

The Greatest Moments in Western Philosophy

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1. The start of Book II of Plato's *Republic*, when Glaukon stops Socrates from celebrating victory over Thrasymachos, and demands that he show that justice is good in itself.
2. The finale of Plato's *Symposium*, after the Ascent to the Beautiful, from the moment when Alcibiades bursts in drunk as a skunk and Socrates vamps like a camp queen, to the end when Socrates tries to prove to Aristophanes and Agathon, almost too drunk to stand, that a good author should be able to write both comedy and tragedy.
3. The start of Book V of Plato's *Republic*, when, after having declared victory a second time, Socrates is forced to start the argument anew and introduce the Forms because Polemarchos leaned over to whisper in Adeimantos's ear about sex.
4. The preface to Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*, when the value of truth itself is called into question.
5. Aristotle's *Prior Analytics*.
6. Parmenides' prohibition on saying That Which Is Not.
7. Kant's recognition that all knowledge is mediated by a conceptual framework.
8. Socrates' demand in the *Apology* that he be allowed to defend himself and to cross-examine Meletus in his own style.
9. The moment in Peirce's "The Doctrine of Chances" when he concludes that one must have Faith, Hope and Charity in order to be truly a logical reasoner, indeed to be rational at all.
10. When Nietzsche remarks in *On the Genealogy of Morals* that the idea "jenseits Gut und Böse" ("beyond good and evil") does not mean "jenseits Gut und Schlecht" ("beyond good and bad").
11. Kierkegaard's description, in *Fear and Trembling*, of the utter irrationality of Abraham.
12. The observation by Heraclitus that everything flows.
13. Peirce's claim that all knowledge, including its confabulation and its comprehension, is founded on semeiotic, and his concomitant argument that all sciences, including logic, are at bottom normative.
14. Marx's Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach.
15. Hume's observation that distinct actual things bear no logical relation to each other. (Al Ghazali got there first, by more than 6 centuries, and with a better argument to boot, but that is beyond the ambit of this Western-oriented list. So I'm not even sure why I mention it. Probably because I love Al Ghazali so much.)

16. James's rallying cry that truth *happens* to an idea.
17. Anscombe's disentangling of intention from normative value.
18. Aquinas's declaration in *Summa* that practical knowledge is its own cause.
19. The propounding of the Principle of Tolerance by Carnap in *The Logical Syntax of Language*.
20. The enunciation of the paradox bearing his name by Russell in a letter to Frege.
21. Kierkegaard's assertion in *The Sickness unto Death* that the self is not a subject nor a relation but rather a relation's relating to itself.
22. Marx's articulation of false consciousness.
23. The master-slave dialectic in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*.
24. Russell's application of formal logic to problems of epistemology in "On Denoting".
25. Rousseau's reconstruction of himself in *Reveries of a Solitary Walker*.
26. Husserl's recognition of the importance of the "horizon" of our consciousness and self-consciousness.
27. The call to arms in defense of the mettle, the enterprise, the joy of philosophy, in the final paragraph of Howard Stein's paper "How Does Physics Bear Upon Metaphysics; and Why Did Plato Hold that Philosophy Cannot Be Written Down?"

I feel driven now to note also

The Worst Moments in Western Philosophy

1. Among all the many intellectual atrocities, one, in its utter egregiousness, rises above all the rest: Descartes' neurotic demand for certainty, his utter phobia of the open-ended and the unsettled, pathologically aggravated by his need to have the source of that certainty be his own pure cognition. That has done more damage to Western philosophy—to Western intellectual life—than all the rest combined.
2. Kant's elevation of the goodness of the will above all other ethical concerns.
3. Aristotle's unwillingness to engage in self-criticism, never to admit that he had made an error.
4. Quine's glib aphorism that our beliefs face the tribunal of experience as a corporate body.
5. David Lewis's hypostatization of "possible world".
6. Locke's refusal to recognize that Newton's work had already shown the inadequacy of his distinction between primary and secondary qualities.