

In a world where it is proclaimed that “might is right”, “the end justifies the means”, “all is fair in love and war” or “survival at all costs”; it seems important to understand that alternative coherent ethical-foundations exist, so that we don’t blindly seek refuge from our ethical quandary, in a received wisdom usually dictating altruism !

Disclaimers:

-As at least an aspiring practitioner of ‘ Non-contingent egoism’, the following can not purport to be a disinterested discussion of that ethical-end, ethical-foundation. But not withstanding the author’s enthusiasm for his subject , the intention is to make known the possibility of ethical-foundations, providing a coherent and consistent basis beyond altruism, rather than proselytise one of them.

- The approach to philosophical problems¹ here ; emphasises direct engagement outside the philosophical canon; consistent with this, there will be found few references to the literature; although toward the end there are some brief comparisons with the egoism of Max Stirner and Ayn Rand. This approach is coupled with an extreme concern for communicated word meaning, that results in a frequent comparison between proposed definitions of words and their common usage dictionary equivalents. This approach will probably be almost as offensive to some, as the conclusions reached; no apology is made for either.!

Ethical prescriptions in a general sense would seem to be certain ‘ *constraints on behaviour, which are essentially responsibilities taken on, as commitments by a person to some other person, to some purpose*’. That other person might even be oneself at a later time. Where an ethical-end also an ethical-foundation is just such a purpose; whether regarded as divinely ordained, a natural part of the world or a Sartrean existential choice.

[Sartrean existential choice]: a final , absolutely unjustified and unjustifiable choice, as distinct say from one which merely affects all of one’s existence

So from the Concise Oxford *[altruism]: “Regard for others as a principle of action”*

which is expanded for clarification here as

[altruism]: “Absolute (ie. non-contingent also generic) identification and/or commitment to help, by the social-self (aka body) ; to the members of one or more social subgroups eg couple, family, tribe, religious community, oppressed demographic.....) and a contingent one, by the phenomenological self or selves (as id, ego or super-ego) , to the social-self (aka body)”

- with (Concise Oxford)

[phenomenological] “1.1 Denoting or relating to an approach that concentrates on the study of consciousness and the objects of direct experience.” ; thus here

[phenomenological self] : “ what one can see of oneself in one’s direct subjective experience”

This enlarged and more precise sense of the word altruism is meant to emphasise, that it is here considered the ethical foundation, as a *Sartrean existential* end, for a large number of:

- diverse values:

eg gratitude, loyalty, persistence, bravery, determination, honesty and obviously self-sacrifice

-personal philosophies.

eg Romanticism: (philosophical) as for example “ to cast one’s fate to the wind”; where the social subgroup may merely consist of the person and the beloved

eg Patriotism: as for example in the song “I vow to thee my country...” ; where the social subgroup consists of all members of a person’s nation state

eg *[Humanism] (Oxford Concise) “Devotion to human interests.....”* ; where the social subgroup consists of the person and all other members of the human species.

-assorted political philosophies, social-justice ideologies and various forms of political correctness

eg Fascism, Marxism, Anarchism.; Feminism, Socialism, Anti-racism etc. where a commitment is made to the members of some oppressed social sub-group. Even Environmentalism where there seems to be a commitment to future human beings and current animal and plant species and Animal-liberation where a commitment is made to members of those animal species.

-Miscellaneous religious ethical prescriptions (where justification is required, beyond or instead of God’s commandment)

eg Christian ethics: as ‘golden-rule ethics i.e. “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” ; where the social subgroup seems to consist ideally of all members of the human species;

eg Mahayana Buddhism: in particular the Bodhisattva ideal ; where the social sub-group would seem to consist of oneself and all sentient beings !

An absolute or intrinsic problem with altruism:

Because the commitment to help the other is absolute; unless constrained in a particular set of ethical prescriptions, it can too easily be interpreted as a right to interfere in the affairs of others; eg “ I only did it, because I was trying to help”

Other problems of altruism;

1/ The problem of self-sacrifice: self-sacrifice is considered a commendable motivation, in all forms of altruism. But most advocates of altruism (in any of the above forms) would concede that in a factual sense (ie. philosophical ‘positive sense’) we are always just aspiring altruists; that is as children we start as egoists. The hope of tradition and society is that this ‘unfortunate situation’ will be rectified by education and experience. It is hoped that individuals will be reformed to some more altruistic ethical world-view; particularly in a philosophically normative sense i.e. as a set of ethical prescriptions of

¹ see appendix I and II for details of that approach to philosophical problems

what “should be”. Never the less it will come as no surprise that self-sacrifice is often corrupted by the underlying egoism, as an expectation of personal gain in consequence of it eg. “After all I’ve done for you !”

2/ If ethics is considered as also applying to non-social situations, a separate ethical foundation or ethical-end is required to justify such prescriptions; with the consequence that with two ethical-ends; the possibility for conflict is created. For example in Buddhism the view seems to be that ethics applies to all acts, not just those with social consequence, yet many of the “actions” of The Eightfold Path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right samadhi; seem to be purely egoistic in contrast to the altruism of the Bodhisattva ideal. Even to some extent Christianity’s

-“ Seven Heavenly Virtues”: Chastity, Temperance, Charity, Diligence, Patience, Kindness and Humility and

“Seven Deadly Sins”: Lust, Gluttony, Greed, Sloth, Wrath, Envy and Pride, when considered as improvements or deficiencies of the self, (as the soul); in the latter.

-Digressing this becomes especially clear in the Christian monastic tradition, perhaps offering, a further explanation for it’s intolerance by the Protestant reformation, an arguably altruistic movement; although the issue also arises in other spiritual traditions. but regardless

3/ The problem of self-responsibility: because the responsibility to the 'other' is here considered logically absolute in altruism; it follows that the responsibility to the self is at best logically contingent; even discouraging of self-responsibility; perhaps explaining some of altruism’s broad appeal. eg “Why am I in this situation, I have done nothing wrong ?”

Notwithstanding; altruism in this extended form is the preferred ethical foundation, ethical basis, ethical end ; call it what you will; of most systems of ethics. both in academic philosophy and across cultures. Many people; even some extremely erudite individuals appear to be convinced that not only is it the preferred ethical foundation, but the only one possible.

That is ‘egoism’ and specifically ‘egoistic ethics’ is considered a contradiction in terms, because ‘ethics’ considered as a system of behavioural constraints; is altruism as defined above

Lets put aside discussion of the desirability of egoism as an ‘ethical foundation’; whilst it is first made clear what is intended by that idea; so that we can see which values, ethical prescriptions and personal or political ideologies; might be justifiable by it; if any. Firstly it should be emphasised here that we are not concerned with ‘egotism’, which has quite a different meaning e.g. *[egotism](Concise Oxford): “The fact of being excessively conceited or absorbed in oneself.”*

The Concise Oxford has

[egoism]) :”Ethics theory that treats self-interest as a foundation of morality”

which for reasons of precision, generality and to emphasise it’s logical complementarity with altruism;

is expanded here to the following form

[egoism] :”Absolute (ie. non-contingent also generic) identification and/or commitment to help by the phenomenological self, or selves as id, super-ego or ego), to the social-self (aka the body); and a contingent one to the members of one or more social subgroups (eg partner, family, tribe, religious community, oppressed demographic.....) by the social-self (aka the body) “

Again it must be emphasised, egoism as an ethical-end, is very much a minority one. Most would see the beginning and end of egoism, in the behaviour of young children and narcissistic personalities of all kinds including psychopaths and sociopaths and it can’t be denied that such people are egoists. It might even be extended to those who engage in some myopic rational calculus of self-gain to the ends of pleasure, wealth or power..etc or those who aspire to so called “enlightened self-interest”, to be regarded as just your childish or myopic egoists; some-what ‘improved’, in an altruistic sense, by an awareness, empathy and more importantly a sympathy, for the effect of their actions on others. No doubt such people do exist; but here we are concerned with egoism as ‘pure’, also radical, unlimited absolute or as termed here

“ non-contingent egoism”. So for example, the sociopath who doesn’t regret his or her actions for altruistic reasons, but for non-contingent egoistic ones ! That is he or she see’s

-that maltreating friends results in less friends, maltreating fellow citizens results in a bad reputation and much animosity, if not time in jail and loss of freedom.

-that the complex webs of deception erected to hide those actions, require increasingly large investments of time and energy and result in a vulnerability to accidental disclosure.

-that the promise of lies, as an easy solution to hiding those actions proves illusory; being vulnerable to the flux of time and circumstance.

-that the possible resulting loss of credibility can be a functional social disadvantage, not just a reduction in social status.

- that the revealed lies are often more devastating than the truth would ever have been !

So the question that our sociopath; or anyone else who is just curious, for that matter might ask is

-“What is it to be purely selfish ?; as in for oneself not in some puerile, myopic way; ie ‘for the self as opposed to for the other’; but to ask ‘where does ultimate self responsibility lie’ and where and to what end does such a path lead ?

. In one sense the following enquiry is just repeating the question of the Greeks:

“What is the good life ?” except they only asked that question in an altruistic sense; here we ask it in a purely egoistic sense. the question seems to lead to several others

- what is the self and what is it to ‘improve’ that self in a non-contingent egoistic sense ?

- what is it’s situation in a general sense and what is it to ‘improve’ that situation in an non-contingent egoistic sense ?;

- are there any general rules of behaviour that are consistent with those ends, or failing that, make them no ‘worse’ ?

The contention here is; there can be no deductive connection from an 'is' to an 'ought'. This is not merely the epistemological theory that value statements can't be falsified, but a sense that to attempt to derive an ought from an is, reflects a profound fanaticism as "there is only one way, solution, possible response to this situation and we or I have it." That is there are perhaps a myriad ethical foundations also ethical ends; but as Sartrean existential choices, they can have no further justification; they must all be in Kierkegaard's sense "leaps of faith". Thus in any situation those myriad ethical ends can justify different sets of ethical prescriptions. To be specific let's contextualise a particular set of ethical prescriptions with a particular view of existence; a set which seems consistent with the extended sense of egoism here called 'non-contingent egoism'; hopefully also providing a clearer sense of that ethical foundation.

Such a view of existence might suggest :

-” The social-self (ie. physical body) is found to be, in a material universe which is simultaneously dangerous, transient, unpredictable indifferent and utterly unforgiving to and of it's existence. and a society which is much the same ! Perhaps for completeness it should be added; a material and social universe where beauty and ugliness , horror and ecstasy, pain and joy, misery and happiness are inextricably mixed.

.... a dire prognosis, with worse to come ! .

- For correlated with that social-self one seems to find a phenomenological self as personality; which is just a chance accretion of pre-existing genetic conditioning, acquired habitual responses and the values and ideological prejudices of that individual's society ; together with a rudimentary means of mediating the resulting conflicts. This is contended to be, very similar to the Freudian theory of personality: comprising id, super-ego and ego respectively; where "id" denotes those aspects acquired genetically or via habit ; where "super-ego" denotes aspects acquired socially . The total conceived as the smaller conscious part of a much larger unconscious mind; but described as a process or perhaps a process of processes of values ! A process being a structure in time, though here is intended phenomenological time not time by the clock, and instead of the word 'conditioning' with possible overtones of "Pavlovian and/or Skinnerian conditioning"; we might use 'training' in the sense the modern neurologist or information technologist intends, when 'training a neural-net'; but used, in a phenomenological sense..

What it is not immediately obvious in a system , like the phenomenological self, is that even the selection of an ethical foundation on the basis of it's consistency with some of those values, though possible is problematic. Because it amounts to the subtle attempt by one fragment of that self to gain dominion over another; thus it merely increases the incoherence of the self. Notice in the above , while we are attempting to avoid exacerbating that incoherence, by avoiding taking sides in any of it's conflicts on one hand; we are categorically denying (for example) that we are free as romanticism would insist or ever likely to have clear, comprehensive and certain knowledge as rationality would require.; on the other.

As far as that personality as phenomenological selves knows, it's existence in that universe starts with biological birth and ends with biological death and regardless of the discoveries of that life-time, much may always remain unknown

- a brief consideration of the life of that personality, by that personality; reveals that not only is it not 'as it might hope to be' but often the opposite. Even worse that self realises, it is serially and/or simultaneously incoherent and it's fragments often in conflict. with each other...it is a group of selves rather than a self ! That is, for example:

-the caring, nurturing parental impulse, is at war with the often violent, hierarchical sadomasochistic sexual impulse
 -the hedonistic pleasure seeking impulse, is at war with the ascetic, which seeks freedom from the tyranny of the senses
 -the romantic impulse that would declare us free, is at war with the rational, which requires our action be consistent with what we know !

-perhaps as Freud speculated there is even an impulse for death at war with an impulse for life

Whatever; the incoherent whole is racked with conflict, perhaps irreducibly, so that even the possibility of coherence is dubious ! What to do ?, how should one act ? -

With this proviso; perhaps we have unconsciously already made a tentative step !; "a leap of faith " We have recognised that somehow 'to see what exists' in the sense of seeing the situation of that self, dire though it may be; is to at least to leave the material situation, unchanged, thus no 'worse' ! ...Leaving 'worse' in a phenomenological sense to be defined !

1/ Thus an aspiration to 'sanity', as a value seems consistent with this extended sense of egoism here termed " non-contingent egoism. The word 'sanity' is used here for lack of another, eg the Concise Oxford has [sanity]is "....the fact of showing good judgment and understanding...":

whereas what is here intended is the narrower sense of [sanity]: "to see that which exists";

but hopefully can be considered consistent with it.

-The situation of those phenomenological selves can be characterised as material, social, psychological and spiritual.

Where the ordering of those categories: is meant to reflect the perceived difficulty of actually seeing them and the conditions of the phenomenological self as they are; in contrast to how they might be wished. That is, perhaps one can see the material circumstance, without too much difficulty, but consider we have only of late started to realise that natural catastrophes are not punishments! Thus seeing one's social situation as in seeing one's friends and associates and the ensuing relationships 'as they are' rather than as one might wish; will be more difficult. Still more difficult will be to see one-self, phenomenologically as one is now; perhaps describable as 'emotional intelligence', for example just recognising anger, contentment , sadness, joy, embarrassment or pleasure..etc in oneself. Finally in what I am terming 'spiritual', we must consider problems like those non-social prescriptions of Buddhism and Christianity, for example the Christian "Deadly Sins " as 'non-social' prescriptions ;"

eg Is wrath as anger actually a sin" ?. Interpreted as " Is anger and/or it's consequences universally undesirable for the phenomenological self; ie unjustifiable in this extended sense of 'non-contingent egoism'

To briefly illustrate such an enquiry; if we are not simply accepting or rejecting received wisdom or our own prejudice, the first problem will be to see and define 'what anger is'. Then if it is theorised that a consequence of anger is that it often leads to violence(say), we must also ask 'what is violence?' again in the sense of prescribing it's category. Next we would need to determine if violence say is a necessary implicit consequence rather than merely a contingent consequence of anger. Finally we can ask is anger and/or violence consistent with 'non-contingent egoism' as here defined ? Similar considerations will apply to the problems of hedonism and asceticism and the related problems of naivete, experience and innocence.....etc ; even the nirvana of Siddhartha Gautama... but we digress

..... In a peculiar sense, 'non-contingent egoism' seems astonishingly to lead back into the concerns of spiritual or even mystical experience; it's more profound problems seemingly reflected in those mystical traditions like Christian Monasticism, Sufism, Taoism and Zen-Buddhism; but regardless seeing those situations as they are; the self's incoherence in time, the unreliability of instinctual and habitual responses, as guides to avoiding a 'worse' future situation; it becomes apparent that even though knowledge of one's material, social, psychological and spiritual situations may increase, it will never be complete. ie that rationality in the sense of "action consistent with knowledge"; must always remain uncertain.
2/ So to acknowledge the need for a profound agnostic humility in the sense of what can be known, believed in and acted on with certainty !

What is a 'worse situation' and what is a 'better situation' for the phenomenological self; according to 'non-contingent egoism'? In a logical sense as an ethical foundation "this would seem to be merely repeating the original question; but viewed in the context of that previously mentioned dire situation, it would seem that:
- a situation with greater choice, will always be at least no worse, with instinct, habit and choice less constrained and/or the material circumstance less pressing Even though no final end has been defined !
To use an example, the monkey with it's fist trapped in a jar, because of the nut it vainly strives to keep; can realise it is 'better' to abandon the nut, though lacking any clear plan or ambition for the rest of it's life !
Similarly the long term situation will have priority over the short term; for non-contingent egoism ..
3/ Thus "To act in the direction of a less restricted situation "; would seem consistent with non-contingent egoism;
-- similarly to hold onto "unnecessary" things and situations (eg the consequence of habits and prejudices); would seem to be inconsistent .

Also the sequential and simultaneous incoherence of the phenomenological-self; as seen by any fragment of that self, is inconsistent with non-contingent egoism, in this same pragmatic sense; even though the parochial response of whichever of those phenomenological-selves is active(eg the parental, the romantic, the rational, the sexual..etc.) is to want to proceed to it's own goal!

Digressing : prompting the speculation; that perhaps further along this path one of these selves might recognise it's own nature as a limitation of that social self, both as a blinkering of perception and a hobbling of action ?; allowing the possibility that this fragment becomes still ; perhaps even precipitating an exponential spreading as a crystallisation of such stillness, amongst the other fragments ?.. but regardless:

4/Thus to act in a way which increases the incoherence of the self would seem to be inconsistent with 'non-contingent egoism

-Really 'non-contingent egoism' seems to speak to the minutiae of existence, whether or how to clean one's teeth or how to deal with an unhappy love affair eg all human beings would seem to be susceptible to the pair bonding, which is reciprocated love with

[love].as : "a profound indifferent, unchosen, unchoosable, attachment, and/or attraction and/or affection for another".
But if that reciprocation no longer exists or never existed, non-contingent egoism would seem to dictate the short term pain, disillusionment, depression, emptiness of abandonment of the relationship; even as a friendship, rather than the long term persistence in something which can only result in greater pain, self-conflict, dominion, humiliation and delusion. But it would also seem to require the recognition, and acknowledgement of "being in-love"; both to oneself and less obviously to the other.! Non-contingent egoism being unforgiving of deception of the other, in the long term; for the non-contingent egoistic reasons our sociopath discovered !

The awareness that intense attachments and aversions eg the avoidance of pain, the intense impulse to breath etc. may serve profound biological imperatives like the avoidance of injury and death, on the one hand ; whilst on the other seeing from personal observation that certain of those attachments and aversions eg sex and food can have an undesirable material and phenomenological consequence; eg a carnivorous dietary choice last night say; may be followed by an experience of a heavy body, low energy and unclear mind the next morning.

Perhaps a gradual change in that preference might occur; not as a result of some ascetic 'spiritual choice' or some ethical philosophical choice or some rational scientific dietary choice; but simply from direct observation of the self by the self.

If a fragment of the self does nothing; does nothing occur ?"; even though this discussion chiefly concerns the phenomenological aka subjective self; it is at least possible that the phenomenological self as a smaller part of an unconscious mind; is correlated with a material brain considered as a neural-net; and the simple awareness(for example) of that incoherence , might correlate with 'self-training' of a smaller part of that neural-net, by a larger part ?..

regardless an additional proposal would be

5/ Thus the acknowledgment that the apparent 'non-action of awareness'; may also result in change; regardless of which fragment of the self is active

For the purpose of comparison with altruism, non-contingent egoism has been conceived as an ethical end or ethical foundation, but enquiry seems to suggest the idea of end needs to be augmented with the eastern notion of a path even an exploration, as a progressive development of the self.

6/ So non-contingent egoism may also be akin to a path, as a progressive development or exploration; in addition to an end.

Finally concerning the commitment to help the other (the primary subject of most traditional altruistic ethics) non-contingent egoism seems to place no blanket prohibition on helping the other, even when nothing is gained beyond the satisfaction of the moment, or when the calculus of what do I get in return for what I give; indicates nothing definite. So although non-contingent egoism absolutely prohibits self-sacrifice: help for others will be allowed, obviously contingent on who, when and where. Even though the temptation to interfere in the affairs of another, will be subject to more caution in non-contingent egoism than in altruism; in the end both altruist and non-contingent egoist will be subject to the same underlying incoherence and delusions of the phenomenological self. Whilst altruism's intricate ethical dilemmas balancing responsibility between smaller and larger social sub-groups, finds no part in non-contingent egoism, because that commitment is always contingent. Something similar does arise in regard to balancing responsibilities to those different fragments of the phenomenological self and their situation.

Notwithstanding; we now have some sense of 'non-contingent egoism' as an ethical foundation perhaps augmented as a progressive development or spiritual path and we also have a sense of ethical prescriptions consistent with it. It is time to briefly consider other values which might be justified by non-contingent egoism;

- ambition: as the intention to strive towards; pleasure, social status, power, wealth, erudition or some spiritual goal.

comment: Non-contingent egoism can provide only contingent justification for the 'sufficiency' of such; in the sense that if they are gained but found wanting, no guarantee was provided. Curiously analogous to biblical injunctions like "What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?"

- similar comments would apply to seemingly traditional egoistic values like; will-power, self-discipline, self-reliance and egoistic seeming personal and political philosophies like stoicism, fatalism and libertarian anarchism.

Regarding the theories of Max Stirner, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Max_Stirner

eg "Sacred things exist only for the egoist who does not acknowledge himself....."

comment:

-seems to be no attempt at a "concise, precise, exhaustive, reductive" description ie definition of intended sense of egoism

-seems to lack any sense of the phenomenological self as conditioned, incoherent, conflicted, deluded etc entity

-seems to lack any sense of existence of profound spiritual problems, for the self; beyond institutional religion, theology and altruistic ethics

Ayn Rand, also very briefly! from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#Philosophy

eg "...The need for morality, according to Rand, is dictated by our nature as creatures that must think and produce to survive; hence we would need morality even on a desert island....."

comment:

-regardless of whether: survival is considered a virtue (ie. it seems more like a Sartrean existential end), made very clear in the medical dilemma of choosing between survival and quality of life;

-or whether thought and production are requirements of it (ie the problem of the kind of survival envisaged and whether it is possible); has implications for whether such thought and production, is even possible.

- "the need for morality" though; would seem to imply that to be without morality is a real, if undesirable possibility.

Yet when the self is conceived as here as personality; as a process of processes of values; instinctive, habitual, moral and ideological; in which morality is just one of many types of value, the contention that a 'real' phenomenological self ie personality, might exist without morality ie a tabula-rasa as opposed to say a quandary of conflicting values; seems hypothetical in the extreme. Curiously though if "hence we would need morality even on a desert island....." was reinterpreted as; "hence we could benefit from a coherent, consistent morality even on a desert island....."; it might receive some support from non-contingent egoism; as for example would those non-social prescriptions of Buddhism mentioned earlier; even though they can have little altruistic justification.

In conclusion:

1/ Whilst we offer no apology for this approach to philosophical enquiry or the conclusions reached, perhaps there needs to be some apology or explanation for the frequent digressions. The motivation for including them is to suggest that while the first principles approach and the insistence on clarity of language, may seem quite austere in its disregard of the familiar, comfortable content of the received wisdom of erudition; it does never the less seem to result in a quality akin to exploration, with many unexpected, interesting and digressing discoveries

2/ A question for those few unrepentant altruists ; who remain despite my best efforts: ,
“When others are not effected, shouldn't I consider the greater context of myself ?

So that I don't (for example) sacrifice :

my health for wealth, power or social status, my curiosity for academic accomplishment;
my capacity for enquiry for some illusion of certainty, respectability or security;
my sanity for conformity with some ideology or social norm; my serenity for a complex web of deceit;
my credibility for a veneer of respectability; my energy for some plethora of trivial activity;
my freedom for some addiction or habituation; my clarity for some slick conventional explanation

3/ In answer to “What if everyone aspired to non-contingent egoism (as above); who would fix society's problems ?

- in the short term things would not be especially different from now; non-contingent egoists would still vote for ,
programs to alleviate social injustice for egoistic reasons , contingently just as their more myopic brothers and sister
do now

- in the longer term to the extent that those problems reflect the problems of a society's citizens writ large;
that is the problems of ordinary 'myopic egoism'; then if our lives and aspirations incorporate a deepening sense of
what is important to ourselves , the contention would be that without the necessity of revolution, legislation,
education or inducement society's problems , would be reduced. and our children being influenced by our example,
as well as our philosophy would provide some guarantee of its continuity. Indeed the prevalent aspirational altruism in
its many forms; which from this point of view seems a kind of hypocrisy, whereby we excuse and thus allow to continue
our myopic egoism; by pretending that the world is improving in some altruistic sense; seems unlikely to improve
society even in an non-contingent altruistic sense

- but it can't be denied ' transcendent egoism' will be anathema to religious proselytisers, ideologues, leaders, politicians
and activists of all persuasions:
eg Christian and Moslem fundamentalists, socialists, anarchists, feminists, environmentalists, fascists

4/ Altruism is quintessentially about membership of the group; and from an altruistic view membership is considered a
privilege to be earned by the individual, perhaps in some initiation or rite of passage; where as for egoism membership of
the group is just a commitment to co-operate dependent on time and circumstance

Finally ; it is not suggested that altruism and egoism are the only possible foundations;
that is there may exist ethical foundations which are neither

- some aesthetic of action:eg “Not good form old chap...” or

-the interesting suggestion from Siddartha Gautama in the “Raft Sutra” that there may be emergent ways of being which
seem to incorporate either no ethical foundation or whose ethical consequence is so contingently complex as to defy
description

-or in that myriad of Sartrian existential ethical ends, foundations we have not or can not even conceive

Surely the legal system of future human societies; will operate amidst a diversity of such

Appendix I : Concerning a direct approach to philosophical problems, outside the canon.

That direct approach to philosophical enquiry explicitly avoids reference to philosophical literature; in this case altruism and egoism. This is not merely an apology for a lack of erudition; but the explicit contention that philosophical enquiry, independent of tradition is both possible and the underlying basis for that tradition. But while such 'first principles enquiry' demands the putting aside of the authority of that received wisdom, it equally demands giving credibility equal with one's own, to its theories, standpoints and values; Thus one takes full responsibility for theories being false, standpoints being untenable, ethical prescriptions being inconsistent with each other and/or being unjustified by a particular ethical foundations. Perhaps one even considers the possibility that, that choice of ethical-foundation may ultimately be a final arbitrary unjustifiable one; here termed a Sartrean existential choice.

So from this position; the common scholarly activity of comparison, contrast and/ or attempted reconciliation in the theories of established sources B and C on philosophical subject A; isn't actual philosophical enquiry but just a selective literature revue. It is simply to continue an ancient scholastic delusion.. More-over a scholastic delusion based on a literature of authoritative sources, which is a stochastic accretion of diverse theories, standpoints and values; in multiply mistranslated 'texts' of convoluted sentences ; the definitions and/or implicit meanings of whose words, often seem merely idiosyncratic constructions, serving the convenience of their authors!

Appendix II Relation of this philosophical approach to Anglo-Saxon and Continental Philosophy

While this approach to philosophical enquiry shares the Anglo-Saxon Positivist Tradition's impatience with obscure language and scholastic debate, it also shares the Continental Tradition's perseverance with unrestricted access to the content of phenomenological experience. But it also rejects some features of both eg whilst it would on one hand categorically deny that sentences of words as material symbols, unconnected to their originating minds and demographics; eg "text" in the Post-Modernism sense; have any more meaning than, say a scattering of sand grains on paper ; it would on the other reject the scientism, implicit in Positivist attempts to reduce philosophical problems to scientific ones.

Appendix III Regarding that extreme concern that intended word meanings are communicated.

How to ensure the important words in any philosophical discourse are understood by their participants and their intended meanings communicated . That is; before two or more people can discuss:

- the existence of some material or phenomenological matter , if an ontological claim;
- or truth, if a theory;
- or tenability, if a point of view, -
- or desirability if a value judgement or ethical prescription;
- or self consistency and/or justification via some ethical foundation, if a set of ethical prescriptions ;
- or status as a Sartrean existential choice, if an ethical foundation (as here)

Then the meaning of the word or words, articulating the idea; need to be shared by that other person or group.

It may seem uncontroversial to observe that as the subject matter of discourse, moves from the simple, obvious, familiar, material and objective to the complex, subtle, subjective aka phenomenal ; the tendency for one's words to convey , no meaning, many meanings or some unintended meaning; becomes greater. So we can speak of a semantic gradient of subject matter. Thus descriptions of material phenomena eg trees,dogs, and cars will be least problematic; but descriptions of emotional experience eg sadness, joy and rage more difficult, with philosophical subjects as qualities of phenomenological categories; eg good , rational, ontological still more difficult and descriptions of mystical experience, eg innocence, meditation, self; so difficult as to lead some to describe it as in part ineffable ie intrinsically beyond words.

But it is controversial; for example linguistics as a science of language can quite properly only concern itself with the objective aspects of words. The problem is, words as material symbols must have a meaning as a referent, which is here considered a category of phenomenal experience. So whilst language as a structure of material symbols is not problematic; for linguistics eg etymology , sentence structure etc. The best one can say of the attempts, thus far to describe the meaning of words objectively; is they are complex, convoluted and shows little prospect of wide utility. That is linguistics currently, fails to address the following problems of language in any simple sense and the suspicion is that it never can !

- what (ontologically) is the meaning of a word ?;
- what (ontologically)is the personal definition of the meaning of a word ? and to the end of personal clarity,
- what are the minimal requirements of such a definition ?
- what (ontologically) is a dictionary definition of the meaning of a word ? and to the end of clear discourse ,
- what are the minimal requirements of such a definition ?;
- what (ontologically) is it to 'translate' the meaning of a word ?

The theory of discourse here is that as that semantic difficulty (above) increases, there will need to be an increasingly constrained 'shared language mode'; if communication is to be achieved. Which for this speaker for example, is that:

- 1/ the language will need to be English and if so;
 - 2/ disambiguation will need to be each speaker's responsibility and if so;
 - 3/ descriptive language un-augmented or replaced by evocative or metaphorical, will be preferred and if so;
 - 4/ words will be considered material symbols, whose meaning or referent is a category of phenomenal experience and if so;
 - 5/ to the end of personal clarity, the personal definition of a word is generally possible and if so
- Commenting on 5/ above; for clarity, a personal definition of a word should be considered not an arbitrary construction, serving some current idiosyncratic purpose ; but rather a falsifiable phenomenological hypothesis, describing (actually prescribing) the phenomenological category which is the meaning or referent of the word, considered as a material symbol ; for that person. That is, if the category so defined; includes inadmissible experience or excludes admissible experience for that person, it is false ! The whole activity of enquiring into an accurate definition is then considered, as not different from ontological enquiry. That is the definition by describing one's meaning as prescription of it's phenomenological category (if accurate), makes clear what it is and often more importantly what it isn't.
- Digressing, it seems possible that the ontological knowledge described in that definition, is what is recognised when 'understanding' in it's second more profound sense is claimed, by a person !
- ..but notice these comments on 5/ above are all considered just 'a' view of word meaning and its proper definition

- 6/ needs to be: a concise, precise, exhaustive and reductive description of that category and if so;
- Commenting on 6/ above; for clear communication where possible that personal definition is identical or at least consistent with common 'good' dictionary definitions of the word. Where a 'good' dictionary definition is considered to be a social artefact (as a tool whose purpose is communication); which reflects the most popular personal definition, in the relevant social sub-group. The implication being that dictionary, definitions should also aspire to being "concise, precise, exhaustive and reductive " and one should not uncritically accept, the definition provided by a particular publisher, merely on the basis of their reputation. Notice the implication that the purpose of a dictionary definition, to the end of clear social communication of meaning, should be to capture current usage, rather than historical or etymological usage.
- Digressing the difficulty and/or disinterest for linguistics in this matter, seems to be reflected in a general absence across dictionaries, of a word meaning 'the business of constructing dictionary definitions'. Although one can find a minority usage " [lexigraphy]: "1 : the art or practice of defining words" from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/lexigraphy>. Of course the more general business of gathering of words and compilation of dictionaries; [lexicography]; (Concise Oxford): "Dictionary-making" has wide currency. But to judge from the preface to the Oxford Concise, even the business of lexicography seems to be an entirely proprietary one , unconstrained by linguistics !
- ..again notice these comments on 6/ above are all considered just 'a' view of dictionary meaning and its proper definition.

- 7/ the dictionary definition of a word can be considered a possible social linguistic artefact, which should, to the end of clear communication within that group, reflect the most popular personal definition, in the group; and if so;
- 8/ translation of a word from language A to language B may be considered to consist of:
 - determining if the word or word usage has a dictionary definition (as above) in language A and if so
 - determining if some word in language B has an equivalent definition //meanings ?

Now each of those eight successively more restrictive components of the writer's 'language mode', is actually a choice from a set of real options. If it was a binary choice this defines a minimum of $2^8 = 256$ modes, actually there are many more than two choices for most of those options eg Just consider the number of possible languages at option 1/. Each such mode entails a different explicit theory of dictionaries and a different implicit theory of translation. For example Wittgenstein a Logical Positivist would certainly not have shared all above six options. He famously declared in Tractatus, that definition of word meaning was not generally possible and meaning was defined by context. Here whilst there is agreement that definition of words using other words must entail some being primitive undefined ones , if an infinite regress is to be avoided; good dictionary definitions are considered possible, useful and urgent. Also even though usage is selected by context; those usages are generally definable..Fore example the word "game" that he sites as undefinable is here considered, simply one with many usages all of which are capable of definition How he regarded dictionary definitions is not stated.

Overall this " theory of discourse" predicts that as semantic difficulty of a subject increases; the demographic with whom one can converse clearly , will reduce. Now it is not contended that any of those choices are compulsory or more advantageous than others, merely that to the extent that the entirety of a language mode is shared, a speaker's communication will be clearer; this does not of course imply agreement.. In fact in this theory in it's current form; even the ordering and number of those choices is tentative, although the above number does seem minimal.