

## A GLOSSARY

Absolutes - concepts which are not modifiable by factors such as culture, circumstances, opinion or belief, but which are perfect, true and unchangeable; that which always applies and provides final or ultimate standard; opposite of relativism.

Arbitrary Absolute - a random decision made by an elite or majority which gains the position of an absolute, i.e.: an action declared right or wrong on the basis of popular opinion or social norm. Arbitrary absolutes can be this today and that tomorrow.

Relativism - when there are no absolutes accepted which establish morals and decisions, then each individual makes his own choices as to what is right or wrong, true or false. These choices only depend upon each person's own experience or situation. Consequently each may develop his own individual ethical or moral system. The assumption is made that what is true for one person is not necessarily or even probably true for another person. A popular phrase expressing this is, "if it's right for you..." The only things which cannot be justified in this system are absolutes.

Particulars - the individual things which are about us. The individual stones on a beach are particulars; the molecules that make up the stones are particulars; the total beach is a particular; you and I as individuals are particulars.

Universal - or absolute; is that under which all the particulars fit; that which gives unity and meaning to the whole. If there are no absolutes - no universal - then particulars have no meaning. In language, there are many particular varieties of apples, but we sum them up with the word "apples", the universal; in the area of morals, if there is no universal, absolute moral standard, then one cannot say in the final sense that anything is right or wrong.

Presuppositions - belief or theory which is assumed before the next step in logic is developed; the basic way an individual looks at life, his basic world view. Conscious or unconscious presuppositions rest upon that which a person considers to be the truth of what exists and lay a grid or filter through which he sees the world.

Philosophy - 1) A discipline which seeks intellectual answers to the basic questions and meanings of life. 2) Also means a man's "world view." In this sense, all men are philosophers.

Methodology - study of the procedures and principles whereby the questions of truth and knowledge is approached.

Dialectic - the principle of change which take place by means of triadic movement. A thesis has its opposite, an antithesis. The two opposites are resolved in a synthesis which in turn becomes a thesis and the process goes on.

Synthesis - the combination of the partial truths of a thesis and its antithesis into a higher stage of truth.

Antithesis - 1) Direct opposition or contrast between two things (as joy is antithesis of sorrow), or 2) As a principle of thought, that with their mind people can come to the conclusion that certain things are true in contrast to other things that are not true.

Logic - the science of correct reasoning. The predictable and inevitable consequence of rational analysis. In classical logic 'A' equals 'A' and 'A' cannot equal 'non-A'.

Epistemology - that part of philosophy dealing with the theory of knowledge; i.e.: how we know and verify something, or how we know we can know.

Verification - the procedure required for the establishment of the truth or falsity of a statement.

Validity - something which has been authenticated by reference to well-grounded and sufficient evidence.

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Anti Philosophy - many of the modern forms of philosophy which have given up any attempt to find a rational unity to the whole of thought and life.

Pragmatism - a system of thought which makes the practical consequences of a belief the sole test of truth; the belief that "If it works then its true".

Romantic - a view of life that is the product of an exaggerated optimism with no base in fact for that optimism.

Existentialism - a modern theory of man which holds that human experience is not describable in scientific or rational terms; in the area of reason everything is absurd, but one can authenticate himself by an act of the will. To make life worthwhile, man lives moment to moment seeking experiences that will give him identity and meaning.

Authenticate oneself - a term used by existentialists whereby man validates the genuineness of his existence by an act of the will or a feeling of dread.

Final Experience - a huge experience that encourages one to believe that there is a meaning to life even though his mind tells him life is absurd. Defined first by Karl Jaspers, German, 1883-1969.

Hedonism - Philosophy that pleasure is the sole or chief good in life. Reflected in "If it feels good, do it" and "You only go around once in life...".

Humanism - two meanings. 1) Any philosophy or system of thought in which a man begins with himself alone, in order to try to find a unified meaning to life; man begins with himself and gathers enough particulars to make his own universals. 2) That part of humanistic thinking in the above wider sense that stress the hope of an optimistic future for mankind; that man can solve all his problems alone and will bring about world peace and happiness.

Nihilism - a belief that existence is basically senseless, meaningless, useless and chaotic, leading often to destructive tendencies in society or in the individual.

Syncretism - used to denote a mixing of religious teachings; stress similarities and disregards differences.

Closed System - presuppositional view of the universe and life in which nothing is outside a total cosmic machine; everything which exists is a part of it. No force exists outside of the machine to influence events or conditions. Man viewed as some form of determined or behavioristic machine.

Opened System - presuppositional view of the universe and life which is open to reordering and influence by God and by man.

Autonomy - standing alone; being independent of and without regard for theological, philosophical, psychological or cultural standards.

Autonomous freedom - the individual is the center of the universe; a freedom without restraint and without limitations.

Christian consensus - occurs when the majority of a culture adheres to a Judeo-Christian set of moral principles and values even though many are not individually Christians.

Unified Field of Knowledge - man's view of the world which is supported by all available information without any opposing information produces this. If any of the information conflicts, he does not have this unity, i.e.: belief in a flat world would conflict with available evidence and information.

Upper Story, Lower Story, Non-Reason, Leap of Faith - Upper Story term used to denote that which, in modern thinking, deals with significance or meaning, but which is not open to contact with verification by the world of facts which constitute the Lower Story. In modern thinking the Lower Story is governed by facts, reason, cause and effect, logic and rationalism; the upper story is divorced from these qualities and has no relationship to them. In the lower story, reason will always lead to pessimism because man, beginning from himself and attempting to find a rational unity to the whole of life, can never arrive at a unified field of knowledge. Therefore, he must try to find optimistic answers in regard to meaning and values in the 'Upper Story' outside of reason, in the area of Non Reason. Through a "Leap of Faith" he tries to find meaning without reason.

Upper Story - a blind optimistic hope of meaning and purpose based on a non-rational leap of faith, an existential or final experience, or a first order drug experience.

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Lower Story - the particulars, the rational and the logical; no purpose or meaning found; pessimism.

Dichotomy - division into two totally separated parts. Used here for the total separation of the rational and logical in man from both meaning and faith.

Pantheism - doctrine that equates God with the forces and laws of the universe. The universe is a part of God's essence rather than a special creation by Him. God is an impersonal "all in all", a sum total of all reality. A better word to describe this position is "pan-everythingism". The word "pantheism", with the "theism" part of the word, gives the connotation of personality. But, by definition, the concept excludes personality and really speaks of something absolutely and finally impersonal.

Mannishness of Man - Those aspects of man, such as love, rationality, creativity, and the fear of non-being, which set man apart from animals and machines; which make him unique when compared to non-man and give evidence of his being created in the image of a personal God. Person-ality = Mannishness.

Infinite - Personal God - term used to denote two essential characteristics of God. First, that He is uncreated and greater than man and all other creation; second, that He is not an impersonal force, but rather is personal and can be known personally.

