

## NATURAL GOOD AND EVIL: BEYOND FITNESS TO SURVIVE

**John McMurtry**

*Department of Philosophy, University of Guelph, Guelph N1G 2W1, Canada*

**Keywords:** analytic philosophy, axiology, beauty, competition, consequentialism, deontology, duties, ethics, evil, evolution, fitness to survive, global market, good and evil, indefinability, intuitionism, life support systems, life-value, mechanism, natural beauty, naturalistic fallacy, normal/abnormal, open question argument, quality and quantity, rules, ruling value system

### Contents

- 4.1. Analytic Philosophy and the Naturalistic Fallacy
  - 4.2. Fitness to Survive as a General Value Theory
  - 4.3. An Implicit Ground of Justification for Evil
  - 4.4. The Meta-Alibi: Denying Value-System Choice Locks It In
  - 4.5. Rules beyond Instincts and Desires: The Moral Difference of the Species
  - 4.6. The Meta-Question of Quantity and Quality
  - 4.7. Ruling Value Equations as the Inner Logic of the Ultimate Global Problem
  - 4.8. The Presupposed Logic of World Reduction
  - 4.9. Beyond Naturalistic Fallacy: the Moral System Problem and its Resolution
  - 4.10. G.E. Moore's Bridging Concept of 'the Good'
  - 4.11. How Contemporary Value Understanding Is Alienated From Natural Beauty
  - 4.12. Finding the Underlying Criteria of Natural Beauty
  - 4.13. Regaining Our Wider Value Body of Nature across Time
  - 4.14. Finding the Ground of Duty beneath Moore and Kant
  - 4.15. The Nature and Ground of Life-Value Duty
  - 4.16. Physics, Economics and Ethics: The Life-Blind Logic across Domains
  - 4.17. Good and Evil without Life Referents: *Principia Ethica* as a Paradigm Case
  - 4.18. Avoiding Moral Substance: From Indefinability to No Life-Value Compass
  - 4.19. Repeating the Problem of Evil: Rational Consensus without any Life-Ground
- Glossary  
Bibliography  
Biographical Sketch

### Summary

This chapter unpacks the most dominant value principle of the contemporary world - competition to survive - and explains from G.E. Moore's original diagnosis of evolutionary ethics the underlying "deep naturalistic fallacy" governing global market capitalism. Critical explanation then develops the positive core concepts of "the Good" in Moore's canonical *Principia Ethica* - "beauty" and "personal affection", "duties" and "consensus" - beyond formal abstractions to life-grounded meaning. Ethics, moral philosophy and ruling value system are explained as connected levels of a century-long sea shift of theory to life-blind parameters of analysis.

#### 4.1. Analytic Philosophy and the Naturalistic Fallacy

Let us begin where the going may seem most difficult for a life-value philosophy and way of human being: standing up to the analytic demands of classical normative philosophy at its most rigorous.

Perhaps the most analytically developed search for a general principle of value is that of G.E. Moore (1873-1958). His *Principia Ethica* (1926) is a paradigmatically analytic work which is most celebrated for his objection to what he calls the “*naturalistic fallacy*”. This fallacy, Moore argues, attempts to define the good as a “natural property” such as “pleasure”, “evolution”, or “the normal”.

It is mistakenly thought, Moore reasons, that because we may *attribute* good to pleasure, or to evolution or to the normal, *the good is identical* with one or other of these natural properties: as in The Good = Happiness. Such an identity of the good with a natural property, Moore argues, rules out the question of value that always still remains - but is it really *good*? Natural properties like “pleasure”, “evolution”, or “the normal” do not answer this second-order value question.

##### 4.1.1. The Open Question Argument

This critical rejoinder is known in ethics and moral philosophy as “the open question argument”. It is a quintessentially philosophical move, and speaks in the face of the most dominant general theories of value of our era. It is commonly believed, for principal example, that because something is necessitated by laws of nature, or is agreed by scientists to be biologically or economically determined, that its perceived order is (1) inalterable and therefore (2) obligatory to accept. Thus it is widely believed that all must compete in terms of such “natural laws” to be “fit to survive”.

##### 4.1.2. Normalized Avoidance of the Malicious Implications

A disturbing implication of this received position is not considered. That is, since violence and bullying, killing, rape, and cannibalism favor the survival of some over others in Nature, then such forms of life are naturally required for survival and evolution. Where such “evolutionary strategies” promote the self or self-group’s reproductive success, it is necessary, so the argument goes, to adopt them. Ideologies like ‘fascism’ and forms of ‘social Darwinism’ have proposed variations on this way of thinking with immense human misery as a result.

Affirmation of biological or economic evolution is seldom stated in this form because its meaning is too provocative to be acceptable. Instead, such implications of “the evolutionary facts which humanity must face” are normally unspoken. Even G.E. Moore who leads the attack on the good = evolution equation does not follow up on these grisly implications. Instead he adopts the standard method of contemporary Anglo-American philosophy which is to structure painful facts of the world out of analysis.

### 4.1.3. From Avoidance to Relish

Outside the Anglo-American analytic pale, there is often no such reservation. Contemporary French and pre-1945 German philosophy, for example, highlight painful realities and take pleasure in them - as, for example, the Hegelian concept of history in which the “pages without blood are blank pages” and the Foucaultian knowledge = power equation where the “inscribing of bodies” by disciplines and punishments are described in fond detail. Although Hegel (1770-1831) is a universalist rational determinist, and Foucault (1926-84) is the postmodern opposite, they manifest one philosophical meta-pattern. Their clinical awareness of history’s cruel trampling of human life is at one with English-speaking silence insofar as no alternative ordering is conceived.

### 4.1.4. Purging the Felt Side of Being as a Ruling Pattern

With the “fitness to survive” value system, there is strict indifference to extreme suffering as irrelevant to external counts. The feelings of life competing for survival where victory goes to the most rapacious, and defeat or death to the rest is thus screened out.

In other words, scientific method rules out the felt side of being as a prescription of its ‘rational objectivity’, while Anglo-American philosophy leads and adopts this convention. This is the lost value field of feeling life, and it is investigated in depth in *Good and Evil Within: Opening the Terra Incognita of the Felt Side of Being*.

#### 4.1.4.1. Gene Machine Model as Exemplar

In the genetic model of fitness-to-survive theory, feeling life is ruled out a-priori. Mechanisms of genetic transmission and extinction that secure (or fail to secure) “survival advantage” are alone of concern. The felt being of observer or observed has no place in the meaning - as the signature concept of this thought-system, “gene machines”, makes clear. In this way the original focus of evolutionary biology on living organisms is displaced by the genetic programs of which they are conceived as transient vehicles.

## 4.2. Fitness to Survive as a General Value Theory

Before gene machines, G.E. Moore’s *Principia Ethica* “ is detailed in discussion of the social Darwinist thinker, Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), whose work, he argues, epitomizes the naturalistic fallacy of equating the good to evolution.

Yet meta-ethics and moral philosophy since Moore avoid the social-Darwinist version of the fallacy, and focus instead on the familiar stalking horse of utilitarianism. Thus the most powerful form of the naturalistic fallacy - the mode of thought which construes good as equivalent to “fit to survive”, and, by fateful implication, bad as *unfit to survive* - is hardly challenged. In the dominant culture of global market competition, the struggle to exist with the unfit going under is assumed as a law of nature. Public leaders exhort their societies to “compete harder to survive”, while academic counsel

recommends how to do so and passes by the moral issue. The underlying value syntax all express is undisturbed by question or doubt.

#### **4.2.1. Human Choice versus No Alternative**

An interesting parallel develops beneath observation. What God's commands were to the medieval era, the survival-of-the-fittest imperative is to the modern.

The difference between them is that moral choice space to deviate from the survival-of-the-fittest law does not exist in the currently ruling doctrine. In prior commands of God, the choice to obey or not was conceived as the central issue, with final judgment deferred to the afterlife. Here there is no alternative, and there are punishments now. One must compete, or does not survive.

#### **4.2.2. Normality as Good**

In contrast, more people seem to know that the *normal* - Moore's third example of the naturalistic fallacy - is an elastic notion whose meaning varies with the conditioning of its users. Thus the "normal" is a far more contested category in philosophy and the social sciences than "fit to survive". Even so, its prescriptions remain central with "normal" and "abnormal" being quite pervasive pro-and-con moral predicates. "Abnormal" has even become an attribute with similar weight to "immoral" - as lucidly explained by R.D. Laing in his *Politics of the Family* (1972).

#### **4.2.3. Nature, God, and Normality at Once**

When to the war for life as an imperative is added its normality, the "fit-to-survive" order deepens and widens as an ultimate framework of value meaning. It is so deeply ensconced as an organizing presupposition that no value issue is normally seen. It is a law of Nature, God, and the Normal at once.

Thus the winners deserve their places in the struggle and so too, it silently follows, the losers deserve to suffer and die. Never is this moral sequence explicitly stated in philosophy or science, but it is entailed. The conflation of the natural, the normal, the competitive and the good is assumed as a natural given beneath question.

#### **4.2.4. Competitive Global Market as Natural Religion**

What is unique about the value of "fitness to survive" is that humanity is assumed not to have a value choice beyond the law of nature determining it. The character that makes a person or society "fit" to continue to exist is instead scientized as law-like fact - the decider of those who may continue to live and flourish (the selected), and those who are fated to suffer and die (the rest). We cannot and should not, it is believed, interfere.

The everyday expression of this ethical cast of mind is, "Let Nature/the Market decide".

#### 4.2.5. Testing for this Moral Absolutism in Practice

A basic question reveals the ruling value syntax. Where is fit and unfit to survive or, “competitive” or “uncompetitive” *not* used as ultimate pro-and-con value categories by the leaderships and governments of industrialized societies?

And where is rational challenge to this reigning order of human existence spoken in ethics, moral philosophy, economics or administrative science? In both practice and theory, these questions are not evidently posed save at the margins.

#### 4.3. An Implicit Ground of Justification for Evil

Where *can* a rational line be drawn, then, against the law of the jungle for humankind?

More pointedly, on what ground can one draw the line against what is pervasive in nature’s struggle for survival – violent assault, tyrannical possession, rape, seizure, and indifference to them? By what principle of value can one justly interfere by life-protective stand and regulation? Yet where is any such principle specified by evolutionary ethics?

Analysis needs to move underneath Moore to examine exactly what the implicit ruling value categories of “competitive” and “fit to survive” denote.

##### 4.3.1. Defining Fitness to Survive

In the science of evolutionary biology from which these value categories arise, a very precise onto-axiological meaning can be deduced. *Fitness to survive means what most numerously reproduces itself over time.* This is the uncontested first principle of evolutionary biology and, by transitivity, evolutionary and capitalist ethics derived from it.

What is unexamined in this implicit first principle of life-and-death rule is its moral meaning or, more precisely, the exact *value* that competitive struggle to survive selects *for*.

##### 4.3.2. The Fallacious Logic

A very basic question is not asked - the open question. Is this ultimate value truly good?

Assumption trumps onto-axiological examination. Fitness to survive is presumed good because it is given that survival is good. The possibility that what most numerously reproduces itself over time can still be evil does not arise. “Fitness to survive” or “competitive success” is *good by definition*. This is the equation of a naturalistic fallacy.

##### 4.3.3. The Unseen Vicious Implications

More deeply, this naturalistic fallacy - unlike the good = happiness equation - has horrendous implications for the most successful human groups. Why should genocide of

other peoples *not* be good if it favors the competitive survival of the perpetrators?

#### **4.3.3.1. Why the Competitively Fittest May be the Most Evil**

The derangement follows from the value logic. If the most “fit” are those who multiply their numbers most is seizing others’ habitats and resources and killing them, their genocidal mode is evolutionary virtue. The reader might well ask, why then is this value theory not understood as a doctrine of supreme evil? This question is not posed, and no line of value is drawn against this implication.

Moore challenged evolution as an equivalent of the Good, but neither he nor other ethicists have laid bare this ultimate moral issue.

#### **4.3.3.2. The Fittest = The Most Ecocidal Through Generational Time**

The bold type equation above follows in principle and in fact from the equation of the fittest beings to the most numerously surviving.

Such a species and its most numerously reproducing members are the “fittest” or “most successful” with the “most favorable characteristics” *because* of their numerically greatest reproduction through time: and so, conversely, because of those life forms and conditions they eliminate and displace with no limit to this “success” so long as none but their own numbers increase.

#### **4.3.4. Overpopulationists Avoid the Baseline Moral Disorder**

Revealingly, even those many who deplore “human overpopulation” do not confront the implicit value-system axis which propels the symptom they seize on.

This is the value-system axis of evolutionary biology *and* modern economics which both affirm as ‘Science’ that the most successfully reproducing and growing demand for resources is “the most competitive” and, thus, “the most fit to survive”. Where is there exception in either primary discipline or its policy practice?

#### **4.3.5. Necessary Evil as Good across Political and Disciplinary Divides**

Observe the value-system operations for both presupposing *and* denying the ruling imperative.

The dominant members of the dominant species continue blithely in “competitive success” within this thought-system’s terms of reference by destructions of most or all other life forms with no issue arising. None arises within its thought frame because its value equation is assumed as value neutral, a purely scientific account of the laws of evolutionary biology.

Accordingly, a covertly regulating value system can lead to a world progressively denuded of every other species: with the dominant species’ dog-eat-dog competition among its own members selecting for these results at the same time.

#### **4.3.6. The Law of Evolutionary Competition**

With all this conceived as propelled by the “natural competition for survival”, the vicious circle of value conception is closed at ever higher levels of cumulative life-system destruction with no problem or alternative conceived within it. The “fittest” within this ruling value system can therefore be the elect of a monstrous moral mechanism, but the problem cannot be posed within its framework of ideation.

All are thus fated to compete against each other and other species for space and means of life, with more and more individuals and species being destroyed and consumed by the ‘evolutionary’ mechanism as its human apex achieves ever greater material powers of annihilation. Nothing can or should be done about it because it is already presupposed as natural law - which cannot in principle compute as an issue of moral choice.

#### **4.4. The Meta-Alibi:: Denying Value-System Choice Locks It In**

As long as moral thought does not break past this closure of reigning doctrine, the worst at the human level may be affirmed as necessary to “progress” and “evolution”. For example, the bloody dispossession and elimination of rural and first peoples is conceived even by Marxian revolutionaries as a necessary cost of productive evolution - the ‘productivist’ principle of evolutionary understanding which has unified Marxist and capitalist understanding at both theoretical and practical levels. Production itself is decoupled from life grounds.

This closed circle of evolutionary conception reigns at biological and economic levels across schools. For its adherents, the scientific undeniability of the process is self-evident. The facts over billions of years confirm its pattern as law-like, and so render its rule inalterable.

Extinctions have already occurred to 99% of the species which have existed over time, it is reasoned, and so this is the inexorable work of “the laws of evolution”- condemning any higher value-system to extinction as an “unfit evolutionary strategy” or in conflict with “historical laws of development”.

##### **4.4.1. Collective Abdication of Responsibility**

There is no choice in what happens at this level, it is assumed. Whatever we might like, what happens is determined by forces beyond our control.

This is the closure to responsibility which Jean-Paul Sartre called “bad faith”, but he limited the term to individuals.

With him as well, a ‘collective bad faith of society’ cannot be comprehended - a problem we explore in depth in later sections.

#### 4.4.2. The Repressed Alternative of Human Value Regulators

A deep distinction of possibilities is overlooked. The competitive fitness-to-survive story has no capacity to distinguish between systematically destroying other life and life habitats to multiply human numbers as “fitness to survive” *and* a mutually enabling life order which sustains biodiversity in compassable flourishing. The latter goal is proposed by deep ecology, but without any standard of human needs to prioritize their satisfaction. This still preconscious value system has been introduced as “the life sequence of value” in *The Global Crisis of Values*, and given principled need content in *The Transcultural Idea: Good as Happiness and Bad as Pain*. Its full onto-ethical meaning is explained step-by-step through the remaining chapters.

While humanity’s powers to evolve by conscious rules above genetic mechanism constitute its species nature, the moral choice-space of *homo regulator* is not adequately comprehended.

#### 4.4.3. The Alibi Equation:: Existing Order = Natural Order = Good Order

An unexamined value-system becomes closed when it is assumed as naturally necessitated, and conceived as beyond human ability to change. This pattern of ruling value-lock is old and transcultural, but the deadly effects increase with material powers - in proportion to how much they are imposed against the requirements of reproduction of other peoples and species.

In any ruling value system, the bold-type compound equation is a cognitive reduction, and its disorder can in fact be discerned at work through history. Yet although discerned in *other* social orders, it is seldom discerned within its own. This externalization of the problem is as old as civilization.

Feudalism assumed the natural right of kings and lords to dictate service of the rest to them by divine laws. Capitalism assumes the natural right of private money-capital competing for profit in a transborder market to dispose over society’s means of life and labor to which all others must sell their labor to survive. Hinduism assumes the caste order of command and subjugation as natural and necessitated by the moral law of the universe. Confucianism assumes the five relations of rule and obedience as the natural mandate of heaven and deviation as immoral.

These are variations of the naturalistic fallacy, but occur at the level of social value system where philosophers presuppose them as well. Whatever their vast differences of moral order, each and all sanctify the surrounding existing order as equivalent to the good and the obligatory - one grand scheme of moral blindness across cultures and time, one which we uncover as we move.

#### 4.4.4. Cultural Universals within the Meta-Pattern

We find here an inner logic of the justification of oppression which is so recurrent and unflagged in different orders as to appear built in. The equation of what exists to what is natural to what is good, however, has certain constant themes across diverse orders. For

example, women are subordinate to men because this is “natural”; armed wars across history are “human nature”, the poor live miserable lives or starve because of “the natural laws of competition”, and so on.

#### **4.4.5. The Deep Naturalistic Fallacy**

In one way or another, no generic fallacy of thought has more dominated the human condition across cultures and over millennia than this double equation of the ruling order to the natural order to the good order.

Observe that the fallacy here is not, as with Moore, in merely identifying the good with a natural property. It is a far deeper and more complex disorder of thought. It equates the human order to the survival-of-the-fittest order of nature, and assumes this as necessary and good for human survival and flourishing.

We call this *the deep naturalistic fallacy*.

#### **4.4.6. A *Reductio Ad Absurdum* of the Fallacy by Analogy**

Imagine someone arguing that because other creatures defecate on the spot across species, it is “natural” to do so and “against the laws of evolutionary biology” to collectively regulate against it.

Imagine their also arguing that it is good because we must as a “law of nature” do so to survive.

All the resources of evolutionary biology seem available to prove the absurdity. The empirical evidence for natural defecation across all animal species is without exception. The mechanism of genetic transmission is evidenced to explain the constancy of life pattern through nature and time. The lack of any disconfirming evidence in any reproducing species appears to make the case irrefutable.

### **4.5. Rules beyond Instincts and Desires:: The Moral Difference of the Species**

If tribes had long remained within this circle of natural necessity, this might have been their proof that humanity cannot regulate itself against spontaneous discharge of animal compulsions.

Without human social life and mores to demonstrate that in fact humans continuously construct another order by their rules, and at best do so to protect and enable human life and life conditions, we remain within this blind alley of the natural order. Once we recognize the fallacy, then social self-regulation by life value is opened as a choice space. This is the ultimately distinguishing feature of the species.

#### **4.5.1. The Meaning of Value Reason:: Thinking Beyond Naturalistic Mechanism**

If we are able to think through the dominant view of evolution, we see clearly that what is thought to exhibit “fitness to survive” is a simplistic formula applying only to

creatures which are not capable of mutually protective rule construction across individuals and groups. Just as spontaneously defecating into natural surroundings may be the way of Nature but subhuman, so too is the unrestrained capture of short resources for more numerous self-offspring whatever the costs to other lives. Brutes may do it, but human beings become brutes so far as they do.

#### 4.5.2. Evolutionary Incoherence

To infer from the morally mindless animals a law of human nature blinkers out humanity's ultimately distinguishing trait and most successful strategy of evolution - rule constructions to govern against animal compulsions and desires which are harmful to the lives and flourishing of other beings. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) famously implied such a human ordering by his concept of necessary restraints on the anarchic id as "the reality principle" of civilization. Yet he failed to distinguish social rules which serve human needs and capacities from those which unnecessarily repress them.

Unexposed to this ultimate axiological distinction, evolutionary biology continues to be applied to humanity in oversight of its primarily distinguishing trait without recognition of its profoundly anti-evolutionary assumption.

#### 4.5.3. Beyond the Deep Naturalistic Fallacy

The greater numerical profusion through time which equates to the "fitter species" by the measure of evolutionary theory is a doubly false standard. It cannot work for the human species over the long term as current overloading and collapse of life support systems indicates, and its implicit value standard confuses orders of life - the instinctual and the rule-governed. Rather than demonstrate goodness or excellence, as the concepts "fitness" and "favorable characteristics" imply, the characteristic of blind self-replication reverses human fitness to survive by ignoring the primary evolutionary advantage of rule-government to fulfill vital life requirements across individuals and protect collective life support systems.

This unexamined moral ground is analyzed in depth in *The Lost Social Subject: Evaluating the Rules By Which We Live* and *The Unseen Global War of Rights Systems and the Principles of its Resolution*.

#### 4.6. The Meta-Question of Quantity and Quality

Fitness-to-survive ethics does not address these ultimate problems in any of its forms. Instead, a general equation of *value gain to greater in number* - 'the more the better' - is assumed to be alone rationally objective. 'Quantify it or it does not exist' is the underlying onto-epistemological assumption. N+/- is what better/worse than N ultimately means, or the value judgment is mere opinion. In the model of the ruling value system, the meaning is self-evident. Having N+/- money units is always better/worse and always an exact quantity, and all value decision proceeds in accordance with this axiological first premise.

The invocation of "quality" rather than "quantity" recognizes there is a problem here,

but without the life-value parametric to exactly identify the life-blindness at work. Although the ‘quality versus quantity’ battle is misconceived as ‘soft versus hard’, ‘emotional versus rational’, and so on, the underlying real issue is life-value versus money-value. Put another way, the ‘quantification’ prescription for understanding is in truth always misleading until quality issues are first settled - exactly what are the numbers or notations symbols *of*? Yet the method of quantification has become a first principle rather than a tool. Thus life referents are a-priori left behind to ensure counts of, ultimately, money values - as explained in *The Global Crisis of Values*.

What is the resolution? The precise axiological reconciliation of quantity and quality by the middle term of life-value is spelled out in by the Primary Axiom of Value from chapter 6 on. Here we limit consideration to the macro consequences of the competing-to-survive ethic as such and, in particular, its quantitative logic of ‘more is always better’.

#### **4.6.1. The Ruling Evolutionary-Economic Axis of Value**

At the highest level of abstraction and influence, the ruling value equation of evolutionary dogma is *more numerous surviving offspring = more fit to survive*.

The correspondence between these regulating meta-axioms of value is not axiologically identified or examined. Observe that both equations are mechanically quantitative, the higher number the better. Observe also that as these numbers become ever higher for *both* equations simultaneously, ever more money transactions in ever higher GDP amounts and ever more numbers of human beings competing for more, the planet’s life support systems are correspondingly degraded, polluted and run down.

This is the third meta-equation which is unthinkable within the reigning value system.

#### **4.7. Ruling Value Equations as the Inner Logic of the Ultimate Global Problem**

These meta-correlations of the one ruling value system are not recognized even by the considerable array of concern and expertise who single out the “overpopulation problem” as the most fundamental world problem humanity faces. What is not comprehended is what we will consider as the primary problem in the chapters ahead - in a word, the fatal contradiction of value system requirements between the compound growth propelled by the evolutionary-economic axis of value and the requirements of terrestrial life and life conditions.

Because the growth mechanism of the ruling value axis is assumed to be both necessary and good - the deep naturalistic fallacy at the core of the contemporary human condition - the ruling value regime can destroy ever more of what is required for life without conception of alternative.

This is humanity’s ultimate world problem.

#### **4.7.1. Second-Order Value Meaning**

The structure of value assumption throughout is life-blind. Yet we can only recognize its axiological derangement when we adopt the ruling value system as a unified object of philosophical reflection, rather than as a given surrounding system within which all compete for their own survival and goods.

What is singularly irrational about this ruling value system is that its regulating value equations *screen out all negative value implications by its tacit acceptance as an inviolable given*. As with other supreme dogmas, it cannot recognize or value anything that conflicts with it.

#### **4.7.2. The Syntax of Propaganda**

Such a structure of selection and exclusion is not peculiar to this ruling value system. It is the syntax of propaganda in general. It reduces meaning to the terms of its own structure of affirmation and negation so that nothing can be said but what conforms to its framework.

This is why propaganda is always repetitive in meaning. However varied its expressions within its regulating presuppositions, the underlying syntax of value is constant through diverse expressions.

#### **4.7.3. The Pro-Values Assumed in Fitness to Survive**

We see this syntax at work in evolutionary biology and its cognate ideologies. Thus “survival *value*” is claimed by whatever expression (“favorable trait”, “advantage”, “fitness”) for what enables the increased numbers of a species or genotype through time; but not evolutionary *disvalue* for the rest of the planetary system that may thereby be irreversibly disabled or destroyed. “Evolutionary success” is always affirmed, but its success being “bad for quality of life” is an unthinkable thought.

Instead, pro-value is ascribed only to the characteristic that produces greater numbers through generational time. The cost to other life is irrelevant. Only the benefits for the dominant count, and they are reckoned in survival ratios in evolution and money-value increases in economics.

#### **4.7.4. The Fallaciously Slanted Axiology Not Seen**

Thus we find the pro-value term “favorable characteristics” used to describe and explain multiplied long-term populations, but the “*unfavorable* characteristics” of these ever more numerous species displacing others and degrading life support is not spoken. What alone computes is “fitness for survival” by “favorable traits” measured by increase of numbers, whatever the outcomes in grossification and life-value reduction.

Propaganda is defined by its slanting of evidence taken into account towards exclusive validation of what confirms it and blocking out what does not.

#### 4.7.5. The Repressed Human Alternative

The invisible structure of propaganda at work most momentously rules out of conception the human species' greatest evolutionary advantage in life-value terms - cooperative organization to understand, protect and enable life and means of life across selves and species. This is the underlying moral advance that is screened out by the partial calculus.

“This is the way evolution goes”, the received wisdom is, “some survive and increase, more others die off: so it has always been, and so it must be”. This value judgment is assumed as a given general scientific fact and value-impartial conclusion: while it is in fact, as we have seen, a deep naturalistic fallacy. Its value judgment fails to recognize this fallacy it commits, and the evolving pattern of human life advance it rules out of view. Something like this one-sided view is discerned by Kropotkin in *Mutual Aid* (1842-1921), but without identification of its fallacy and, more deeply, without organizing principles for understanding its alternative.

#### 4.7.6. The Unseen Fatal Implication

Thus if one species secures its “evolutionary success” and “fitness for survival” by cumulatively denuding the planetary ecosystem and its biodiversity of lives and resources by a system of selection and exclusion blind to all quality of life but what registers in population numbers, no problem registers within this implicit value system.

The closed loop of conception rules out reflective or second-order understanding of the terrestrial life-system itself. In consequence, it is blind to life-value losses on this macro scale by what is supposed as the “fitness for survival” of the species. The ruling value order presupposed as natural law can therefore strip the world with no moral or life-value issue conceivable within it. “Extinction is evolution’s way”. The underlying moral pattern is unconceived. Exponential increase of money-demand-and-commodity cycles goes hand-in-hand with exponential increases of population numbers, but no axiological connections or questions arise.

#### 4.8. The Presupposed Logic of World Reduction

Consider, for example, the increasing numerical dominance, “evolutionary success”, of the imperial species and its species retinues - industrialized hominids, their pets, their experimental animals, their genetically engineered seeds, and so on, all of which species from humanity human down are shown to be evolutionary successes by their generationally escalating numbers.

That they deprive all other species and species variations of their lives and life conditions at the same time is not a system loss whose disvalue can register within the number metrics of quantification sciences without life-quality meaning. Not even the pattern itself can be comprehended across specialist lenses. Insofar as the negative outcomes in life-value terms do not compute, and insofar as the uncontrolled pattern is assumed away as beyond human moral responsibility, humanity is borne by a mindless biosphere turn it itself engineers.

#### **4.8.1. The Logic of Closure**

Universal competition for money-exchange value and exponentially escalating demand and commodities instead spike up beyond planetary carrying capacities, and are one-sidedly understood as “economic progress” and the “enhanced welfare of populations”. At the same time, the negative consequences of those who are dispossessed and malnourished by these operations of “economic welfare gain” are not counted in the ruling value metric either.

The hallmark of closure in any value system is its incapacity to reflect on itself at a second-order level - in G.E. Moore’s terms, the inability to pose the open question of whether the value it equates to good *is* good. The life-value losses of the biosphere itself by the ruling value system’s mechanism of selection, is therefore screened out. Its necessity is assumed prior to any question even as biophysical crises emerge.

#### **4.8.2. Thought-System Lock by Ruling Methods**

Methodological equations accompany value equations. The ruling evolutionary paradigm is equated to all science of “evolution”, and the ruling economic paradigm is equated to all science of “economics” - with their objects of study assumed as all of “evolution” and all of “the economy” at the same time. In both, a number-bound, uni-factor, atomic structure of conception is presupposed, and all premise equations are believed to be value-neutral.

“We only describe the facts”, it is believed, and their law-like pattern is not a value issue.

#### **4.8.3. Abdication of Moral Responsibility Is Built In**

An unseen but momentous consequence follows. Repression of value content and exclusion of human choice in what is deemed “fit to live” rules out collective human responsibility for the consequences of the ruling value system by definition.

The deep naturalistic fallacy is in this way set into first premises so that the ruling value mechanism is paradoxically conceived as that with which humanity cannot interfere. Global humanity becomes bound within its value-system constructions which are perceived as externally imposed by natural laws with no-one accountable.

#### **4.9. Beyond Naturalistic Fallacy:: the Moral System Problem and its Resolution**

We may axiologically define our condition in the following spare terms. Driven by a ruling economic system for which fitness to survive means possessing money demand which maximally increases each cycle, the value equation of “fitness to survive” comes to mean private possession of what evolutionary science prescinds from its accounts. Those made dominant in “the struggle for existence” are assumed as possessing a “favorable characteristic” that is transferred to innate genetic superiority - while their real competitive advantage of external possession remains unnamed even as its money demand sequences cumulatively overrun planetary life and life support systems.

Although their behaviors in fact increasingly compromise the survival prospects of most species themselves including the human, they are conceived as the “fittest for survival” within what this thought system assumes is an “impersonal competitive order selecting for the most evolved forms”.

#### **4.9.1. Why There Are No Limits to Growth:: The Underlying Meta-Program of Value**

Once analysis recognizes that the ruling quantitative formulae of advantage are life-blindly exponential while the earth’s resources are not, which is increasingly evident to the ecologically literate, another move of thought is required which sciences do not make - connection back to the ruling value system which selects for these results. From this missing axiological connection, understanding can appreciate the deeper meaning of “uncontrolled growth”, “overpopulation” and “system collapse”. They are rising alarm signals of the system disorder - but are without axiological explanation of it as a value-regime derangement. This level of determination is not penetrated by the evolutionary and economic sciences nor indeed moral philosophy.

Even those who directly speak of the need for “limits to growth” or “population control” do not recognize the underlying system of value at work, nor the axiology of its correction.

#### **4.9.2. Yet Is Life-Value Ethics Also a Naturalistic Fallacy?**

The question may arise to challenge straightaway the *life-value onto-axiology* which meets this system quandary: The question may be directly put as follows: Does not the general equation of good to life value *itself* fall prey to the naturalistic fallacy?

The answer is no. The life-value formula of good - most simply expressed as *x is of value to the extent that x enables more coherently inclusive life* - is not like progeny or pleasure multiplication a “natural property”. It is good because of what does *not* exist in Nature as a conscious choice - living to enable life more inclusively: that is, beyond the genetic, pecuniary or desiring self in life-value identification and flourishing.

#### **4.9.3. Conscious Evolutionary Theory Introduced**

Individual and collective human choice beyond the reductive equations of the ruling value system are precisely *not* ruled out by a life-value system - as they are by the ‘deep naturalistic fallacy’ which assumes the good to be equated to laws of nature and ruling system at the same time. Human choice of the Good is, rather, posed as the ultimate value question.

This is the opening towards what we may call evolution and evolutionary theory at the advanced human level - *a conscious value system* with economic theory as a baseline of non-wasteful human reproduction and well-being. This is the wider life-value system spelled out in the concluding three sections of this Theme Essay.

#### 4.10. G.E. Moore's Bridging Concept of 'the Good'

G.E. Moore's solution is better known, and has had very illustrious support. The eminent "Bloomsbury circle" which agreed with his ethical theory included the economist John Maynard Keynes and the novelist Virginia Woolf.

On first impression, the title of Moore's life work, *Principia Ethica*, does not appear to cover all realms of value - aesthetic and other kinds of value as well as moral values. Yet it is clear from his description of the Good that his concept is intended to be universalist: that is, comprehending all important values whatsoever. In his own words, the Good that he proposes to us is the "raison d'être of the virtues", "the rational ultimate end of human action", "the sole criterion of social progress" and that which [Moore's own emphases) "includes *all* the greatest and *by far* the greatest, goods we can imagine ... [&] [as well as] good in any of its various degrees" (pp. 188-89).

Moore sponsors a universalist claim, and coming from an epitome of British analytic philosophy, we need to take its exact measure. Indeed he and the celebrated intellectual circle which agreed with him are posing to the world a solution to human civilization's oldest and most profound problem - 'what is the Good'?

##### 4.10.1. The Ultimate Good Intuited Directly

What, then, is the "rational ultimate end of all human action" which Moore finally proposes? He waits until after his own arguments against all the traditional 'naturalist' and 'metaphysical' concepts of the good have been concluded. We need not reiterate the almost 200 pages Moore spends arriving at his conceptualization which (his emphasis) "includes *all* the greatest and *by far* the greatest, goods we can imagine". Moore characterizes the final principle here as also, "the sole criterion of social progress" and what "includes "all the greatest goods we can imagine". We will find that the Primary Axiom of Value satisfies all of Moore's claims, but not his formula of 'the Good' which he defines once:

*"certain states of consciousness, which may be roughly described as the pleasures of human intercourse and the enjoyment of beautiful objects ... [more specifically] personal affection and the appreciation of what is beautiful in Art and Nature" (p. 187).*

##### 4.10.2. Bridging Domains of the Good:: The Moral and the Aesthetic at Once

There is much more breadth in Moore's concept of the Good than may first appear. It *joins the aesthetic and the moral* in its notion which are normally kept apart as distinct kinds of value. Since his magisterial work, there has been little or no serious attempt to integrate these domains of value.

Indeed ever after Moore, the moral and the aesthetic realms of value have been departmentalized as different fields of value, with different domains of study, different course numbers, different specialists to teach, research and guide graduate students in discussing, and different journals and graduate program appraisers to rank performance in as separate fields of philosophy.

In the now countless domains of value studies including within other disciplines than philosophy, experts are likely not to communicate with one another, or even understand each other's specialist vocabularies and concerns.

Nonetheless we know that all have a common ground in principle whether they recognize it or not. Values for these fields all express *regulating principles of pro and con attribution* prior to agreement on what these underlying principles are. But as forms of thought and decision multiply within multiplying divisions of mental labor, connection across their meanings is ruled out by territorial fences of specialization. Thus even although values are what humanity distinctively lives by, integration has been ruled out by methodological division. And this is where Moore provides a good example of connection across differences.

#### **4.10.3. Moore's Also Bridges across Artistic and Natural Beauty**

Moore bridges across the walls of segregation that have prevented integration across fields of value over the last century, and he does so with a wide principle of value substance. He not only bridges across moral philosophy and aesthetics, but across human and non-human value objects.

Thus in a value-fragmented age, Moore distinctively includes Nature as a realm of *intrinsic* value in itself. Yet in accordance with his account of value as primarily subjective, he emphasizes "infinitely more so" the appreciation of Nature as value substance.

#### **4.11. How Contemporary Value Understanding Is Alienated From Natural Beauty**

To give a sense of what has happened in philosophy since Moore, nature and natural beauty today very seldom figure even in the field of Aesthetics.

Without any argument, but moored in anthropocentric prejudice, the study of "the principles of art and beauty" is formally confined to human-made objects which are assumed as comprising the sole domain of what is art or beauty.

We see here the aesthetic dimension of man's industrial alienation from his natural life-world - not only in perpetually disaggregating it and reassembling it as packaged commodities, but - with no utility gain - disqualifying the natural world from the field of beauty.

##### **4.11.1. The General Alienation from Nature of Human Value Understanding**

"Appreciation of nature" or "natural beauty" does not occur as a subject of thought in the academy. In the natural and social sciences, it is excluded by scientific method. Philosophy concurs in this a-priori exclusion. It is difficult to find where the greatest of all beauty in the world - natural beauty - figures as of any worth in any value measure. If we measure what we value, and it has not even a recognized criterion of value, we may see the estrangement of thought from its meaning.

In fields of literature, some poets and novelists lyrically luxuriate in natural beauty, as do visual artists in landscape painting, photography, and so on. Yet there is no attempt to excavate the unifying principles of natural beauty, of what it is versus what it is not, even although views are often militantly and expensively opposed (e.g., in whether or not a ‘new urban development destroys natural beauty’). We seem alienated from the issue itself.

#### **4.11.2. Is Commerce in Natural Beauty Another Form of Alienation From It?**

In the current age, the field of natural beauty is by and large left to the commercial arena. The value formula is to instrumentalize it by manufacture of evocative natural images to raise market sales for selected commodities unrelated to or damaging to the natural beauty presented (e.g., SUV’s on mountain terrains, or cigarettes in beautiful young women’s mouths). This deep-structural alienation from natural beauty is seldom critically observed. While the neo-Marxian ‘critical theory’ of Max Adorno (1903-69) and Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979), relate to Nature as non-commodified life interest, they provide no principles of recognition of its beauty.

What natural beauty, we may ask, is *not* now subordinated to market gain as the overriding value? Lacking valorization of the natural beauty in itself, reproducible images of it come to substitute for the natural beauty which is disappearing.

#### **4.11.3. Ecology and Natural Beauty**

Appreciation of natural beauty does not occur as an issue to discuss even in ecological discourses. Environmental Ethics is a relatively new field of learning, but one will not find principles of natural beauty explained in its now very extensive literatures, nor standards to adjudicate between competing perspectives and denials (recall Ronald Reagan’s retort to the movement to save California’s ancient redwood trees, “how many more do you need to see?”).

An empty space of value meaning is found even in ecological understanding. There is wide and growing sensibility to natural beauty as the comparatively new field of ecology becomes common parlance in the face of devastated ecosystems across the world. Yet comprehension of what *is* natural beauty remains personal, impressionistic and inarticulate in principle.

#### **4.11.4. Biophilia without Aesthetic Standards**

Naturalists and ecologists like the well-known contemporary entomologist, E.O. Wilson, and the paleontologist, Stephen Jay Gould, are poetic in their loving appreciation of the wonders of natural life - both expressing a profound *biophilia* - but one will find no principle of evaluation to explain *why* a tropical sunset is more beautiful than an Asian city haze, or why a primeval sea phylum is less beautiful than a dolphin.

#### **4.12. Finding the Underlying Criteria of Natural Beauty**

G.E. Moore offers no such principles of beauty either, even though he is an exceptional philosopher of value for whom natural beauty stands as an ultimate source of ‘the Good’.

The field of meaning here in a word is untilled, strikingly neglected across contemporary human thought. Yet we may still appreciate Moore’s meta-step towards recognition of natural beauty in modern analytic thought. He opens the space for appreciating its intrinsic value prior to what it is used for.

Moore thereby takes a first major step in analytic understanding of natural value - even if even the beauty of Nature is not understood so far as to tell why a tiger burning bright is more sublime than a Burgess-shell mollusk.

##### **4.12.1. Substituting Images for Reality**

That the realm of natural beauty is the greatest domain of value we directly and immediately experience in life is not yet conceived as a subject for reflective discussion.

Rather market sales media produce pervasive figments of natural beauty while living referents disappear. Scarcity of real natural beauty generates demand for artificial images of it. Their use in sales is a representative level of the ‘substitution for Nature’ which ruling money sequences increasingly bring about.

##### **4.12.2. The Holocaust of Natural Beauty beneath Reflection**

The meta-problem is that no *value criterion* of natural beauty yet exists to recognize what is being destroyed in reality. There are no standards to name, communicate or question ‘the great substitution’, no anchoring values to confront the spreading extermination.

The sublimely evolved complexity and depth of natural beauty which is born prior to and sustains the human condition and its value flourishing is in this way lost without knowing it. Extinctions of species composing natural beauty spark rising interest across the globe, but the charismatic few become the only holding issue amidst the whole dissolving into bits. Ecology conceives in holistic system terms, but has no value principles of life or beauty.

##### **4.12.3. The Core Principles of Natural Beauty**

The best we have regarding natural beauty is what logicians call an “ostensive definition”. We point at it, but do not define the principle whereby we can recognize it to defend it or tell it from imposters.

Natural beauty has a common core with beauty of any kind, but reveals itself in more sublime and subtly evolved shapes and compositions through multidimensional space-time embodiment than human art can configure. As with any beautiful formation, all the

elements and contours of the object contribute to the whole, with the whole ultimately boundless in its sentient and connective reach – with the limits of these the limits of its beauty.

Within these opening wholes of natural beauty - whether of the captivating rock or seashell or charismatic beast in the forefront, or luminously colored and moving sunset over water, mountain-rock hieroglyph of eons of time, or all together as one - there are common characteristics of the elements and their arrangement whose beauty admits of greater and less sublimity of experience for beholders.

#### **4.12.3.1. The Natural Principles**

Four defining principles of natural beauty provide the value bearings previously lacking and required. Most simply expressed, these criteria mark beauty in proportion to the developed fulfillment of their principles:

- (1) *Clarity of qualities and contrast,*
- (2) *Holding of the lines of unifying form,*
- (3) *Meaning signified beyond the direct object, and, most profoundly,*
- (4) *Infinitude of evolved connectedness in natural geo-space-time presence*

These principles admit of limitless degrees of realization of depth and scope, but together constitute a generic value set of which readers may ask to verify their validity: What is missing? What is there which sets meaning too wide? What human-made object can qualify?

#### **4.12.4. Inclusive Life Coherence Always the Value Meaning**

What overall distinguishes the infinite harmonies of natural beauty is the limitless reach of its horizons of inclusion - not just in sky-wide sunsets or bird songs at rising dawn - but in the evolved lines of each plant, animal or mineral or its expression within which all of time and the world's biosphere are ultimately implicated.

This boundless frame of meaning can be unfolded in terms of this *logos* of beauty. At the highest level of abstraction in all domains of value, we find worth in whatever more inclusively enables the fields of human and ecological life - in the case of beauty, the experiencing of its expressions in the whole of being at one with it.

#### **4.13. Regaining Our Wider Value Body of Nature across Time**

Once we enter this realm of principled reflection on natural beauty, we may see how vast and connective its value meaning is - why G.E. Moore distinctively insisted on including consciousness of it as a fundamental experience of 'the Good', although without the criteria to explain it.

In cosmic terms, natural beauty roots us by sentience to the planet life-host as creative ideal and reality at once, and - for moderns - re-sensitizes the mechanized being of our lives to what it blocks out, the visible soul of life's enjoyment.

#### **4.13.1. Opening Consciousness to Nature as Ultimate and Intrinsic Value**

To open the window of thought on the universe of goodness in naturally evolved appearance breaks open the shell of a philosophical tradition for whom Nature is by and large considered only of instrumental worth: excluded from the realm of aesthetics in theory, and treated as of no value except as a pool of resources in practice.

This narrow world of value is one which Moore and others gesture beyond, but do not explain the value meaning.

#### **4.13.2. Public Policy and Eco-Sciences Preclude Intrinsic Natural Value**

Public authority is not yet governed by a non-instrumental understanding of Nature's ultimate and intrinsic worth. Rather, state leadership, policy and media work as hand in glove with private business powers to recognize only instrumental worth: as in, "the watershed is wasted if not developed".

Natural scientists, on the other hand, are restricted by limits of discipline in so that the intrinsic value of Nature does not arise in principle. Norms of intrinsic worth are excluded while science is increasingly funded to serve money-value adding for private enterprises.

Even directors of schools of environment whose research seeks to protect Nature as *not* merely instrumental but fellow being "in co-evolution", as Peter Brown states it in his resonantly titled *The Commonwealth of Life* (2001), do not critically engage the issue of value ground, nor the meaning of intrinsic natural worth or beauty in itself. Rather even here, value meaning is assumed in sweeping affirmation without defining principles of value defined or addressed.

#### **4.14. Finding the Ground of Duty beneath Moore and Kant**

Moore's concept of the Good is in contrast to the contemporary mainstream too. He directly recognizes natural beauty as of ultimate and intrinsic value, but only in the end ostensibly. Again we face an unprincipled affirmation.

Let us then turn to another 'let-life-be' pacification of values by Moore - to what he says about human duties, a very central domain of moral philosophy and ethics.

##### **4.14.1. Rational Duties Based on Prior Causal Knowledge**

The imposition of any general *duty*, Moore argues, requires "causal knowledge" of what the prescribed actions will produce. But the causal knowledge of a duty's good-producing effects is "too incomplete for us to ever assure ourselves of this result" (p. 149).

In other words, for an action to be shown as a duty, we must know what are the conditions which, with the prescribed action, will produce the intended consequence. But such anticipated consequences we can only know "humbly", in a practical manner,

by an applied understanding of which possibility among “alternatives likely to occur will produce the greatest total value” (p. 150).

#### 4.14.2. Consequentialism versus Intuitionism:: An Unseen Conflict

For Moore, duty is a matter of acting on probabilistic grounds to produce value. This is a moral *consequentialism* which is in conflict with Moore’s *intuitionism*.

Consequentialism judges the good solely by desired consequences. Intuitionism sees the Good directly. If Moore makes duty, which is an aspect of any concept of the good, a consequentialist matter, then its meaning falls apart from his intuitionist notion of the good. Yet this very basic issue does not occur to Moore’s analysis. The conflict can be put this way. With Moore, duties are causally dependent moral obligations which require *a-posteriori* or factual knowledge; whereas, at the same time for him, knowledge of the Good is *a-priori*, a direct intuition. Therefore, for Moore, it follows, duties (as *a-posteriori*) cannot qualify for ‘the Good’. Yet one basis for the good as such, and another for duty, *doing* what is right, is axiologically incoherent. Neither Moore nor his analytic successors have resolved this problem.

#### 4.14.3. Kant versus Moore on Duty

In adopting a strategic outlook to duties rather than a conceiving them as deducible from the directly intuited Good, Moore’s ethical philosophy comes into fundamental conflict with that of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804).

Kant’s categorical demands of duty, such as the absolute prohibition against lying in any circumstance is implicitly rejected by Moore for a contextual view which takes into account the probability of the duty producing a good outcome. If the probability of a good result is not high, then the duty diminishes towards no duty. Moore’s position thus avoids unintended consequences of *absolute* duties like Kant’s - to always tell the truth, even if it leads a murderer to a victim.

Yet on the other hand, if duties are converted into merely conditional requirements, the deontologist’s argument is that duties degrade into mere calculations of probable consequences and so cannot be counted on as such. “I’ll tell the truth but only when I am sure it is for the good” – a promise or commitment which admits of an out in almost any case.

#### 4.14.4. Reflecting on Duties as Dictates of Probabilistic Prudence

Although Moore gives no example of a causally justified duty, continuing the empty abstractions of analytic method, we might infer from his general principle the moral contents of what he might mean - for example, duties to desist from murder, rape, and so on because the probability is extremely high that serious harm is thereby prevented.

#### 4.14.5. The Life-Value Principle of Duty

Insofar, as harm to human life is a highly probable consequence of an act, it seems

proportionately imperative to prohibit it by strict duty against it. Conversely, insofar as life will be almost certainly enabled by a form of action, one might deduce a positive duty for society or individuals to perform that action.

We may call this the life-value principle of duty. Yet no such basis of duty is provided by Moore, or Kant, or indeed any received moral theory. As elsewhere in moral theory, life coordinates are missing.

#### **4.14.6. The Primary Axiom of Value as Ground of Duty**

In direct contrast, the Primary Axiom of Value explained ahead defines these coordinates. All valid duty entailments follow from its principle. Duty is good or bad, that is, to the extent of life's being violated or supported, disabled or enabled through time, by the duty's prescription. The greater the difference to life loss or gain by it, therefore, the stricter the duty is.

Probabilistic calculation of the consequences of following duty in Moore's case, however, refers to no such life content. Duty depends on the known probability of effects, but Moore gives no life-value standard to evaluate or measure the effects themselves to explain why we are bound by the duty. We may retain his probability measure, but require a value criterion for its content.

#### **4.14.7. Accepting or Rejecting Duties**

If we think through the world we are in fact required to act in, life-value duties can be inferred straightforwardly on this basis: for example, to participate in caring for one's own children and to perform as able useful work for the society within which we live. Life-value gain follows certainly from such duties, and loss without them.

On the other hand, the duty to obey one's parents or employer if they dictate harm to life is repudiated on such occasions by life-value duty, while the duties to do anything that stifles life without enabling it are unjustified - as with the compulsory female veil, for example.

#### **4.15. The Nature and Ground of Life-Value Duty**

When we work from the principle of life-value, not only probability of positive consequences is taken into account in recognizing the binding nature of a duty, but the intrinsic value of the *act itself* in performing the duty - that which consequentialism overlooks. For example, caring for children dependent on one in such a way as to increase mutual ranges of life-capacity enjoyment *within* the act of doing so - for itself as well as consequences - is what life-value duty affirms. Neither consequentialist nor deontological accounts of duty can capture this intrinsic value.

The life-value duty also admits of *degrees* of binding obligation, not absolutes one way or the other, and it does so in correspondence to the life gains versus losses in its process of fulfillment: not just results (consequentialism) and not just conformity to a principle of right (deontology).

#### 4.15.1. Knowing One's Duty

These are value considerations overlooked by both deontological and consequentialist obligations. They allow us to conclude against Moore that duties may hold even if causal knowledge of value-producing effects is incomplete.

We are thus duty bound against violating another's life capacities prior to any complete knowledge of the consequences. There is duty against the act itself. We know the duty not "in conforming our will to a principle of action" as with Kant, and not by "knowledge of effects", as with Moore. We know the obligation from prioritizing life-value itself - always to enable and not disable life and in better fulfillment the more inclusively coherent in doing so.

#### 4.15.2. The Causal Principle of Duty against A-Priori Deontology

Framing duties within a condition of causal justification targets obligation better than an *a-priori* imperative decoupled from circumstances. Kant, however, conceives moral obligation as pure, formal and absolute, with all duties reposed on the ultimate "*categorical imperative*" to "always will the maxim of one's action as a universal law".

Observe that such a categorical imperative is purely formal without any life-value substance. It is consistent with willing anything at all as long as one is willing to universalize the value principle - to kill all communists as non-persons, for example. Life parameters of duties avoid such moral absurdities, but wherever we look, we find that even Moore's probability-based duties lack life lines of distinction. Whether the theory is consequentialist or deontological, duty is not guided by life requirements - although they are the underlying basis of all coherent obligations.

#### 4.15.3. Kant's Moral Life-Blindness a Paradigm of the Era

Yet Kant declares in his greatest work on moral thought, *The Critique of Practical Reason*: "The moral disposition is the effect of a respect for something entirely different from life, in comparison and contrast which life and its enjoyment have absolutely no worth" (Section 90).

Kant's consciously life-indifferent position shows us how acceptable life-blindness is in modern rationality. A lock-step mechanism of reason seems to have been stamped on the age by the industrial revolution whose logic of steel generates moral correlatives. This life-blind rigor is a profound pattern of life alienation which reaches into every domain of analysis.

#### 4.16. Physics, Economics and Ethics:: The Life-Blind Logic across Domains

The world today is a result. Life-blind formal economics is the role model for discovering structures of moral and political truth by deductions of positions by abstract self-maximizers without lives. The economic model for this de-lified normative method of self-maximizing mechanisms, in turn, imitates a nineteenth century model of engineering physics - "reducing inputs", "accelerating throughputs" and "maximizing

outputs” to ensure a smooth-running mechanism of what is called “welfare production”, but in which life coordinates have no place.

Kant figures into this intellectual machinery as providing a model of a life-insensitive rationality - operating by pure reason on the transcendental plane, while regarding the economic-market realm of embodied life as a realm of pure mechanism. This ontological dichotomy has marked most thought of the modern age. More broadly, there is an unexamined feed-through of mechanical physics to economics to value theory with no critical awareness of the severance from life-value that has been built into this underlying metaphysics of the epoch. Philip Mirowski’s *Machine Dreams* (2002) provides an expert account of the theoretical automatism at work in contemporary social-science research programs. But the cross-over effects into moral philosophy, value theory and mechanical concepts of life and reason in general are not tracked.

#### **4.16.1. The Soulless Megamachine**

In this reduction of human thought and value to mechanically maximizing systems lies the inner meaning of what we might call *après* Lewis Mumford “the soulless megamachine”. We can define this ‘megamachine’ in onto-axiological terms by saying that it *runs by a-priori technical formulae disconnected from life needs to reorganize the world to fit a life-blind global system as transitory constitutive functions.*

Critical reflection in philosophy has tended to imitate this de-lifed method rather than call it into question. Fundamental human problems are instead (as in other disciplines) divided into separate elements, relations and specialist silos within which shared problems and life conditions do not arise. In general, these operations of analysis are unexamined in what unites them - their elision of common needs and life bases across domains.

In the real world of people’s duties, the obligations of persons and societies come to be reduced to priced services to competing and constituent operations within the megamachine’s growth with life-values excluded – a regulating meta-pattern which is not decoded.

#### **4.16.2. Ruling Value Syntax and Global Despoliation without Connection**

In consequence, this global socio-economic system can continuously demand what despoils human life and life conditions - with whatever does not meet system demands restructured to fit, or discarded. Growth of the money-sequence system may thus disemploy and dispossess people across borders, defund their public education, health and income-support services, repeal former life-protective regulatory standards, convert family sustenance farms to cash-crop exports, and in general eliminate what does not conform to this ruling order’s universalization

What distinguishes these transformations as duty bound to the ruling value system is the double onto-axiological equation regulating their advance: to wit, that this system is naturally necessary *and* good. The ruling value syntax thus regulates in the form of a deep naturalistic fallacy across spatial and temporal divisions.

Despite wide internalization of G.E. Moore's identification of the naturalistic fallacy in philosophy, it has not been applied to the ruling value system itself. Again we may observe the syntactical determination of theory to be consistent with the reproduction and growth of the ruling system. That its defining inner logic is fallacious is not an issue which can arise.

#### **4.17. Good and Evil Without Life Referents:: Principia Ethica as a Paradigm Case**

While the logical hygiene of the “analytic method” as exemplarily wielded by Moore is useful, it may become an end in itself. Moore sets this pattern by his method's displacement of value substance. Yet if analytic method fails to formulate any substantive principle and blocks understanding from reasoning in this direction, its usefulness is reversed.

The problem of analytic method without life bearings emerges most clearly in Moore's explanation of what he declares to be the “rational ultimate end of all human action”. Nowhere does he provide us with any guiding example or criterion of this rational ultimate end to which all human action is to be ethically directed. His ethic is in this way literally meaningless.

##### **4.17.1. Beauty and Affection:: Ultimate Categories of Value with No Principled Grounds**

Moore declares that “beauty” and “affection” are uniquely ultimate goods, but on no occasion does he offer any meaning by which we could recognize what *is* beautiful from what is a fake, or by which we could resolve or adjudicate conflicting views on the nature of these values.

Nor does Moore provide any definition or even illustration of these values which he calls “by far the greatest goods”. Such a method is degenerate because it insulates against reason to disagree, while providing no line of meaning to its claim. The only example Moore gives of beauty in his voluminous study is Beethoven's Fifth Symphony – and who would disagree? Yet he offers no principle or ground to explain *why* it is beautiful as opposed to, say, like big-band music.

##### **4.17.2. Evil Implications Follow from No Criterion of Value**

Throughout his *Principia Ethica*, in short, Moore provides no way of telling a true as opposed to false claim of beauty *or* of personal affection – the ultimate sources of ‘the Good’. He seeks to justify this failure by arguing for the “undefinability” of the Good, but we will see that this argument is inherently fallacious.

With no criterial principle to define friendship or beauty, absurd moral implications arise. Consider, for example, the personal affection of General Augusto Pinochet and Margaret Thatcher, or of Joseph Stalin and Laurent Beria. Or in our own time, the mutual affection of George Bush Jr. and Tony Blair in war crime. If such personal affections qualify as an ultimate good, and Moore provides no reason why not, the ultimate value he asserts allows for the validation of evil.

Moore is by no means alone in such normative theory by circling abstractions. Yet pursuit is usually made difficult, and so analysis needs to follow the track here to show how empty the highest-end normative thought can become. On Moore's other ultimate good of "beauty", absence of any criterion again allows for an undefined concept to allow an opposite as a case of it. For simple example, why is not any construction of fashion not "an object of beauty" if it is marketed and bought as such? With no criterion to adjudicate, judgment is set adrift. License is unknowingly given to exploitative imposture.

#### **4.17.3. The Irony of Rigorous Analysis without Criteria of Meaning**

How to distinguish the good from the evil, the beautiful from the ugly, or the best from vilest personal relations, are questions of ultimate value which ethics and moral philosophy exist to address. Moore distinctively and boldly puts them at the forefront of his theory. While others since have allowed moral value to become equivalent to any preference at all, Moore stands for long treasured values. Yet his undefined meanings in the name of direct intuition have unwittingly allowed for the debasing of ultimate values to matters of moneyed taste.

When the paragon of analytic philosophers refuses at any stage to provide any distinction in principle between what is good and evil in the major twentieth-century treatise on ethics, there appears to be profound moral confusion at the core. Moore's *Principia Ethica* is not only a paradigm case of the anchorless value condition it evolves within, but reveals the loss of bearings of the analytic tradition of philosophy itself. Priding itself since Hume on strict distinctions of meaning, its exemplar refuses them at the ultimate level of good and evil themselves.

#### **4.18. Avoiding Moral Substance:: From Indefinability to No Life-Value Compass**

It might be objected that Moore's intuitionism properly rules out such definitions. The Good is 'indefinable' by its nature. This is a defense which has long been accepted, but let us consider it more carefully. In fact, Moore rules out only one specific *type* of definition of the Good: namely that which "*substitutes for it in our minds - all its parts and their arrangement ... as, for example, we can do when we define 'a horse or a donkey'.*" (p. 8). Moore perhaps mocks criterion of the Good by his example of "a donkey" - a transferred epithet in literary terms. Condescension silences question. Yet the physicalist definition Moore diverts attention to is perfectly irrelevant to defining what is good. Moore commits the fallacy of what logicians call an *ignoratio elenchi* (literally "ignorance of the argument"), a derangement first explained by Aristotle. It means to sidetrack the argument to an irrelevant issue.

The fallacy here is that no coherent principle or criterion of what is good attempts to "substitute in our minds all its parts and arrangement" *because any such definition applies only to physical forms.* The Good' is not a material object except for idolators.

##### **4.18.1. Representative Failure of Contemporary Ethics**

Moore's prototype argument for the indefinability of the good reveals an underlying

convention of professional philosophy – to assert issues of great moment within circles of clever argumentation with little or no substance of conclusion. Thus even though Moore is braver than others in declaring with vehement certainty “the Good”, on the one hand, and “the greatest positive evil” or “the vile” on the other, he provides no defined answer to what they mean. In truth, he explains no way to tell them apart.

A deep pattern again emerges. The loss of any life-ground in moral thought is an internal correlative of the collapse of life support systems outside it.

#### **4.18.2. The Retreat to Ethical Emotivism and Loss of Moral Compass**

Philosophy’s subsequent reduction of moral judgment to merely expressions of emotion - the “emotivist” theory - follows after Moore. A.J. Ayer (1910-89) who champions this view in the next generation of Oxbridge proclaims that ethical judgments are “meaningless” in nature, perhaps due to Moore’s refusal to define what he means. In any case, Ayer speaks for the wider European movement of “logical positivism” which dominates philosophy and intellectual culture for the next half a century.

In an age when ‘value free’ science’s powers to control and predict are on offer to its funders, and values themselves are reduced in theory to desires or sentiments without substance, pro-and-con perspectives of value alone remain with no life-ground.

#### **4.18.3. The Age of No Life-Value Compass**

Through the latter half of the twentieth century and into the present, ethical and moral reasoning has been so situated. Argumentation without life substance has been the general fare of the journals, while the powers of market conditioning, engineering and superior firepower have carried the day. “Philosophy has developed sharp teeth”, the contemporary philosopher, Mario Bunge, has perceptively observed, “but lacks appetite for meaty substance.”

Since justification for the claimed ‘undefinability’ of good and evil turns out to be fallacious in the most celebrated twentieth-century argument for it, what does moral reason have left to offer? Moore is a first major symptom of a century’s moral pattern - avoidance of life substance across theories and schools.

### **4.19. Repeating the Problem of Evil:: Rational Consensus without any Life-Ground**

The wider meaning of Moore’s work might then be understood as a transition in the debasing of ethical thought. Moore anticipates the future in more than one way. He leads direction towards “consensus” as the only way in the end of deciding what is good. This is the safe haven of value judgment to which Moore points as the final decider of value (pp. 200, 205).

#### **4.19.1. Procedural Value Theory**

In the grounding of ethical intuition in consensus over historical time, Moore takes a

meta-step towards subsequent contractarian moral and political philosophy and communication theory. With none explicitly connecting to Moore, canonical normative works since his have moved to a similar tack. Consensus of rational opinion can alone decide what is good, just, moral or valid.

After annihilative wars led by sweeping ideologies, philosophers appear to have decided the way out is by rational procedures of agreement. Systematically articulated positions constrained by strict inferential deduction have become the consensual form of normative authority. This movement in philosophy and value theory is called “proceduralism”, and its rationally achieved normative conclusions are referred to as “constructivism”.

In contrast to the “historical consensus” referred to by Moore, these theorists adopt idealized rational methods – a further step from grounding in the real world. As explanation shows ahead, seeking any ground beneath language is the sin of “essentialism”, “metaphysics”, or “foundationalism”. Analysis will continue to investigate these modes of dismissal of any value base, but here we attend solely to the principle of *consensus* as normative guide.

#### **4.19.2. Consensus with No Foundations**

The crucial problem is that normative principles set by rational consensus decouple value judgments from the underlying requirements of life itself - as exemplified by Jurgen Habermas in his move to principles of consensus as ultimate in his debate with Herbert Marcuse analyzed in *The Value Field of Action: Reconciling Humanity and the Beast*.

In the real as well as theoretical worlds, life-support coordinates to regulate consent structures are essentially absent. What proceeds by electoral votes for contesting parties, for example, is assumed to be the meaning of democratic legitimacy. Yet democratic substance itself - the common life interest achieved by a self-determining citizenry - is screened out by the consensual procedure. Indeed government *against* the common life interest by a global market agenda can be proclaimed as democratically decided even when extremes of inequality, pollution and infrastructural degradation rise across borders.

#### **4.19.3. The Unposed Problem**

The meta-problem is that the consensus itself may not be good. Whether the canon writer is John Rawls, Jurgen Habermas or someone else, their rational procedures and conclusions of consensus do not solve this problem. Given none has provided any life-value criteria, the problem is insoluble. The ultimate question therefore insists: How can we know that *any* consensus is good for human life beyond its own rules of discourse and conclusion?

Procedures of consensus in themselves cannot apply beyond their language of reason or membership. This is why subjugation of groups beyond the community of agreement can be assumed as good by the rational consensus of the time - for example,

enslavement of other peoples in both the ancient and the modern cradles of democracy with consensual approval. The problem of achieving rational consensus with alien societies is simply avoided.

#### **4.19.4. The Real World:: Rational Consensus for a Global Market System**

In the world of life reality, depredation of the earth's life support systems have already occurred by the procedural consensus of the most highly placed representatives of the world's leading elected governments (e.g., "the Washington consensus"). Throughout they have agreed that capitalist-market globalization is good for the world's people. Unless social and natural life support systems are built into the terms of the accepted consensus, and they nowhere have been, there is no assurance it is life coherent.

In the end, no consensus - even if procedurally democratic and rational - can be adequate if it is not bound by objective life requirements. This is the ultimate normative issue to which analysis returns in the concluding sections of this study.

#### **4.19.5. The Profoundest Problem of the Human Condition**

In fact, no theory or practice of consensus - social contract of justice, moral agreement, or ideal speech situation - has even raised the issue. Although coherence with human life requirements and support systems can only be achieved when procedures adopt these requirements as their regulators, this baseline of rationality is not conceived.

Meanwhile in the real world of capitalist-market democracy, ecogenocidal policies have in fact advanced in the name of "global consensus" - the deepest problem that humanity faces.

#### **4.19.6. The Missing Link:: Finding the Life-Ground of Value to Guide Consensual Process**

On the one hand, no blindspot has been more fateful. On the other hand, any position which seeks deeper than consensus for collective life bearings is apt to be decried as "paternalist" or "authoritarian".

Not all agree, of course. The next chapter, *Traditions as Moral Anchor in a Time of Anchorless Relativism*, examines the primary philosophical adversaries of this way of thinking – the Marxian and Virtue traditions. They ground in neither self choices nor rational consensus without life bases, but in historical human powers and community.

To these anchoring visions evolving since the ancients, explanatory analysis now turns.

### **Glossary**

**Agent-relative:** A standard philosophical term signifying individual choice as in "agent-relative ethics" which assumes that value agency is confined to individuals.

**Analytic** An umbrella term covering any school or method of philosophy for

- philosophy:** which logical rigor and distinctions are prioritized and referents restricted to linguistic entities.
- Anti-foundationalism:** A generic term for the dominant trend of philosophy over the recent century whose unifying characteristic is denial of any universal truths or values.
- A-priori:** Derived independently of sense experience e.g.,  $2+2=4$ . Truth by definition and tautological deduction is the mathematical model, but presuppositions are often falsely assumed a-priori.
- A-posteriori:** “After the fact”, dependent on sense experience.
- Axiology:** From the Greek, *axioma*, “what is thought to be worthy”, the ultimate category of value reason, ideally building from rationally self-evident bases or *axioms* of value a complete system of value (aesthetic, epistemological, moral, etc.) with unlimited validity across domains. See also **Onto-axiology**
- Anti-foundationalism:** A generic term for the dominant trend of philosophy over the recent century whose unifying characteristic is denial of any universal truths or values.
- Capital:** Wealth that can be used to produce more wealth without loss by consumption or waste to be distinguished from money capital. See **Capitalism**.
- Capitalism:** A socioeconomic system in which all values are conceived in money terms and maximum sale of commodities for maximum private profit is the ultimate value regulator.
- Civil commons:** A unifying concept to designate social constructs which enable universal access to life goods, with **life support systems** as primary cc so far as society protects and enables their reproduction and provision for all of its members.
- Coherence Principle:** see **Life Coherence Principle**
- Collective agency:** To be distinguished from aggregates of individual choices and best understood as the rule systems people (s) make or follow as societies.
- Common life interest:** The reproduction and development of society’s life support systems. It disambiguates the categories of “the common interest” or “the public interest”.
- Continental philosophy:** A standard way of distinguishing contemporary European philosophy and method from **Analytic philosophy**. See also **Existentialism, Marxism, Phenomenology, and Postmodernism**.
- Consequentialism:** Often equated to utilitarianism, but strictly holding that the good or bad is to be found in its consequences, not its principle of action or intention.
- Deep ecology:** A movement founded by Arne Naess whose leading ideas against

environmental resourcism are that “the well-being and flourishing of non-human life have value in themselves independent of their usefulness for human purposes” and “humans have no right to reduce the richness and diversity of life forms except to satisfy vital needs”, a term left undefined.

**Deep naturalistic fallacy:** Does not merely identify the good with a natural property, but identifies the survival-of-the-fittest order of nature with human order, and assumes this order as both necessary and good for human survival and development.

**Deontological ethics:** Also “duty ethics”, standardly opposed to utilitarianism in holding that good lies in the principle or duty which action embodies, not its consequences of happiness

**Desire theory of value:** A concept to designate any theory of value which conceives all values in terms of individual desires or their objects.

**Determinism:** A typically reductionist term typically counterposed to freedom of choice, but understood by life-value onto-axiology to mean the delimiting of a range of material possibility within which different individual or collective choices occur.

**Development:** A central term of value in contemporary global discourse which does not distinguish between opposed forms of development or growth - for example, more commodities sold for profit (market development/growth) and more means of life available for people’s lives (human development/growth).

**Epistemology:** This is a central field of philosophy concerned with the nature, grounds and limits of knowledge a generally unrecognized realm of value judgment and theory insofar as judgments rest on elective norms of “true” -”false”, “valid” -”invalid”, “justified”-”unjustified”.

**Ethics:** One of the three recognized basic areas of philosophy that which is concerned with what is good and bad in human action, including competing positions of utilitarianism, deontological/formalist/duty ethics, emotivism/non-cognitivism, evolutionary ethics, intuitionism, naturalism, perfectionism, phenomenological ethics, postmodern ethics, subjectivism/pluralism/relativism, self-realization/teleological ethics, and virtue ethics. Perhaps the most enduring received meta-ethical debate is between consequentialism (judging by consequences, e.g., utilitarianism) and non-consequentialism (judging by the intrinsic principle of judgment and action e.g., Platonism and Kantianism). Moral philosophy is often equated to Ethics, but is in principle more restricted in reference to ought-to statements which entail prescriptions or prohibitions whose violation is thought to deserve guilt or punishment.

**Existentialism:** Classically defined by Jean-Paul Sartre as “existence precedes essence”, which means that human choice of what one does

(existence) precedes any set fate, determinism, role or external design (essence) ruling out this choice.

- Globalization:** A concept which admits of different meanings but whose dominant meaning is globalization of capitalism. See **Capitalism**.
- Intrinsic and instrumental value:** What is a good in itself and what is good as a means.
- Internal and external goods:** This is the basic distinction between what is a good in itself and what is good as an external possession.
- Life-blind norms:** A characteristic tendency of the ruling value systems of established societies and of their received ideologies to blinker out the life-disabling effects of their ruling orders.
- Life coherence principle:** Requirement whereby claims and theories must to qualify as rational or valid be consistent with (1) factual premises and (2) valid inferences to (3) enable rather than disable life and life-systems.
- Life-Ground:** Most simply expressed, all the conditions required to take your next breath. Axiologically understood, all the life support systems required for human life to reproduce or develop. The life-ground is to be distinguished from the concept of “the life-world” which refers to background beliefs.
- Life sequence of value:** The process whereby anybody of life becomes more life by means of life a process which admits of regressive, reproductive and progressive modes and degrees, each measurable by the criteria of more/less fields of life enabled or enjoyed through time.
- Life standards:** Those principles and laws which protect and enable human and ecological life systems.
- Life-value metric:** More/less life range in any domain or degrees of life function or expression.
- Life-value ontology:** General term for a value-system which regards life and means of life to more coherently comprehensive ranges of life as the sole real good, including the life support systems ultimately required to enable this process.
- Linguistic turn:** Major philosophical movement of the twentieth century associated with the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein, but moving far beyond Wittgenstein and his school in its influence (e.g., anti-foundationalism, postmodernism). By confining philosophical problems and discourse to issues of language or sign systems, the l.t. implicitly disconnects philosophy and reflective inquiry from the material problems of the world.
- Marxism/Marxian:** The theory of historical materialism which argues that the material mode of production of any society determines its legal, political and ideological forms (including morality), and that all significant

change (including values) is by laws of development of productive forces outgrowing their ownership integument.

- Materialism:** In philosophy, not the popular idea of an acquisitive ethic, but of a broader onto-axiology which is also anti-acquisitive – as with Mo Tzu, Helvetius and Marx over 2300 years. Opposed to idealism, it means materiality (space-time occupancy) alone is real and determining, with organic intelligence and scientific method determining legitimate knowledge.
- Measures of life value:** These refer to the ranges of the fields of life value which are maintained, gained or lost at the margins in reference to a prior or compared state (e.g., at the collective level, literacy rate growth, caloric and protein intake compared to health requirements, and housing ratios per capita to ratios of able-bodied citizens to available meaningful work of value to others). Life-value measure is applicable to phenomena in any life-field or domain by identification of more/less range of life capacity through time.
- Mechanical reduction:** The dominant model of life-systems as mechanical systems which rules out non-mechanical life properties (e.g., the irreversibility of life processes and non-substitutability of its constituents and conditions).
- Meta-Ethics:** The study of the nature of moral judgment conventionally focused on the logical status of ought and taxonomies of competing theories in exclusion of substantive moral issues.
- Metaphysics:** The ultimately regulating principles of existence (ontology) and knowledge (epistemology) which typically lack grounding in universal life support systems of causation, choice and identity
- Money sequence of value:** Using anything whatever as means (including money derivatives) to turn private money sums into greater quantities in reiterated choice paths of money-value adding.
- Moral Philosophy:** Moral philosophy is often equated to Ethics, but is in principle more restricted in reference to ought-to statements which entail prescriptions or prohibitions whose violation is thought to deserve guilt or punishment (e.g., the prescription/prohibition not to harm life). See also Ethics.
- Onto-axiology:** A concept which supersedes the standard reductionist split between ontology (the philosophy of being) and ethics/axiology (general theory of good and bad).
- Objective Values:** Values which are independent of individuals' affirming them (e.g., the values of universal life support systems).
- Proceduralism:** A generic pattern of leading philosophies of value which assume that universal values can only be implicit in or decided by procedures of argument (e.g., “contractarian” models of justice and norms of “the ideal speech situation”), and whose rational

“procedures” distinguish the different schools.

- Relativism:** A generic term for the view that there are no objective or universal values because all values are by their nature relative to the contingent cultures, preferences, individuals, practices and world-views in which they are embedded.
- Ruling Value-System:** See Social value system and Value Syntax
- Social justice:** The baseline and measure of social justice is defined by the constant principle of its opposite suffering from need by the life-capacity loss entailed by the deprivation of life means. Social justice is the overcoming of the various forms of this iniquity.
- Social Value System:** A society’s value-system which is normally presupposed by those governed by it and which ultimately regulates the decision norms and goals of its dominant social institutions, the individual roles within them, and the thought structures of those internalizing its regulating assumptions and conclusions. Also referred to as “ruling v.s.”
- Transcendental deduction:** Logical analysis in which the necessary presuppositions of the intelligibility of a claim or position are deduced as self-evident (e.g., the necessary presupposition that all humanity is European in the statement “Columbus discovered America”).
- Universal life goods:** All goods *without* which human life capacities are reduced or destroyed (eg., breathable air, potable water, means of expression for free speech).
- Validity:** From the Latin, *validus*, or strong, validity is narrowly equated in formalist traditions to inferences which are deducible from premises. In life-value onto-axiology, validity includes this sub-type validity, but requires consistency with known fact as well as, most primarily, life-coherent purpose.
- Value neutrality:** A standard which is claimed when a value-system is so deeply taken for granted that its outcomes appear as non-normative although achieved by the regulation of strict criteria of value and value judgment (e.g., the canons of scientific method).
- Value syntax:** Organizing principles of pro-and-con meaning, prescription, position and transformation which regulate a value system, but may be invisible to those who presuppose it. In the ruling value syntax of contemporary global society, the *subject* is money capital whose *verb* is seeking to become more without upper limit and whose *modifiers* are money-demand and its equivalents (“the money sequence of value”) with competing money capital subjects and the human and natural resources they purchase, exchange and dispose of always used to become *more* money capital. Rationality in this onto-axiological grammar is regulatively presupposed as (i) self-maximizing strategies in (ii) conditions of scarcity or conflict

over (iii) desired payoffs at (iv) minimum costs for the self to (v) win/gain more.

## Bibliography

Aristotle(1995), *The Complete Works of Aristotle* (ed. J. Barnes), Princeton: Princeton University Press [Includes Aristotle's most famous work in ethics, the *Nicomachean Ethics*, as well as his other works in normative philosophy and value theory, *Eudemian Ethics*, *Economics*, *Politics*, and *Virtues and Vices* - affirming the general theory that the good for human being is the realization of one's faculties to the utmost: (*eudaimonia*, or self-realization).]

R. Audi ed. (1995), *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press. [An excellent short encyclopedia of received philosophical authors, concepts and schools, but, as they, lacking the life-ground analysis and explanation followed by the 6.25 Theme Essay.]

Ayer, A.J. *Language, Truth and Logic* (1936), 160 pp. New York: Dover. [ The classical statement of the once dominant school of "logical positivism", a view deriving from scientific empiricism and holding that since there are not observations that prove moral statements as true or false, they are meaningless.]

Becker L.C. ed. (2000), *Encyclopedia of Ethics*, 641pp. London GB: Routledge. [This is the definitive comprehensive text in the field by experts in the areas of published philosophy up to the end of the twentieth century, and provides the widest representation of value theory formally available. McMurtry's essay entries on "Competition" and "Forms of Consciousness" define and explain primary but under-examined ethical categories.]

Berger, John (1975), *Ways of Seeing*, 169 pp. London: BBC-Penguin.[Berger's classic text begins "the relationship between what we see and what we know is never settled", laying bare ruling-value dimensions of famous visual art objects.]

Bernays, Edward W. (1933), *Propaganda*, 159 pp. New York: Liveright. [This is a revealing book by a nephew of Freud and a primary pioneer of Wall Street modern mass-market conditioning who explains how media appeal to unconscious desires to sell commodities and engineer consent, and why this is necessary for control of the masses with more than they need.]

Chan, W. (1963), *Sourcebook of Chinese Philosophy*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press [This is the definitive and comprehensive collection of classical Chinese Philosophy from Confucius and Lao Tzu to K'ang Yu-Wei.]

Darwin, C. (1936), *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. 549 pp. New York: Modern Library [Darwin's classical statement presented as an implicit general value theory of what is and is not "fit" to live in the human condition - the most dominant descriptive onto-axiology in the modern epoch. See **Smith**.

Dawkins, R. (1976), *The Selfish Gene*, 224 pp. Oxford: Oxford University Press.[Widely influential text of contemporary evolutionary biology featuring explanation by "the selfish replicators of genes and memes" by whose "universal ruthless selfishness" action is explained.]

de Wal, Franz (2009), *The Age of Empathy: Nature's Lessons for a Kind Society*, 304 pp. London: Crown Publishers.[Like Kropotkin over a century earlier, argues against the dominant view of the relentlessly selfish competitive instincts of human and natural life as one-sided, showing empathy to have evolved since the emergence of mammals.]

Edgeworth, Frances (1881[1932]). *Mathematical Psychics*, London: London School of Economics [This works leads the contemporary conception of man as "a pleasure machine" justifying "the employment of mechanical terms and mathematical reasoning in social science".]

Edwards, Paul (1967), *Philosopher's Index*, 8 volumes. London: Macmillan [This is the most comprehensive and detailed encyclopedia of philosophy.]

Gandhi, M. (1935/2000), *The Bhagavad Gita according to Gandhi* 245 p. Berkeley, Ca.: Berkeley Hills Books.[Gandhi conceives the dynastic war of the Gita as an allegory for the inner war of the soul between

the divine atman and the selfish forces of avidity.]

Gauthier, D. *Morals By Agreement* (1986), 367 pp. Oxford: Oxford University Press.[Definitive contractarian account of morality in a Hobbesian-market mode as an agreement among abstract and rationally self-maximizing agents deciding step by step is best for their own self-interests with no concern for others or *tivism* involved.]

Gould, S.J. (1989) *Wonderful life: the Burgess Shale and the nature of history*, 347 pp. New York: WW. Norton. [Devoted account by a famous paleontologist of the long extinct vertebrate world of the Burgess shale fossils (prior to the four-limb and large-body development of vertebrate evolution) which variously expresses wonder at their beauty but with no indication of principles of value judgment beyond minutial novelty.]

Great Law of Peace of the Longhouse Peoples. Akwesasne: White Roots of Peace, 1971. [Fire councils open with poetic tribute to life support systems as ultimate ground of the lives of all “expressing gratitude to the earth where men dwell, to the streams of water - - the maize and fruits - - to the animals that serve as food - - to the great winds - - and to the sun”.]

Hume, David (1960/1888), *A Treatise of Human Nature*, 709pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press [Hume’s classic study which is a philosophical precursor of market rationality which posits rationality as self-maximizing choice of desire objects.]

Jablonka, E. and Lamb, M. (2005), *Evolution in Four Dimensions*, 472 pp. Cambridge Mass.: Bradford Books/MIT Press.[This book importantly argues against a received one-way dogma that evolution is a developmental system in which not only genes but heritable variations play a role in evolution through epigenetic, behavioral, and symbolic processes which can modify DNA sequences themselves by selecting which genes switch on and off.]

Kant, I. (1992) *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*, 15 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Includes all Kant’s work in value theory in the inclusive sense, whatever is conceived of worth, or not, including *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* (148pp), *Critique of Practical Reason* (250 pp.), featuring Kant’s transcendental idealism and its “categorical imperative” (“act only in such a way as make the maxim of your action a universal law”) from which his concept of duty follows.]

Kropotkin, P. (1955), *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*, 362 pp. Boston: Extending Horizons Books. [This is a classical argument for cooperation as a factor of evolution as distinguished from Darwinian competitive struggle alone, providing a wealth of data including of pre-capitalist cooperative social formations but not defining principles to unify their meaning as ‘co-operative’ versus hierarchical and exclusionary in another way, or merely non-consciously relational.]

Locke, John (1690/1950), *The Second Treatise on Government*, 139 pp. New York: Liberal Arts Press. [This founding classic of liberal value theory argues for the protection of private property, including money, as the ground of all legitimate social obligation and government.]

Mackie, J.L. (1977), *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*, 249 pp. New York: Penguin.[This text argues that all moral or ethical judgments of right and wrong, good or bad, are “false”.]

Marcuse, H. (1956), *Eros and Civilization*, 209 pp. Boston: Beacon Press [This is an original philosophical synthesis of Marxian and Freudian thought moving beyond Freud’s reality principle of necessary repression to affirmation of “the life instinct” and unrestricted “libidinous” possibility enabled in a society which has overcome material scarcity.]

Marcuse, H. (1978), *The Aesthetic Dimension: Towards a Theory of Marxist Aesthetics*, 71 pp. Boston: Beacon Press. [This is distinctive account of art as creative negation of the status quo.]

McMurtry, J.(1998), *Unequal Freedoms: The Global Market As An Ethical System*, 372 pp. Toronto and Westport CT: Garamond and Kumarian [A systematic account of the unexamined and illicit ethical assumptions and inferences of classical, neoclassical and contemporary doctrines of the free market as an ethical, economic and political system.]

McMurtry, J. (2002), *Value Wars: The Global Market versus the Life Economy*, 262pp. London: Pluto Press [This volume explains and tracks the underlying principles of opposing value-systems in the ‘new world order’ across phenomena of wars, public-sector degradation, and ecological crises with defining constitutional regulators for a life-grounded global order.]

Mill, J.S. (1860/1996) *Utilitarianism*, 260pp. New York: Oxford University Press [This volume contains the primary modern statement of value as defined by “the Greatest Happiness Principle” wherein “all actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce pain”.]

Merchant, Carolyn (1980), *The Death of Nature*, 292pp. New York: Harper and Row.[This work provides a prototype eco-feminist analysis of the images of modern scientific mechanism since Bacon and their violent usurpation of the prior central metaphor of ‘earth as nurturing mother’.]

Miller, P. And Westra, L (2002), *Just Ecological Integrity: The Ethics of Planetary Life*, 326pp. Boston: Rowman and Littlefield. [This cross-current collection of articles, written for the occasion of the Earth Charter 2000 in Costa Rica, provides state-of-the-art analyses at the interface between human values and ecological disintegration.]

Mirowski, P. (2000), *Machine Dreams*, 540 pp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press [This study tracks the machine model in contemporary market economic theory into the “automaton theater” of economic, military and decision-theory research.]

Moore, GE (1909), *Principia Ethica*, 272 pp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [This is the classic work of ethical theory of the twentieth century, and exhibits in paradigm form the close analysis of argument and agent-relative premises which have typified the dominant analytic school of Anglo-American moral theory since David Hume.]

Nietzsche, Friedrich (1964), *The Complete Works of Nietzsche* (ed. O. Levy). New York: Russell and Russell. [Includes *The Genealogy of Morals* and, in particular, *Beyond Good and Evil* which reject morality and ethics as “constructs of domination”.]

Nussbaum, M. (1999 ) *Sex and Social Justice*, 476pp. New York: Oxford University Press.[Major work of an outstanding Aristotelian liberal and feminist, revealing in its attention to “separateness”, “the separate individual” as the ground of value understanding, the “fundamental fact of ethics”, thus entailing abstraction out of life support systems as a methodological given.]

M.C. Nussbaum and Amartya Sen eds. (1993) *The Quality of Life*. Clarendon: Oxford University Press. A major collection of articles and replies to them by leaders in the field including the editors, G.A. Cohen, Onera O’Neill, Hilary Putnam, Charles Taylor, and Michael Walzer, on equality, capability and well-being, gender justice, and standards of living: none of which grounds in need requirements or life support systems.]

G. Outka and J.P. Reeder eds. (1993), *Prospectus for a Common Morality*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. This is a collection of original articles by internationally recognized leaders in the field arguing within a liberal framework of normative understanding.]

Perry, R.B. (1969), *Realms of Value: A Critique of Human Civilization*, 487 pp. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. [Perry provides the most comprehensive argument for a general value theory yet published: briefly, the good = what is desired. ]

Plato (1961), *The Collected Dialogues of Plato* (ed. E. Hamilton and H. Cairns), Pantheon Books: New York. [The complete works of philosophy’s most famous author.]

Radhakrishnan, S. and Moore, C. (1957), *Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy*, 683pp. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [This is a definitive and comprehensive collection of Indian philosophy including the principal Upanishads, the Bhagavad-Gita, and early and late Buddhism.]

Rawls, J. (1967), *A Theory of Justice*. 542pp. Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press. [This is the recognized definitive work of 20<sup>th</sup> century liberal political philosophy deploying the principle of self-maximizing rationality to develop a theory of justice as fairness.]

Sen, Amartya (1977). “Rational Fools: A Critique of the Behavioral Foundations of Economic Theory”, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 6, 317-44.

Smith, Adam (1776/1966), *An Inquiry into Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. 2 vols. New York: A.M. Kelley. [Possibly the most materially influential work in history, it anticipates Darwin’s theory of evolution and the biological-economic linchpin of modern thought:”Demand for men, like any other commodity, quickens when it goes on too slowly, and stops when advance too fast. It is this demand which regulates and determines the state of propagation in all the different countries of the world”.]

Spinoza, Baruch (1985), *The Collected Works of Spinoza* (ed. E. Curley), 7 vols. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [Spinoza's classical Rationalist Idealism work features a distinctive concept of "self interest" which must comprehend the logic of the whole to be rational.]

Suzuki, D.T. (1956). *Zen Buddhism: Selected Writings of D.T. Suzuki* (ed. W. Barrett). 294 pp. Garden City N.Y.: Doubleday [By the most widely recognized scholar of Zen, this work illustrates its lack of any principle of value to rule lethal warrior arts.]

Thoreau, Henry (1965), *Walden, and other writings*. 732 pp. New York: Modern Library. [Thoreau affirms a life of harmonious simplicity and awakens within Nature.]

Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1968), *Philosophical Investigations*. 260 pp. New York: Macmillan. [This work leads what philosophers have come to call "the linguistic turn" of 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophy.]

M.E. Zimmerman, J.B. Callicott, J.Clark, G. Sessions, K. J. Warren eds. (1998). *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*. 490 pp. Prentice Hall: London. (This is a critically wide-ranging text in philosophy of the environment with articles by such well-known figures as Thomas Berry, Aldo Leopold (the pioneer of the Land Ethic), Arne Ness (definitive account of Deep Ecology by the founder), Carolyn Merchant (defining excerpts from *The Death of Nature*), James O'Connor (leader of socialism and ecology movement), Tom Regan, Peter Singer, Paul Taylor (animal rights), Gary Snyder (bio-regionalism), and the editors (covering such fields as ecofeminism and social ecology).

### **Biographical Sketch**

**John McMurtry** holds his B.A. and M.A. from the University of Toronto, Canada and his Ph.D from the University of London, England, and has been Professor of Philosophy at the University of Guelph for over 25 years and University Professor Emeritus since 2005. He is an elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, and his many articles, chapters, books and interviews have been internationally published and translated.