-insān al-kāmil* ("Universal Man"), *kalimat Allāh* ("Word of God"), *haqīqa muḥammadiyya* ("The Muhammadan Reality"), and *nūr muḥammadī* ("The Muhammadan Light").

ʿAql



In principio erat verbum, Latin for *In the beginning was the Word*, from the Clementine Vulgate, Gospel of John, 1:1–18.



Plotinus with his disciples.

One of the names given to a concept very much like the Christian Logos by the classical Muslim metaphysicians is 'aql, which is the "Arabic equivalent to the Greek νοῦς (intellect)."^[53] In the writings of the Islamic neoplatonist philosophers, such as al-Farabi (c. 872 – c. 950 AD) and Avicenna (d. 1037),^[53] the idea of the 'aql was presented in a manner that both resembled "the late Greek doctrine" and, likewise, "corresponded in many respects to the Logos Christology."^[53]

The concept of *logos* in Sufism is used to relate the "Uncreated" (God) to the "Created" (humanity). In Sufism, for the Deist, no contact between man and God can be possible without the *logos*. The *logos* is everywhere and always the same, but its personification is "unique" within each region. Jesus and Muhammad are seen as the personifications of the *logos*, and this is what enables them to speak in such absolute terms.^{[54][55]}

One of the boldest and most radical attempts to reformulate the neoplatonic concepts into Sufism arose with the philosopher Ibn Arabi, who traveled widely in Spain and North Africa. His concepts were expressed in two major works *The Ringstones of Wisdom (Fusus al-Hikam)* and *The Meccan Illuminations (Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya)*. To Ibn Arabi, every prophet corresponds to a reality which he called a *logos (Kalimah)*, as an aspect of the unique divine being. In his view the divine being would have for ever remained hidden, had it not been for the prophets, with *logos* providing the link between man and divinity.^[56]

Ibn Arabi seems to have adopted his version of the *logos* concept from neoplatonic and Christian sources,^[57] although (writing in Arabic rather than Greek) he used more than twenty different terms when discussing it.^[58] For Ibn Arabi, the *logos* or "Universal Man" was a mediating link between individual human beings and the divine essence.^[59]

Other Sufi writers also show the influence of the neoplatonic *logos*.^[60] In the 15th century Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī introduced the *Doctrine of Logos and the Perfect Man*. For al-Jīlī, the "perfect man" (associated with the *logos* or the Prophet) has the power to assume different forms at different times and to appear in different guises.^[61]

In Ottoman Sufism, Şeyh Gâlib (d. 1799) articulates Sühan (*logos-Kalima*) in his *Hüsn ü Aşk (Beauty and Love)* in parallel to Ibn Arabi's Kalima. In the romance, *Sühan* appears as an embodiment of Kalima as a reference to the Word of God, the Perfect Man, and the Reality of Muhammad.^[62]

Jung's analytical psychology

Carl Jung contrasted the critical and rational faculties of *logos* with the emotional, non-reason oriented and mythical elements of *eros*.^[63] In Jung's approach, *logos* vs *eros* can be represented as "science vs mysticism", or "reason vs imagination" or "conscious activity vs the unconscious".^[64]

For Jung, *logos* represented the masculine principle of rationality, in contrast to its feminine counterpart, *eros*:

Woman's psychology is founded on the principle of *Eros*, the great binder and loosener, whereas from ancient times the ruling principle ascribed to man is *Logos*. The concept of *Eros* could be expressed in modern terms as psychic relatedness, and that of *Logos* as objective interest.^[65]



A 37-year-old Carl Jung in 1912.

Jung attempted to equate *logos* and *eros*, his intuitive conceptions of masculine and feminine consciousness, with the alchemical Sol and Luna. Jung commented that in a man the lunar anima and in a woman the solar animus has the greatest influence on consciousness.^[66] Jung often proceeded to analyze situations in terms of "paired opposites", e.g. by using the analogy with the eastern yin and yang^[67] and was also influenced by the neoplatonists.^[68]

In his book *Mysterium Coniunctionis* Jung made some important final remarks about anima and animus:

In so far as the spirit is also a kind of "window on eternity".. it conveys to the soul a certain influx divinus... and the knowledge of a higher system of the world, wherein consists precisely its supposed animation of the soul.

And in this book Jung again emphasized that the animus compensates *eros*, while the anima compensates *logos*.^[69]

Rhetoric

Author and professor Jeanne Fahnestock describes *logos* as a "premise". She states that, to find the reason behind a rhetor's backing of a certain position or stance, one must acknowledge the different "premises" that the rhetor applies via his or her chosen diction.^[70] The rhetor's success, she argues, will come down to "certain objects of agreement...between arguer and audience". "Logos is logical appeal, and the term logic is derived from it. It is normally used to describe facts and figures that support the speaker's topic."^[71] Furthermore, *logos* is credited with appealing to the audience's sense of logic, with the definition of "logic" being concerned with the thing as it is known.^[71] Furthermore, one can appeal to this sense of logic in two ways. The first is through inductive reasoning, providing the audience with relevant examples and using them to point back to the overall statement.^[72] The second is through deductive enthymeme, providing the audience with general scenarios and then indicating commonalities among them.^[72]

Rhema

The word *logos* has been used in different senses along with *rhema*. Both Plato and Aristotle used the term *logos* along with *rhema* to refer to sentences and propositions.^{[73][74]}

The Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek uses the terms *rhema* and *logos* as equivalents and uses both for the Hebrew word dabar, as the Word of God.^{[75][76][77]}

Some modern usage in Christian theology distinguishes *rhema* from *logos* (which here refers to the written scriptures) while *rhema* refers to the revelation received by the reader from the Holy Spirit when the Word (*logos*) is read,^{[78][79][80][81]} although this distinction has been criticized.^{[82][83]}

See also

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|---------------------|----------------------|
| ▪ <u>-logy</u> | ▪ <u>Logocracy</u> |
| ▪ <u>Dabar</u> | ▪ <u>Logotherapy</u> |
| ▪ <u>Dharma</u> | ▪ <u>Nous</u> |
| ▪ <u>Epeolatry</u> | ▪ <u>Om</u> |
| ▪ <u>Imiaslavie</u> | ▪ <u>Panlogism</u> |
| ▪ <u>Logic</u> | ▪ <u>Parmenides</u> |

■ Rta

■ Shabda

■ Sophia (wisdom)

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