

## THE GLOBAL CRISIS OF VALUES

**John McMurtry**

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

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### Summary

This chapter provides an overview value-system analysis of how we live and reason, explaining the unexamined presuppositions which govern science, technology and social orders themselves, and why humanity's unique choice-space of deciding the rules of its reproduction has long been blinkered out. Throughout this axiological investigation lays bare the ultimate but unseen normative crisis of the contemporary epoch - money versus life sequences of value - and explains how this ultimate conflict of value-sets determines humanity's future beneath system-wide avoidance of the problem.

### 1.1. Value Pervasion without Core

Despite an increasingly dominant view among philosophers and social scientists that no values can be universalized to have reliable status beyond particular locations, people's

lives everywhere are no less pervasively determined by them. The value-laden reality of our condition is graphically described by John Fekete in *Life after Postmodernism: Essays on Culture and Values* (1987): “[We] live, breathe, and excrete values. No aspect of human life is unrelated to values, valuations, and validations. Value orientations and value relations saturate our experiences and life practices from the smallest established microstructures of feeling, thought, and behavior to the largest established macrostructures of organizations and institutions. The history of cultures and social formations is unintelligible except in relation to a history of value orientations, value ideals, goods values, value responses, and value judgments, and their objectifications, interplay, and transformations” (p.1).

### **1.1.1. The Postmodern and Cosmopolitan View of Values**

The postmodern and cosmopolitan view is that there is no global or universal value across cultural codes and individual perspectives, or even the true meaning of a text. This is a philosophy of “differences” without common ground or foundation which has become conventional wisdom in the last 30 years.

Yet at the same time, political conflict across the globe features universal value claims in the name of which elections, wars, persecutions and propaganda campaigns are fought - “Western values”, “Islamic values”, “family values”, and even “life values” that are indifferent to the bearers of life.

### **1.1.2. Values Lead as Well As Rationalize**

In the last century especially, political and propagandist exploitations of the centrality of values in people’s lives have given the concept of “values” such a bad name that many have repudiated values discourse altogether as “merely ideological”. Such dismissal is dangerous because it does not engage a profound problem of the human condition - values that not only rationalize, for example, wars and persecutions, but lead them by canalizing their motivation as good in nature. If the claim of good stays critically unexamined (whether by evangelical certitude, cosmopolitan cynicism, or mechanical reduction to self-interest), it avoids detection as a fallacious moral construction.

### **1.1.3. Calling Values to Account**

When former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, for example, argues in a New Year edition of *Foreign Affairs* (2007) that the reason for the invasion of Iraq in April 2003 by foreign armed forces was a “values” war, a war not for “security” or “regime change”, but for “values change”, his title is “A Battle for Global Values”.

Yet, no principled grounding of this “values war” is anywhere offered. Not one defining criterion of any value substantiates its meaning - although one good after another is proclaimed from “justice” to opposing “unfair trade” to “global poverty”, and “degradation of the planet”. All that is required in such a field of meaning - in this case, the premier journal of record of international-affairs commentary - is the continual invocation of pro-and-con slogans applied to events and perceived trends.

With no accountability to any principle of moral meaning, values can be whatever one wants to claim. They may “saturate experiences and life practices from the smallest microstructures of feeling, thought, and behavior to the largest established macrostructures of organizations and institutions”, but have little or no principled sense. Nor are they obliged to have any in a world where the good is only what people want. In truth Blair’s “values choice” constituted the “supreme crime” under known criteria of international law instituted since the Nuremberg Charter. Yet as elsewhere, these normative bases are bypassed. Principled value grounds, it seems, are avoided as a global convention.

What is truly good is no easy question, all would agree. But whatever it is - and it is what this study seeks to answer in the light of philosophy West and East over 2500 years - it requires a meaning that can tell right from wrong beyond asserting pro-and-con slogans.

#### **1.1.4. Science and Facts Cannot Solve the Problem**

“Science” is today widely believed to be sufficient to guide us, but this belief too is unexamined. Science can tell us the patterns of facts, but not whether they are good or bad. Indeed scientific method normally prescribes “value neutrality” to all who would be scientific. But if scientific method is thus “value neutral”, how can it guide us on what is right and wrong?

It may be thought that good and evil are illusions anyway, or mere exclamations - the position of the philosophical school of “logical positivism” led by A.J. Ayer (1910-89). This view argues that since there are not observations that prove value statements as true or false, they are “meaningless”.

As a result of the success of this argument, moral philosophers have moved to discuss what it means to say something is moral or wrong, not whether it is or not. This method is called “meta-ethics”, and it brackets out all substantive value issues. The master puzzle is the logical status of “ought” which - whatever it is, an inference from a subjunctive conditional or a command, or something else - explains nothing about what is good or evil.

Since the moral philosophy of logical positivism has modeled itself on science, the question of good and bad in principle thus disappears as an issue. Values are irrational, and that is an end of the matter.

#### **1.2. The Fallacy of Value-Neutral Science**

But is science truly “value neutral”? The assumption that it is can be recognized as false as soon as value analysis discloses the logic of its method - the very rigorous norms in terms of which scientists consistently and consciously judge findings of fact and hypotheses. These norms or “scientific standards” constitute a very strict value system. They prescribe that every step of assertion of fact is rigorously consistent with evidence which can be reproduced by others. Pro and con principles of validity and invalidity - the very essence of a value system - guide every judgment and conclusion. Without these regulating values or standards, science would cease to exist.

Laboratory scientists, for example, are governed by inviolable standards of peer-verifiable evidence and experimental protocol for their work to qualify as scientific. At the same time, invariant and confirmable sequences or probabilities of phenomena must be shown for the results to count as having “scientific value”. These standards must be obeyed for scientists to provide what they themselves call “good science” - what they are obliged to conform to if their work is to be considered valid rather than invalid.

Thus the claim that science is “value neutral” is ultimately absurd - the “*value-neutral fallacy*”. That this belief has had such sustained currency in our era indicates the great confusion surrounding the values that humans live by. Values govern every activity of our rule-governed species, especially the hard sciences themselves. What scientists really mean is, *only* these values count in science.

### 1.2.1. When Science is Good for Us, and When Not

It is because of these strict values that almost all of the rules, tools and advantages we count on as human are the results of scientific method. As long as science moves within its limits, it is humanity’s most valuable tool. Its demands for strict consistency of facts and claims, openness to disconfirming empirical data, and quest for predictive results lead the way of human knowledge for all observable and redundant patterns that exist. But what is not clearly recognized is that these patterns are also the limits of science. Science does not apply to what is neither observable nor redundant.

*Scientism* is science which exceeds this limit. It is the invalid extension of observable uniform sequences into the sphere of conscious life phenomena to which they do not apply. Yet so basic and consensual is the scientific value system that it comes to appear as the structure of everything real. What does not conform to it does not exist, even our inner lives of thought. This is the scientific fallacy. Yet so successful have science’s advances been in the physics realm in particular that externally observable and verifiably constant sequences are perceived and demanded everywhere - so that what is *not* externally observable or not invariant in sequence, such as experiencing life itself and valuing it, is deemed illusory.

### 1.2.2. The Limits of Scientific Method

In truth, what is of intrinsic human value lies precisely in what does *not* conform to observable and repetitive patterns. These “fields of life value” and their ultimate ranges of intrinsic life value are analyzed in Chapters Traditions As Moral Anchor In An Age Of Criterionless Relativism;The Primary Axiom And The Life-Value Compass;Good And Evil Within: Opening The Terra Incognita Of The Felt Side Of Being where the onto-axiology of life value is spelled out.

For example, science and scientific method cannot lead us in the ultimate question of what is of value in our lives. They can only help in getting the facts straight about verifiable sequences of phenomena. This is an immensely important task, but it oversteps its bounds where elective life processes are involved - for example, your own next thought. Here a vast realm within and without comes into play that no scientist can predict because it operates on a plane of being that is not space occupying, the realm of

consciousness itself - thought and felt being - which only its bearer can experience directly.

It is a mark of the era's loss of value bearings that these limits of science are not defined. Yet just as great a problem lies in reifying engineering science's expressions as capital-T Technology which appears to rule us from without.

### **1.3. Technology as Materialized Value-Sets**

Technology like the science it expresses is typically thought to be "value neutral". Yet before any technology is established, it is first scientifically validated in some way, and so selected as acceptable by the normative criteria of science. Each advance to a "*better*" technology is then judged by defined measures of performance which decide which technology is "*superior*" or "*inferior*" - all value judgments regulating all technologies which exist. And every such value judgment implies a principle of preference (e.g., less cost, higher velocity) - that is, a value standard.

It is therefore false to claim, as so many do, that "technology is indifferent to values". A technology is a materialized value system with its value regulators programmed into its performance. To explain the matter in a formal definition: *Every step of a technology's implementation is a fixed option-set mechanically sequenced to achieve certain desired results.*

Thus to construe technology as an independent force ruling over humanity is a preconscious fetishism - endowing a human-made object with superhuman powers projected onto it.

#### **1.3.1. Technology as Frankenstein: From Mary Shelley to the World Machine**

Technological value-sets only differ from living value-systems by being exactly materialized in a repeat- mechanism whose sequencing is closed and invariant. That is why technologies do not appear to be value-systems - because the choice-steps they fix into invariant order are locked into a uniformity of repetitive operations that abolish *subsequent* choices from their successful operation. It is just this locking-in operation of science and technology which boxes out the value-choice steps of their construction.

"Frankenstein monster" is the imaginative version of this automaton machine-power operating apparently on its own. Yet even in Mary Shelley's novel, the monster was known to have a choosing human author and director - a directive value system behind the machine. This governing value-choice sequence has, however, been forgotten in the fetishism of Technology.

Even the famed twentieth-century philosopher, Martin Heidegger (1889-1956) pronounces a form of this hypostasis in his argument in *On Technology* (1977). Here he says that "everywhere we remain unfree and chained to technology" (p. 5). He and others, now an industry of thinkers, block out what is actually dictating technology's every step. That is, they systematically avoid, that is, the ruling value-system forging every link of "Technology" as an instrumental moment *of it*.

What is this ruling value system? If we track any contemporary technology through its value-choice construction, we find that every single step of investment, planning, operationalization, marketing and deployment of a technology's innovation and implementation is typically dedicated to money-value added for its proprietors at each stage. What has occurred to dissolve this value-system governor is a kind of magical thinking. Technology has been hypostacized as an autonomous power "enslaving" humanity when, in fact, it is the servant of a value system which is not seen. Thus mechanisms joined with other mechanisms come to hold people in thrall as an uncontrollable world machine which operates on its own - the source of much science fiction today.

#### **1.4. The Unexamined Life at a System Level**

Deeper than the hypostasis of technology has been the absolutization of the global economic order of which it is an instrument, the ruling value system conceived as an autonomous necessity run by iron laws beyond human will or control. What is not recognized is that these laws are in fact imperatives of an inherited normative construction whose universally regulating inner logic of command is, at the highest level of abstraction, to turn money into more money for private money possessors - a value mechanism formalized ahead.

Long prior to global capitalism, societies have related to their inherited social orders as prescribed by all-powerful forces beyond their choice. Seldom is such an order recognized as locked-in until it disappears. Before it falls, conception of its powers is superstitious in structure (from the Latin, "*super-stehen*", literally "to stand over"), and not decoded as what it is - a kind of god-system to which any alternative is unthinkable. We may recognize this inner logic of system worship elsewhere, but imagine it as impossible in our own. Yet here as well, we see the same signs. Painful sacrifices are called for to sustain and extend the ruling system. Adoration of its magic and miracles is ritually proclaimed. Public wealth and resources are devoted to ensure renewal of its cycles.

Sober reason knows that every man-made construction is produced and governed in accordance with the directions of human agents through time. The recurrent problem has been that a society's presupposed and sanctified system of mutual life reproduction is assumed to be conferred by a higher order of rule - an ancestral-ghost hierarchy, eternal divine commands, or inexorable laws of the market that are inalterably given. This is a profound confusion across eras and cultures, and will occupy much analysis of this study. It is never more inertial and dangerous than when it has become global with no tolerated alternative beyond it - approximately our condition today. Here it is especially important to examine rather than presuppose the ruling value system. When Socrates famously said "the unexamined life is not worth living", he did not only mean the life of the individual, although that is what he is usually taken to mean. He meant more deeply, or so his counsel is considered here, the life of a society or civilization.

##### **1.4.1. The Value-System Rule behind Perceived Higher Necessity**

In our era, for example, technology and the capitalist system are assumed - whether by

orthodox or Marxian economics - to be operating in accordance with inalterable laws with inevitable consequences of human development. Yet human decisions operating in accordance with a human-made ruling value mechanism are what decide every moment of the system's reproduction. It does not run by itself. The problem is that the deciding value-choice space at the system level, as inside a game at the micro level, is assumed away. People "play the game" inside its rules without critical analysis of its regulating values. If the governing value system thus remains unexamined, conformity to its demands is determined prior to conscious reflection. The social construction is thus perceived as an autonomous necessity independent of their wills.

On the other hand, if the dominant cultural values are those of a feudal society, then different rules order collective existence. Modern technology, the primary means of the contemporary money-capital system, may be ruled out as unacceptable and abhorrent - as Galileo's telescopic astronomy was by the Church fathers in Italy, and as the firearm was by the Bushido warrior caste in Japan. The governing value-system decides without question of it. It is sacrosanct.

For example, even in contemporary capitalism itself, no scientific technology is adopted that does not conform to the ruling value principle of maximizing real money returns to private investors. "This is the way the world works", it is assumed. Even a brilliant new technology that can save countless lives is excluded from production however inexpensive it is if it does not serve this supreme goal. For example, the *British Medical Journal* reported in an article on December 5 1998 that a daily low-cost dosage of a pill of non-patented components resulted in an 80% reduction of heart attacks in everyone over 55, "a greater impact on the prevention of disease in the Western world than any known prevention". But no subsequent market manufacture of the combination-pill was undertaken, and public health ministries ignored it for years.

In this way, we may see how a ruling economic mechanism believed to be strictly scientific operates by institutionalized choice-paths governed by a ruling value system which is both unexamined and life-blind.

### **1.5. The Unseen Chains of Presupposed Ruling Norms**

How could such thoroughly value-governed practices as scientific method, technological development and capitalist mechanism have become so widely misconceived as "value neutral"? How could those who decry "technology without ethics" or "capitalist greed" not see that each in fact conforms to a social value system which is itself not called into question.

However silently value presuppositions may regulate thought and choice from beneath awareness of their constraint, all humans do express values or value systems. When such instituted principles of thought and action become habitual and enforced by social acceptance, they typically appear to their bearers as beyond their choice and responsibility. In the contemporary world, it is capital-S "Science" or capital-T "Technology" or the capital-M "Market" which is thought to determine from without by its autonomous necessity.

### 1.5.1. Reclaiming the Human Author of the Ruling Value Order

Such a ruling value mechanism may seem socially required for stable social order, but this does not alter its nature as a social construction. And we can always choose against as well as for any value we live by within the limits of physical laws. Indeed Giambattista Vico (1688-1744) famously argued in *The New Science* (1724) that humans can only fully understand what they make themselves. Yet ruling value systems have been made an exception by their presupposition as set beyond human choice and control. As the instinctual repertoire is to the herd, so is the social value system to the human society which has not yet evolved to conscious self-determination.

While a rich modern tradition of “social contract theory” has moved from Vico’s insight to the construction of ideal ‘social contracts’ by which humanity ought to be bound - a tradition which goes from Thomas Hobbes (1558-1679) to Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78) to John Rawls (1921-2006) - no part of this great tradition critically analyses the actual value system by which humanity lives. Consequently, the capitalist value-system itself remains unexamined.

John Locke (1632-1704) justifies the system of private property and money exchange as the foundation of state rule and legitimacy, but he attributes its order to divine law and right in an idealized account. The idea that humanity ought to self-determine at the social level - in Rousseau’s idea making the “chains of the law” be self-determined by the “common interest” and “general will” - is a core ideal of this tradition, but only at the political-state level not the economic level, with critical examination of the actually ruling capitalist value system avoided.

### 1.5.2. Humanity’s Field of Value Choice and Self-Regulation

We might now summarize our condition as follows. Because our lives, our social orders and our civilizations themselves are all embodiments of regulating constructs of value to which we consciously or unconsciously conform through time, we might best understand our human reality as a vast and complex *field of values whose regulating norms are adopted, rejected and changed within the ranges of possibility given by physical laws*.

Value systems constitute the human meaning of our individual and collective lives within this wide range of material possibility and choice. They are to humanity as instinctual programs are to animals, but are decided by human beings themselves.

**1.5.2.1.** This is the great general responsibility that humanity has been for the most part unwilling to face at the economic level. Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-80) led the existentialist movement in philosophy that highlighted the responsibility the individual must bear for creating who s/he is, but he did not penetrate to the rule-governed order of the surrounding society by which all are governed. Indeed, he thought the ruling capitalist order was “a monstrous construction with no author”. That this “construction with no author” has in fact been forged in every moment of its rule, reproduction and growth by human decision is apt to be forgotten by individuals who are born and die within it. These are the invisible chains with which moral philosophy and critical inquiry avoid engaging.

## **1.6. Human Nature: The Animal which Lives By Values**

Humans are, after all, the only beings for whom how to live can be an issue. A dog or a bird or a fish merely does what it is impelled to do by its body whose inherited instincts are triggered into formation and action by environmental stimuli. The animal is, as the young Karl Marx (1818-83) put it, “immediately identical with its life activity”. The distinction between what it *wants* and what is *of value*, we may add, does not arise to its evident consciousness.

Even in those celebrated instances of kin protection in which a maternal or apical animal of a kin group risks or sacrifices its life security for the benefit of others of the in group, the reaction is not regulated by any principle of value applying beyond the particular kin and circumstances.

### **1.6.1. Values Must Be Distinguished From Desires**

It may be replied that the dog, who represses his desire to move when his master cries “bad!”, experiences a distinction between good and bad. But this is only because it has been trained to obey human prescriptions - on pain of losing what it desires if it does not - food and affection, for example. For the dog, and for the unfree human, there is no question of good or bad beyond success in getting what is wanted.

If the consciousness of the dog did consider such an issue, how could we know? We could know if the animal gave signs of putting its own desire into question - for example, by moving from a plate of food it wants to eat to make room for another who has not eaten at all. When we observe such actions on the part of animals, we find evidence of their being value-bearers - the realm of value beyond the self’s immediate appetite or obedience to a particular master.

### **1.6.2. Testing for Self-Government by Values**

Without language, living in accordance with values does not seem possible because human values are principles governing choice, and principles seem dependent on the abstractions of concepts which, in turn, require language.

Thus it has been widely but mistakenly assumed that non-human beings are not value-bearing *because* they do not speak a human language. Yet there might be signs of value-behavior without language expressing it - for example, the refusal of an animal to harm another when competing for food, territory or mate. Imagine if animals waiting in queue to feed, not because of the superior powers to bite of those eating before it, but taking turns in accordance with a principle of eating no more than needed when others are still without - as dolphins indicate the capacity for in their feeding, and human beings, more systematically, when they have evolved to collective moral self-government. The signs of this are everywhere that people make rules to protect and enable the lives of all - rules whose meaning and evolving possibility are analyzed in depth in *The Lost Social Subject: Evaluating the Rules by Which We Live*.

### **1.6.3. Morally Free and Unfree Human Beings**

Certainly we find this universal value in developed humanity in regard to acting to save the individual lives of other species, or indeed entire ecosystems of life - just as we find the opposite of ego-centeredness that is indifferent to all other lives but its own or of its narrow group - what we properly call “inhuman”.

Even with non-human animals, there have been many familiar stories and observations of social creatures with more developed brains like dolphins and apes whose concern for other life extends across species on observed occasions - spoken of by both Aristotle and Darwin, for example. We are dealing here with the evolution of an unmapped but ultimate field of life and its meaning.

### **1.6.4. The Ultimate Choice Space of Human Being**

Yet only human beings seem to be capable of action governed by principles of value beyond immediate situations and against immediate appetites - the supra-body plane of freedom and identification which opens the life sphere of being human. This is not to deny that there is a very long period of struggle of humanity for and against living on this plane: a struggle in which philosophers like Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) and his following as well as social Darwinists repudiate the supra-animal moral level as unnatural. History’s predator classes and tyrants may confirm this claim, but not if we recognize that the choice-space of society’s rules admits polar-opposite alternatives and modes in between - as history too discloses to the open mind.

This issue of values and how to live is very old and deeply conflicted in moral vision, and will be engaged throughout this study at different levels. Philosophy’s vocation is to examine the underlying principles of what we are, know and value. Yet this vocation has been under-fulfilled in respect of the surrounding social value systems within which philosophers themselves have lived.

### **1.6.5. Aesthetic and Knowledge Values: Humanity as the Value-Bearing Being**

Non-moral or aesthetic values can exist across species as well, but are just as difficult to discern in the non-human animal. Yet it is quite plausible that if a non-human animal had aesthetic values, we would see signs of it - for example, by its consistently preferring places with complexity and harmony of design, or arranging them in this way. While tribal life may often seem to resemble the instinctual repertoires of the animal world, the artistic designs and expressions of the primitive human go far beyond the natural given in visual and dance creations understood as resonating with the cosmic whole - a relationship of cognitive, image and feeling connection to the terrestrial life-host which is unique to the species.

Where in all the records of humanity do we find a people who does *not* so connect to the cosmos? However impressionistic in form, we can see from the beginning of humanity a meaning which reductionist concepts of “human nature” blinker out. It is in humanity’s identification with the cosmic whole as an open value meaning that we find the human vocation at its most embracing - a field of value meaning, which will occupy the last

sections of this study.

### **1.6.6. Humans as Beasts**

None of this implies that human beings cannot be like beasts in not being aware beyond their own immediate wants. “Everyone just goes for what they want”, they say, “it’s a law of nature and competitive survival”. Such a behavioral pattern among human beings cannot be denied. What is missed is that the ruling value system selects for or against it, and this level of choice determination is rarely examined.

A value system for which good does not arise except as getting what is desired lives on the level of the brutes, and Hobbesian philosophy, fascist ideology and dominant evolutionary biology argue that human beings cannot do otherwise and survive. The philosophical point is, however, to understand value systems as possibilities, not reduce all to the one which is perceived or locked in.

### **1.6.7. Value Intelligence**

For most, values may mean compliance with prescriptions to get what one wants within a structure of conventions - as in competitive market ideology which differs from the Nietzschean predator philosophy in accepting rules within which self-maximizing desires are pursued (i.e., strict property and exchange laws). We might say of this next level of value system, with or without Lawrence Kohlberg’s stages of moral development, that this is the logic of conventionalized animals not yet morally conscious beyond what’s-in-it-for-the-self. People recognize human freedom, in contrast, when they recognize that the values they live by are decidable and may identify widely or narrowly - what human beings do distinct from beasts. It is these value formations which decide which way, and the more inclusively life coherent they are, the better - the ultimate inner logic of value intelligence and evolution which the remainder of this study tracks.

## **1.7. The Contemporary Value Impasse: No Common Good except Market Value**

Prior to the neo-liberal era, great liberal thinkers like John Stuart Mill (1806-73) and John Dewey (1859-1952) were grounded in a concept of the common good that included all society’s citizens, and valorized human development as an end in itself - quite contrary to the currently ruling global value paradigm which valorizes forms of money gain alone with civilization instrumental to them.

Mill and Dewey, arguably the greatest liberal thinkers of the epoch, also respectively implied and affirmed what is taboo to advocate today - the socialized management of society’s productive forces to better enable the individual freedom and flourishing of its members. In the global value system which has ruled over the last 30 years, in stark contrast, the choice-pattern is to exclude government from any function but serving the market and its private owners and buyers.

This doctrine reverts to the original night-watchman state of the John Locke whose theory of citizenry and legitimacy justified revolution against the royal invasion of private property, and - hardly noticed - sanctified enclosures of the commons at the same time (as

explained in Jeff Noonan's essay, *Life-Blind Liberalism and Life-Grounded Democracy*, found elsewhere on this EOLSS site. The only good in this value system is individual private property, including of life itself, with money-exchange permitting more without limit.

### **1.7.1. Individual Consumers and Voters in Aggregate as Freedom and Democracy**

These system-deciding values are presupposed rather than opened to question. Typically normative discussion begins from a meta-premise - that the "state must remain impartial between conceptions of the good life" which are necessarily various if its citizens are free. Our freedom and open-endedness as human beings is thought to depend on individuals deciding for themselves the values they live by. On the one hand, what is called "contractarian" theory understands justice and morality in terms of self-maximizing individuals as contractors whose negotiation of general normative principles and institutions brackets out everything but the contracting terms among individual citizens. On the other hand, on the ground, the master frame of the actually ruling value system is the "free market" and "free elections" with no requirements of life support systems entering the reasons of these individual self-maximizers.

The same logic of value is reiterated on the political plane as on the economic. Contests for votes decide the common good at the state level just as money votes decide the common good at the economic level. These together decide the common interest by the atomically aggregated results on each plane. What does not fit this model is ruled out a-priori, as we will see in more depth ahead.

### **1.7.2. Unexamined Anomalies of the Ruling Value System**

We may pose a general question of this ultimately deciding value regime. If government has to work in "the common interest" to qualify as good government, it is obscure how it can do so without some clear idea of what *common* life interest is other than protection of the private property of each in self-maximizing exchanges. They have, instead, been equated, and so the problem of degradation of shared life support systems is invisible to this ruling value calculus. When ecological collapses can no longer be avoided, the solution that follows from the ruling framework of conception is to privatize them. This closed circle of the reigning value system is unpacked and resolved in the last chapters of this monograph.

The accepted competition for survival wherein public authority is excluded except to (in Locke's concept) "umpire" the competition remains a dominant conception, but is not connected to its results on the collective life infrastructures which are not and cannot be valued in private property and money-exchange terms. This ultimate values crisis is, thus, not comprehended. After prolonged and ever stricter institution of the ruling value mechanism across the world as "globalization", little or no room is left to most people for even the values which the doctrine holds paramount - security of the individual in life and property, and freely contending voices and pathways of "the good life". This great values paradox poses a central problem of this inquiry.

A basic general fact illustrates the problem. If less than 1% of a society owns more than

90% of its wealth - as is the case the United States and other societies today by report of both the U.S. Congress and United Nations statistics - then comparatively few are able to decide the “conception of the good life” in reality, and many or most have less security in their life and property by the operations of rising inequalities and ecological degradations. Yet the ruling value order remains assumed as “optimal” or “the best of possible worlds”.

### **1.7.3. Freedom, Life and Happiness Entail Means to Be So**

At this point, we need to identify a foundational material truth that is ignored, and indeed hardly noticed in philosophy itself. For people to be able to live by the values they choose, they require the means to do so, or their rights are as empty as Marie Antoinette’s counsel to the poor without bread, “let them eat cake”. A society where the common life interest is not thus provided for or even conceived as such, it follows, cannot be one where all citizens have the freedom and right to life and happiness. The matter may be put very simply. Without the means to do x, the individual right to be or do x does not exist in fact.

Yet ruling value systems past and present are so little examined within their time of rule that rights of the virtuous to heaven or the freedom to life and happiness of all may be long proclaimed and accepted with no reason for supposing them to be true.

## **1.8. Value-System Choice within Limits of Genetic-Environmental Determination**

There is a persistent contention that values and freedom to choose them are in any case illusory, and that all we do is determined by our genes and our environment. In its most general form, this argument has been around since Democritus (470-360 BCE) for whom all that exists is merely atoms and combinations of them predetermined in every path of eventuation.

### **1.8.1. Free Choice within Determined Limits: The Missing Middle Ground**

Such determinism is simplistic because it cannot, for familiar example, begin to explain the determination of a simple fact such as whether one thinks of a white elephant or not over the next five minutes - an ancient Pythagorean test of mental discipline. No-one can predict where thought will go in another, often not even in oneself.

Yet determinism is true so far as environmental and genetic limits *set ranges of material possibility* for all individuals and societies and their value systems. We cannot fall upwards on earth, or have cells that do not age, or eat air for nutrition. On the other hand, such limits always permit and enable creative alternatives consistent within their bounds. No matter how inexorable the laws of physics and chemistry are, there are different ways of living within the ranges of possibility delimited by their rule. This compatibility between freedom and determinism is not life coherently deniable.

For more substantial example, it is true that human behaviors are at the most general level invariant - for example, to need food and water and to rely on human-made tools for survival - and that these are determining parameters of our existence - for example, the necessity of heating in northern places in the winter (as Thoreau emphasizes in *Walden Pond*) and, in our day, electricity and computers as basic tools of the contemporary good

life. Yet whatever these ranges of material possibility are, there are still always irreducible differences of project between individual species members (the argument of *existentialism*), as well as differences of value standards among groups (the argument of *cultural relativism*). These differences cannot plausibly be explained away as genetically determined sequences or as wholly determined adaptations to the external environment, or both, since the very same genetic and environmentally conditioned groups display different projects and standards among them, often within single individuals - for crucial example in our time to pay attention or not to the collective life support systems on which the good life of everyone depends.

### **1.8.2 The Freedom versus Determinism Debate**

Much of the history of human thought has been devoted to the question of “freedom versus determinism” in one or other of its forms, and the debate continues, featuring in this era the phenomenon of “genomania”, as Jason Scott Robert calls it in *Embryology, Epigenesis, Evolution* (2008), referring to the simplistic one-way genetic determinism of much popular science.

Yet beneath the scientific failures of the hard determinist argument, this debate itself - freedom versus determinism - provides proof by its inexhaustible multiplicity and contrariety of positions that humans can and do choose their positions and are moved by distinctions between good and bad, for example, good and bad arguments. No form of determinism can explain this.

Thus we find that even the arguer for “hard determinism” exhibits the free will s/he denies by confronting others who disagree and choosing this issue itself and a specific line of reasoning to pursue among other possibilities. Value judgment and choice is unavoidable even for determinists

### **1.8.3. Living by Values Generates another Plane of Being**

Insofar as we value by choice, however much we contrive ingenious denials of it, we move on another plane of being and becoming in the world than organic reproduction. We form our lives within choice-ranges set by laws of nature. We do so as societies and we do so as individuals, whatever the habitual avoidance of examining the social value systems by which we live.

### **1.8.4. Value Systems Decide Who We Are**

Value systems determine who we are individually and as societies. Values in this way are our ontology as we decide it. This is the meaning of *onto-ethics*. Onto-axiology is the study of these values as regulating systems.

The key idea here is that determinism becomes self-determination, and thus freedom, so far as we decide it. But, at the same time, such freedom obtains within the limits and by means of physical laws - what we might think of as the rules of the terrestrial game. This freedom gives rise to the ultimate philosophical question since the ancients - the question of how to live.

To do so within the dictates of physics is the learning of science since Aristotle. The fatal problem has been that people have long confused the conventional constructions of surrounding social value systems with the laws of physics or God - or Deists like Adam Smith (1723-90), with both at once.

### **1.9. Philosophy's Turn against Universal Values: Rejection across Schools**

Since human beings clearly do not choose the same values to live by, many have falsely deduced from the plurality and difference of values that individual choice and universal values are incompatible. Market liberalism and postmodernism, for example, have adopted strong versions of this claim. Indeed the dominant position of our *fin de siècle* seems to be that we can't have both individual freedom of choice and universal principles of the good life for all at the same time.

This value position is best known as "pluralism", to which the idea of a common good for all is objectionable - a confusion which is now far more widespread than determinism, and almost an obligatory convention of belief.

#### **1.9.1. Pluralism and Relativism**

On the historical and cultural level, the differences of the world's peoples, once allowed invariance across time by geographical barriers and cultural independence, now rush in upon one another at every place.

Cosmopolitan world cities and multicultural nations, multiplying divisions of labor and social niches, and immediate communication of divergent ways of life across the globe have simultaneously engendered a pervasive *value relativism*. Every individual chooses his or her own version of the good, and a free society is believed to be the result of revealed preferences of individual wants in an open market. Postmodernism goes further. Any claim of universality of value is an offense against the principle of difference.

#### **1.9.2. Opposition to Universal Values across Schools**

Postmodernism has led philosophy and literature in adopting the principles of difference, irreducible particularity and perspectivalism without resolution. What is most abhorred is "the terrorism of the universal". Yet the French-and American-led postmodernist movement has not been alone in this anti-universalist position. Anti-foundationalists, social and individual relativists and liberal theorists compete amongst one another to declare more forcefully the ineliminable value particularity and conflicts of our lot.

Social conservatives, who would seem to be opposed to this trend, in fact express a variation on the same theme. As Edmund Burke (1729 -97) and Michael Oakesott (1901-92) today argue, conservatives adopt values of their own way of life, "our *own* standards and traditions", whatever they might be. To impose a universal principle of value is regarded as an offense by them as well. Thus there seems to be one underlying agreement on values across contemporary schools and sides - that there is no universal value, and that perspectival differences are what individuate peoples and persons. This view has sedimented as a kind of first major premise of recent philosophy and of the

cosmopolitan mind-set in general.

It is now widely believed that the issue of which value is ultimate or right is like trying to stand outside the world from the standpoint of nowhere. The disagreements among the ceaselessly different positions, it is contended, cannot be resolved or decided without supposing some “Archimedean point” or “God's-eye view” from which to adjudicate. These metaphors are typically incantational without substantiation by argument, but are propounded by many people in many variations - perhaps most notably in the last 30 years by Richard Rorty (1931-) in such works as *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* (1989).

### **1.9.3. Anti-Imperialist Card in Collaboration with Imperial Value System**

Since one form of imperial value-system or another has long claimed a universalist form, pluralist relativism and postmodernism adopt a moral high-ground by conflating imperialist with universalist principles of value as such.

This is a non-sequitur equation as we will see, but again succeeds by the invocation of strawman images. Since most philosophers do not care to be associated with imperialist doctrines, a kind of philosophical fad-smear carries the day. Yet none explain why universal rules to respect and protect life must be “terrorist universals” or “God’s-eye” pretences or some other castigation of universal values as such. No universal values? Consider the universal value of life support systems. Yet as in the wider market, slogans suffice. The idea that no universal principle or system of value can be legitimate prevails by group-mind osmosis.

In this way, what ultimately matters to us, the values we live by, are made anchorless with no common life-ground - or, on the other hand, revert to ethno-religious fundamentalism. Seething one way or another within a global money-demand mechanism, no coherently life-grounded direction is found.

### **1.10. The Unseen Contradiction: Value Pluralism in Theory Not Practice**

In the actual behavior of people in the contemporary world, there is no such skepticism of the value system that in fact rules. The value sequence of turning money into more money for private money possessors across borders, for example, is essentially unchallenged by relativists, pluralists, postmodernists, conservatives and liberals alike.

Thomas Hobbes almost named the game in his canonical work, the *Leviathan* (1651), when he asserted: “A man's value is his price”. Today we might say the same for the value of all that exists: Value = Money Value, an underlying universal equation with no evident counterargument against it in any contemporary discipline. Moreover, its ruling ground in private debt creation by private financial institutions is nowhere discussed in the public record. The fact that bank lenders have little or no cash reserves to back what they lend to others at compound interest is a given. Not even the financial collapse of the system with taxpayers refunding it from public coffers connects attention to the value foundations or lack of them.

### **1.10.1. The Inner Sanctum of a Ruling Value Order**

The silent assumption of a universal value system without ground while denying the possibility of any universal value as such is an unseen anomaly at the heart of the contemporary world order. Yet it is no more an issue than “God created the world *ex nihilo*” was in the ruling value system before it. Herein lies the inner sanctum of taboo across epochs. The ruling value system is above question, that is, until it falls.

So deeply does it regulate thought and choice in the meantime that not even its self contradiction surfaces to philosophical consciousness. We can, however, desubmerge the contemporary ruling order by Socratic questions. Who does *not* now think and act on behalf of the first principle that more money demand for the self is good? Who turns down the lottery, the pay raise or the tax refund? At the most general level, who does not seek to hold and maximize money value to survive or prosper? At the second-order level of value reflection, who examines this value system as it regulates the self and world?

### **1.10.2. Is There a Universal Value Beyond Market Value?**

Market or money value was once understood to be one kind of value among others: ethical value, aesthetic value, truth value, religious value, and so on. A money-value system of worth - to gain money value as an end-in-itself - is what Aristotle (384-322) called *chremastatik*. He regarded it as pathological. Yet today it rules as a given for which we may hardly find an exception in public life. A basic question which thus arises is, where is money-demand value, *not* the value to which all submit? Or, more deeply in alternative, what could be a more basic value to govern this value system itself as instrument rather than master? This is the ultimate question pursued by this inquiry.

### **1.10.3. Ruling out the Question**

Twentieth century philosophy and theory has been by and large closed to this core issue. No media or policy discussion mentions it. At the top of public policy determination, money-value adding rules. Econometrics and economists assume its count mechanism as the requirement of science itself. True economic order - provision without waste of the scarce means whereby we live - is blinkered out *a-priori*.

Outside this ruling paradigm of economic value, argument for any other universal value is hard to find. A preconsciously duplicitous system of value has thus increasingly reigned. The actually reigning value mechanism is blinkered out, while any live alternative is attacked in letters if not by arms.

### **1.10.4. Division of Fields: Methodological Blinkers against Inquiry into Universal Values**

At the level of philosophical method, multiplying schools and specialties of moral philosophy and aesthetics divide up value theory into philosophies of law, medicine, technology, religion, literature, bioethics, economics, and so on without limit. The unexamined result is that no overarching vision or principles of value fit into any of them.

Coherence of unifying conception is thus put out of bounds. The variety of formal disputes and vocabularies within the manifold subfields become at the same time ever more self-referential.

As the eminent philosopher Bernard Williams (1929-2007), who approves, has cleanly put it in *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (1984): “There is no single principle of value, no common yardstick, but values are rather embedded in contingent world-views and ways of life specific to particular societies and practices”. Williams here exactly defines a position which cuts across schools. The connected life whole on which all depends is thus preempted from value comprehension.

### **1.10.5. Why Everything Has Changed Except Our Way of Thinking**

When Einstein famously said that “everything has changed except our way of thinking”, he did not explain why.

Preclusion of such rethinking is in truth built in at the level of research possibility. As the recent history of philosophy discloses, the multiplying particular bearings of language games, specific practices, incommensurable epistemic perspectives, anti-foundationalist conversations and poststructural principles of difference have overwhelmed the very idea of a unifying value system, good or ill, as inconceivable to acceptable meaning.

### **1.10.6. Rudderless Drift Follows**

The increasingly rudderless drift of conscious value bearings into fragmentary formalism, while obeying a globally ruling value mechanism which is unexamined, generates an absurd axiological condition. The money-demand equation of value in fact rules as a “single fundamental yardstick of what is of worth” and a “terrorist universal” for real, but these properties are instead projected onto whatever is an alternative *to* it.

Human thought has long conformed to what appear to be value-neutral historical trends independent of human control - for example, increasing division of labor of people and nations into specific functions of world production, and ceaseless reduction of jobs and vocations into financialized accounting numbers. Systemic transformation of the planetary elements themselves into packaged commodities and their wastes seems to go along with this perceived inevitable pattern of “economic development”, the ultimate macro good of this ruling value order.

In this sea-shift of civilization and culture towards reduction of all value bearings into the terms of ruling value mechanism, the only common bond of worth left, the final court of value appeal for all that exists, has become the price it can fetch in the global market.

### **1.10.7. The Life-Blind Absolutism That Rules Beneath Notice**

A deep problem arises out of this universal value reduction. What appears to be an increasingly anarchic drift towards value plurality without limit is, in actuality, a value system of money-demand delinked from any life-ground to base it, not even the classical labor-value measure or the gold standard. Landed property, labor, gold or commodity

output no longer anchor the ruling value system in any reality but itself. This is why when one part goes - say, the value of mortgaged credit derivatives sold across the world in financialized batches with no moment connected to any grounding value - the opening black hole spreads through the unmoored global system with no value anchor.

At the micro level, no value exists but the money price it gets in ever shifting markets of buyers and sellers where each seeks only the most for self not grounded beyond market position. The downstream results of such a value regime are predictably chaotic in the long term, but the global ecological and financial collapses are not connected back to the money-value system which rules with no foundation.

### **1.10.8. Adaptation to the Contradiction by Avoiding It**

Two kinds of philosophical response have been typical to the *de facto* global rule of the money-demand principle of value. The first claims in one or other variation of the rationale introduced by the moral philosopher, Adam Smith that the market system of establishing value is perfect in its value mechanism, “an invisible hand” which coordinates productive activities and exchanges in a maximally efficient system. The second response is to avoid the problem as a law-like given beyond one’s function of comprehension - as “human nature”, “the way of the world”, or “better than any alternative”.

The implications for action do not differ. The first kind One gets on as best one can in ensuring and accumulating one's own money-demand holdings. The first kind does so in assertive confidence that this is the best for all. The other does so in quiet confidence that there is nothing s/he can do than what is best for self. These two positions complement one another as public and private value meaning.

### **1.11. The Homicidal Blind Eye of Modern Economic Rationality**

What is unexamined throughout is the actually regulating value system itself ruling across the world - at the most basic level by “the laws of supply and demand”.

In the passage which follows, we see how Adam Smith himself defines these laws in Book 1, Chapter 8, “Wages of Labour”, of his classic work *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). Revealingly, modern economic value theory was founded by the Professor of Moral Philosophy at University of Glasgow. For over a century, the new economic paradigm was known as “the moral science”.

What is undiscussed about the value-system origins of this ruling paradigm is that Smith anticipates in principle the developmental paradigm of Darwin’s *Origins of the Species* 83 years later. It is from these two theories of the human and life condition, crystallized in the following passage, that the ultimately regulating value program of modern and contemporary thought emerges:

“Every species of animals naturally multiplies in proportion to the means of their subsistence, and no species can ever multiply beyond it. But in civilized society it is only among the inferior ranks of people that the scantiness of subsistence can set limits to the

further multiplication of the human species; and it can so in no other way than by destroying a great part of the children which their fruitful marriages produce - - The demand for men, like any other commodity, quickens when it goes on too slowly, and stops when it advances too fast. It is this demand which regulates and determines the state of propagation in all the different countries of the world.”

### **1.11.1. The Ruling False Equations of Supply and Demand**

Since this is a very seldom cited summary of the ruling order’s system’s prototype logic of value, it deserves pause on its steps of value meaning. The “laws of supply and demand” are not nature-given. They are hypostases of a value system’s ordering by self-maximizing exchange, here between workers and employers. Workers are obliged to sell or seek to sell their commodity of labor at whatever price they can get; and employers purchase it to produce commodities for market sale at maximum profit. While this system is equated to “the Economy”, and its prescription and study as “Economics”, these are false equations.

That is, “supply” is not of life means which are otherwise scarce, the generic meaning of any economy, but refers only to the aggregate profitable production and sale of priced commodities to individuals who are able to pay for them. The values produced are assumed to be what “the economy” requires, but this assumption does not follow either since this value mechanism is not structured to produce what peoples’ lives need for their capacities to reproduce and develop, but only what sells to buyers at competitive profits. These are not remotely the same value sequences. Consider, for example, the contemporary profitability of addictive junk foods and beverages. They increase the velocities and volumes of commodity sales for investor profits, but do not provide life means - arguably the opposite.

“Demand”, in turn, does not represent the requirements of society for individual and collective means of existence, but is money demand to purchase private commodities which, if they are needed, are inaccessible to those who lack the money to purchase them.

### **1.11.2 Not Laws of Necessity, But Value Mechanism**

Much is clarified when the system is analyzed as a value mechanism which could be otherwise ordered, but is universalized in a form which is falsely assumed to have “no alternative”. Social and ecological life support systems, the basis of any economy past or present, do not register to this ruling value system; nor people lacking the money to buy what their lives require. On both baseline levels of economic performance, the ruling value-mechanism is thus blind. Yet its alleged market value mechanism is assumed “optimal” by definition - literally, “the best of possible worlds”.

### **1.11.3. Homicidal Consequences as Beneficent**

On the ground, the market value system is made up of (in Adam Smith’s terms) “private employers” and “owners of capital”, on the one hand, and “the inferior ranks of people”, on the other. Workers are assumed “inferior” because they own only their own labor which they must sell to survive, and, Smith reasons, must proportionately die out when

demand for their labor declines. While welfare state policies have provided a “safety net” for the unemployed in developed societies since Smith’s paradigm account, such political interventions have been long opposed by market economists and the money. In the ultimately cutting edge of this value mechanism, supply of labor achieves “equilibrium” with demand for it “in no other way than by destroying a great part of the children which the workers’ fruitful marriages produce”. Again we may note the inner logic of this value system entails systematically homicidal consequences which are, nonetheless, understood as economically necessary and beneficent.

#### **1.11.4. Justifications for Starvation of Worker Families**

While contemporary value judgment, unlike Adam Smith, may find such an economic value system heinous when laid open to the light of axiological analysis, such normative analysis has been avoided. Where in more fortunate societies, family welfare is provided so that families do *not* starve when private employer demand for labor falls, such public investment in the lives of people and their children does not compute as of value to this moral system. Rather, it is perceived through the ruling value categories as unproductive state intervention in free and competitive commodity exchange. In general, any public or tax costs which do not achieve money-value gains are conceived by this reigning value system as wasteful and unaffordable.

#### **1.11.5. From Unexamined Ruling Assumptions to Justified Ill Consequences**

Unexamined ruling assumptions decide the fate of societies as well as individuals. Once life-blind value equations are assumed a-priori, projected as physical laws and mathematically represented - as has occurred with the ruling value mechanism of today- they are well-armored against critical understanding or correction. When the system operates over generations, the most life-destructive consequences can occur but be conceived as necessary through the regulating lenses of value judgment - for example, mass malnutrition and ill-health of hundreds of millions of people amidst growing plenty, systemic global despoliation of topsoils, forests, fishstocks, oceans, aquifers, and so on. If recognized, these externalities compute as “unavoidable costs of growth”, the sovereign goal of this ruling value system.

### **1.12. Bracketing Out Ruling Value Systems across Schools and Millennia**

Even the post-1845 Karl Marx did not conceive this system as a *value*-system disorder, but rather as the “inexorable laws of motion” of capitalist development which even he regarded as necessary and for the long-term good of human society - namely, by the inevitable revolution he perceived to be determined by the system’s laws of productive development. Analysis at the level of ruling value system is thus blocked out a-priori.

What we find in general across parties and cultures is one form or another of boxing out the ruling value system of society as open to question. The actually regulating normative order of this or that period and region is perceived as sacrosanct or given, and seldom contested by visible philosophy and science within its surrounding rule. This has been a meta-norm over epochs since the slave system approved by Socrates (470-399 BCE) and Confucius (551-479 BCE), for example, who respectively led the greatest schools of

philosophy in the West and China in the golden age of world philosophy.

In the chapters which follow, we critically examine the leading moral and value theories across borders, and discover much the same pattern - most importantly in value blindness to underlying life support systems and human life necessities in general.

### **1.12.1. Value-System Selection against Deep-Structural Moral Inquiry**

Ruling value sets across cultures appear to be like fixed instinctual repertoires - until awakened by objective crises and advances of learning which require movement beyond the accustomed value prescriptions and measures. Today, for example, value theorists as well as others presuppose market price or income as the measure of worth across domains - from sports idols to stocks, homes to land, academic salaries to creative art objects. As in past ages, received philosophy's inquiries do not question the actually regulating value system of the ascendant order. Yet, eventual crises of life means provision - the cutting edge of real necessity - impose themselves on the received order. This is the coded meaning of numerous folk tragedies and falls of empires. Yet although the future of global humanity is at stake in the increasing collapse of life support systems in our own era, the life-blind governors of the ruling value mechanism remain unidentified in acceptable discourses.

In the contemporary era, the normal taboo against system-critical inquiry is not broken but deepened by advanced disciplinary methods themselves. They have been hardened by division of labor into methodological resistance to any such investigation as outside established competences of specialization. An intellectual vacuum thus forms in which the very possibility of such research is selected against by a mutually re-enforcing combination of professional method and desire for career advancement within the ruling order, with institutional gatekeepers in command of purse strings for what is funded and what is not. The general outcome is that peer-review processes themselves select against what calls into question the governing value system - as may be confirmed by checking the specialties and grants of any existing university or journal of record. While such system censorship is well recognized in judgment of *other* ruling value systems - say, Soviet science and letters as perceived by Western media and scholars - it is seldom recognized within the surrounding value regime itself.

### **1.12.2. Clarifying Instrumental Value and Self-Interest**

Reason does not permit us both to deny the possibility of any universal value, and to accept as given an actually ruling one which blocks out critical exposure of it.

A general category of ethical distinction may be invoked to avoid such contradiction - the well-known distinction between *instrumental* and *intrinsic* value. Here the argument can be that the surrounding standard of market value, though dominant as a medium of value exchange, is merely *instrumental* value, and so can be used for any other purpose its possessor wants - for example, for personal means of life, further education, or gifts to the needy. This has been a major defense of the self-maximizing rationality which is presupposed as axiomatic or given. The argument is that the principle of self-maximization leaves open the choice of *what* is maximized. And so, it may be

alleged, the money-value system does not rule us, but is only a mediating unit of exchange for the different ultimate goods each of us may choose.

For example, the rationalist concept of “self interest” advanced by Baruch Spinoza (1632-77) means the very opposite of selfishness. In his conception, enlightened self-interest chooses for true advantage in the light of reason, which includes common shareable goods. Yet Spinozean self-interest opposes market self-maximization in principle. For the latter follows self-serving preference with no deeper ground or value anchor, whereas self-interest with Spinoza lies in comprehending the rational whole - a *scientia intuitiva* in which the modes and infinite attributes of the universe are understood as one and separated only by ignorance.

### 1.13. The Axiological Sequences of Money-Capital and Life Capital

Beneath much confusion on the values we live by, there are in our epoch two primary sequences of value in unseen but cumulative conflict with each other.

The first is *the money sequence of value* which uses life as means to become more money for money possessors (producing money capital value over time as its regulating objective). The second is *the life sequence of value* which creates and uses means of life to enable more flourishing life (producing life capital over time as its regulating objective). The life sequence of value is laid bare in axiological depth throughout this monograph. The money sequence of value is what is called “the new world order” or “world capitalism”. This is the general value-system fact with which life-grounded value inquiry needs to begin because its meaning is so little understood and analyzed by any value theory.

#### 1.13.1. The Money Sequence of Value

In the global market, money value is not merely a means of exchange. Rather, the relationship of value instrumentality works the other way round. The axiology of production and distribution of priced goods is one in which money value forms the beginning and the end of the ruling value sequence, with all else as the means of *it*, money capital growth.

The formula of this ruling sequence of value is Money Investment → Priced Commodity → More Money (Investment + Profit), or  $M \rightarrow C \rightarrow M^1$ , as Karl Marx classically formalizes it in *Capital* (1867). Marx calls this formula the “general formula of capital”.

#### 1.13.2. Not the Same as Marx’s Formula of Capital

Yet Marx’s general formula of capital should be distinguished from the “money sequence of value” which uses not just priced commodities but the world in any condition or moment at all for money gains. Money-value gain intermediates everywhere it can with all else as its means, a totalizing instrumentalization of life and the world by money capital which may be formalized by the value sequence  $\$ \rightarrow A \text{ as } M \rightarrow \$^1$ .

### 1.13.3. The Missing Base of Life Capital

While Marx captures this money-capital sequence in its prototype form, neither he nor others ground in humanity's ultimate reproductive value base - *life capital* which begins and ends with life capital rather than money capital. This is the life capital sequence which may be formalized as Life Capital → Means of Life Provision → Life Capital Appreciation, or LC→MLP→LC<sup>1</sup> (for example, arable topsoil through crops and organic build-up of soil to more topsoil and crops in reiterating sequences of means-of-life provision and life-capital gain). We need not get lost in these formulae to understand the most important general point. The economic formula of capital includes only money capital, not life capital as 'natural' (e.g., the soil) or as community created (e.g., shared literacy and knowledge) which continuously enable provision of more life goods for people as the ultimate value goal, not more money-demand for money-capital possessors.

The failure to ground in life capital and to distinguish it from money capital is a fatal preemption of human thought. It excludes from view humanity's undergirding social and ecological life support systems themselves as of value. The defense and development of life capital as the foundations of any life-coherent economic order is thus blinkered out. In the generic language of life-ground onto-axiology, the ultimate life-ground upon which all value whatever depends is in this way preconsciously erased.

### 1.13.4. The Financialization Turn of the Ruling Value System

The ruling money sequence of value has a-priori properties which are assumed rather than defined, and they explain why its reigning value-system goes so wrong. Its axiological 'DNA' is indifferent to life requirements and conditions, seeks only to turn money into more money for private money possessors and managers without connection to life-means requirements, and repels or attacks any limit to the self-multiplying growth of this value sequence.

This is why ever more "financial intermediations" across domains and nations multiply within and across exchange processes inserting infinitesimal calculi of marginal money gains from nanosecond sales with financial mathematics plotting ever wider circuits of private money-value maximization. Thus decoupled private money-sequences with progressively greater diversities of deregulated financial pathways move to ever greater volumes and velocities of multiplied margin gains to "grow wealth".

In these ways beneath value-system examination, borderless money sequences are constructed into ever faster, more voluminous and globalized packages and pathways which are unaccountable to any life or productive function.

#### 1.13.4.1. The Mystery Axiologically Explained

The Nobel-Prize economist Paul Krugman concludes in *The Return of Depression Economics and the Crisis of 2008* that economic depressions occur because "people devise ever more ingenious ways to make what appears to be free money with nobody understanding the consequences". His generalization fits the phenomena, but is not

explained in axiological terms. Value analysis moves beyond his gnomic utterance to understanding of the value mechanism at work when it penetrates to the underlying money sequence of value.

The “free money” is the profit of the money sequence of value producing nothing - as in multiplying financial intermediations and derivatives speculations by banks, merger-and-acquisition law firms and equity funds disconnected from any economic base or life function. The “consequences nobody understands” are what follow from this increasing allocation of economic demand to money-growth operations with no purpose or limit beyond their own money gains.

Until the underlying value logic is recognized, most of our problems - including the most severe financial crash since the Great Depression - remain shrouded in mystery and economically irrational effects. There are many explanations within the presupposed value paradigm like “lack of transparency” or “imperfect information”, but these only repeat the given premises of the autonomous money-value system: they seek to perfect it rather than connect it to life and life capital coordinates of value. Until human and ecological life requirements ground the demand of the ruling economic order, the decoupled money-sequence value system continues blind to its regulating logic and its depredatory effects.

#### **1.13.5. The Ruling Value System as Explanatory Logic of World Problems**

In accordance with the money sequence of value, unpriced ecological elements and systems are continuously wasted, polluted and exhausted as “externalities” of turning money into more money and commodities for private money possessors at maximum velocity and scale across continents. Over time, no level of life organization is untouched by the ruling global value mechanism.

In aggregate and uncontrolled combination, the reigning money-value system draws people’s homes, foods and environments into the constantly fluctuating margins of speculative “financialization”. From “stock churning”, “short-selling” and “arbitraging” to “new derivatives” and “credit-default swaps”, the profit-taking circuits multiply by mathematical method into globalizing interconnection with no life function or limit. The macro *oikonomos* itself - humanity’s household of life means through time - does not compute to this value calculus.

#### **1.14. The Fatal Confusion of Ruling Norms and Physical Laws**

An ancient confusion between ruling norms and physical laws continues to reign. Just as classical Greek, Indian and Chinese philosophy each differently assumed slave classes and women as inferior and the servants of designated males, the ruling value syntax of their time, so the ruling capitalist value mechanism’s reduction of all life to servant functions of it has been assumed to be as binding as the laws of physics. That the system’s ruling economic laws have no life parameters at all is not noticed. That they exclude the second law of thermodynamics itself - as Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen has shown in *The Entropy Law and the Economics Process* (1971) - makes no difference. The ruling value syntax is locked in.

In truth, the money sequence of value ( $\$ \rightarrow \text{All as Means} \rightarrow \$^1$ ) is a rigorous regulation of value choices. Its supply and demand order is not a law “like gravitation” as David Ricardo supposed in his 1817 classic, *Principles of Political Economy*, and economists since have believed. In fact, its regulating form is a social construction through every step. “How”, readers may ask, “has the illusion of laws that rule people men from without become so widely accepted in a scientific civilization?” The short answer is that a ruling value system can be so pervasively instituted as a governor of group thought and action that it appears to operate like laws of nature to which conformity is a condition of social intelligibility and acceptance.

#### 1.14.1. From Ruling Value Order to Regulating Group-Mind

Consider in other contexts such fixed ruling value-sets as the Pushtan honor code in the mountains of Asia, the burning of deemed agents of the devil across Europe and America at the outset of modernity, and most broadly, ecogenocidal wars against declared enemy social orders across continents from biblical times into the present. No reasonable person would say any of these forms of life and value judgment expressed physical or divine laws. Yet all are so represented in their place and time.

Such cases exemplify the recurrent systemic disorder of human value systems which we may generically term the *ruling group mind* - not to be confused with the “group mind” briefly investigated by Freud in transient crowd behavior. Although widely various in its nature, the ruling group-mind is a screening system of thought and value which is recognized by a distinguishing set of properties across cultures:

- (i) A ruling set of group presuppositions which are conceived to be
- (ii) As given as the structure of the world and
- (iii) Demand the compliance of each for collective survival so as to
- (iv) Frame social ideation and communication to
- (v) Select only for what confirms this order to thereby
- (vi) Block or invalidate whatever does not,
- (vii) To generate stereotypes or myths as replacement standards which
- (viii) Only enemies or inferiors reject who
- (ix) Are variously attacked to sustain or extend the group’s ruling value program.

While this criterial set of the normative group-mind is diversely expressed and admits of polar degrees of rigidity and harmful consequence, it is a unitary mechanism whose interlocking operations constitute (x) a defining mind-set of mutual understanding and self-identity of group members.

The ruling money-sequence system of value is thus sustained. One can walk through each of the operations (i) to (x) and find its regulating value syntax confirmed in the mass media, political and economic discourses, and - by tacit consent - even the manifold specialties of philosophy. The problem is that it is pre-conscious and so is not disputed or conceived as an issue within the sphere of its rule. Indeed exposure of it may be a dangerous act. Yet if not exposed, even a mass-homicidal value system may be consensually assumed as necessary and beneficial.

While contemporary anthropological science and transnational media have made these normative disorders familiar in their alien forms, they are assumed to be a problem only in exotic or enemy societies - not within the surrounding social order itself. The value disorder is not detectable by those it regulates.

#### **1.14.2. A Paradigm Example of a Life-Blind Regulating Value Premise**

Consider a paradigm illustration within Western civilization during the modern scientific industrial revolution. For centuries, none that we know of flagged the value judgment of the “discovery of America” which was thought to be and taught as an historical-physical fact - although millions of people had already lived in and explored its continent over tens of thousands of years.

The underlying and unexamined first premise of value which produced this certitude of given fact was that only Europeans are human beings. Given such a regulating premise of understanding, a set-point of meaning and value was fixed from the first contact onward. Hence no crime but rather bravery was perceived in systematically eradicating entire peoples and their ways of life as inhuman. This remains a standard value assumption which can be discerned in global market wars today: for example, against a “terrorist state” whose “weapons of mass destruction” did not exist. Yet value-system analysis would be mistaken in confining an ecogenocidal mind-set to specific regions, agents or value systems. Ethnic “cleansing”, anti-”communist” pogroms, tribal hatreds before 1492 - the disorder of ruling value systems is widespread, but axiological detection of its generic nature is possibly our deepest world problem.

#### **1.14.3. Modern Science Too Subjugated by Ruling Value Program**

Modern science is by no means immune. Modern scientific communities can be governed by such a ruling mind-lock even within their range of competence, as Ludwik Fleck’s 1929 classic, *Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact* shows. His monograph investigates the scientific labeling of a single “disease entity”, the organic disorder tabooed as “syphilis”, and identifies five regulating principles of cognitive block: (1) any contradiction to the received system of understanding is unthinkable; (2) what cannot be fit into the ruling thought-system remains unseen; or (3) is kept secret; or (4) laboriously explained so as not to contradict the given assumptions; and (5) and admits contradictory views into conception only to substantiate current views.

Consider the contemporary capitalist value mechanism in the light of Fleck’s principles. All of the operations he singles out are just as recognizable at the global level, but nowhere related to a socially ruling value system. As with Thomas Kuhn’s much better known *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), only known false assumptions of already exploded scientific theories are exposed to diagnostic study, and then not as moral regulators. In such sanitized and neutralized isolation, the wider and more destructive ruling value system of the surrounding socio-economic-political regime continues blinkered out. In fact, Fleck wrote in Nazi Germany and Kuhn in McCarthyite America, but neither they nor others moved their paradigm analyses to a society-wide level. Again, critical examination of an encircling normative order is cordoned off from analysis, the silent taboo zone of the human condition.

### **1.15. Recognizing the Life-Blind Logic of the Reigning Value System**

Conception of a life-blind ruling value system as natural necessity is made ironclad when its regulating demands are assumed to promote a better world by definition. Such was the master assumption of medieval Church rule, and so too the New World Order today.

While this generic first premise is easily recognized as false in the case of an opposing social value regime, it is not within an order which still reigns. Yet axiological analysis discloses what is not seen without it - for example, that the capitalist value system has no logical relationship to enabling human life, and no life-requirement coordinates at all. But even when this life-blindness is demonstrated as the system's uncontrolled growth cumulatively leads to collapses of social and ecological life support systems, no normative connection is identified or need for moral paradigm shift understood.

On the contrary, a beneficent coincidence of the system's rule with optimal effects for humanity is built into the formal framework of the ruling thought system. Its law of value gain is called "Pareto optimization" or, more grandly, "the Primary Axiom of Welfare Economics". That is, an equation between freely self-maximizing market exchanges and "the optimum" or "best of possible worlds" is adopted as a given: with its proof being mathematical demonstration in an ideal case of asset trading between self-maximizing but otherwise empty logical spaces.

That no life-value measures or life support systems or anything else but market tokens are conceived as relevant in these "classic proofs" discloses the a-priori lifelessness of this reigning value paradigm at its most developed theoretical levels. Practice is no different. Because the ruling value calculus counts only money value or its equivalents as values, all other value, even life value, is screened out.

Distinctions between "the Austrian school", "neoclassical orthodoxy", the "new institutional economics" and so on do not resolve this meta-problem. All adhere to the normative core of privately maximizing money sequences and commodity sales as the end-in-self value program of society's reproduction and growth.

#### **1.15.1. Contradiction with Reality Screened Out**

While growth of money-and-commodity sequences of value, on the one hand, and human welfare and economic development on the other are thus equated or conflated in the ruling value paradigm's variations, a contradiction with life facts becomes increasingly evident in the world. This is predictable. The money sequence of value and the life sequence of value are axiologically opposed in each's logic of value adding. This is why even ill effects of the capitalist system which are recognized are screened out as "externalities". They cannot compute within the ruling framework of meaning.

Both sequences of value admit of margins of loss as well as gain, but in the money-sequence value system, no life value gained or lost is computed in any accounting; while in the real world, life and life support systems are cumulatively predated by its uncontrolled growth and globalization.

### 1.15.2. The Undeciphered Value Contradiction

If and when the life sequence of value regulates, life is the beginning and ending term of decision and action, and *means of life* for more life are the middle term. The life sequence of value may be formalized in the notation Life→Means of Life → More Life or  $L \rightarrow M\text{-of-}L \rightarrow L^1$ .

While we discover ahead that this value sequence points towards the ultimately regulating principle of all value that exists, disciplinary armors block out this level of conception. The consequence is that although the ruling value sequence and the life sequence of value are in systematic and global conflict, the contradiction is invisible at the system level.

For the ruling money sequence of value, the end-sum of each money sequence is necessarily greater than the last to net profit in “real money terms”; and each subsequent investment input is required to be correspondingly greater in the aggregate sum of global market money-demand that is seeking to become maximally more *ad infinitum*.

What is not understood is that insofar as money-sequence demand is not invested to serve the requirements of individual, social and ecological life systems, but allocated only to increase private money-capital accumulations which are increasingly deregulated the same time. Ecological, social and organic systems may be stripped and despoiled without any debit registering in the ruling value calculus. The reigning value system has no resources for recognizing or resolving this ultimate value contradiction.

### 1.15.3. The Totalized Value System beyond Question

Let us consider a general pattern which has often formed in human society. A ruling value system can over time invalidate all other values towards a totalizing system in which all goods are reduced to mere means to its end - whatever it might be. What does not conform to the ruling value system is selected out.

Yet if the lives and life capacities of society’s members and their life conditions do not factor in to the ruling value system as intrinsic values within it, then it is life-blind in principle whether the *summum bonum* is ever grander constructs for god-kings or money-capital growth without end.

**1.15.3.1** It follows from such a value system, as Adam Smith himself recognized at the theoretical birth of what was to become the most universally reigning value-regime yet known, that many or most human beings must live or die as it employs, disemploys or otherwise instrumentalizes them. It further follows that the conditions on which human life depends can, in proportion to organizational and technological powers, be degraded and deracinated by such a value system’s totalist expansion until the order cumulatively crashes. Whether the ruling value system is affirmed as necessary for the Sun-God’s return by wider imperial sacrifices of the conquered, or for the development of free capital and commodity circulation with no resisting society permitted to survive, the ruling value regime ultimately undermines the conditions of its own reproduction and

growth through generational time.

#### **1.15.4. Philosophy Too Abstracts Out the Life-Ground**

Surely philosophy and theory must penetrate the problem. Yet when we read such titles as *Life's Dominion* (1993) by arguably the pre-eminent living philosopher of law and politics, Ronald Dworkin, we find no regrounding principles to satisfy the title concept. As elsewhere, there is no hint of life-blind logic of the ruling value system, nor of the fatal conflict of life and money value systems conceived.

Instead, argument on abortion - again as elsewhere - is featured as the central life-and-death topic, and its isolated referent abstracts away the wider principles by which people live as societies as well as their life support systems. Whatever side is taken on this issue or another, the silent function is the de-grounding of moral thought and preemption of society-wide moral regulators at the level of everyday life purpose.

Another leading philosopher of the late twentieth century, Richard Wollheim, calls his book *Thread of Life* (1985). Once again, "life" appears as the title concept, indeed the "thread of life" across its infinite phenomena. Yet once again, understanding is built within the same value syntax of atomic agency decoupled from ruling value system, and theoretically indifferent to underlying crises of social and ecological life systems. The "thread of life" left turns out to be what is called "the person", a philosophical term of art from which any issue of human life vocation is abstracted out.

In general here, "personal identity" is a category which is equated to a denatured sameness through time. Indeed, the critical champion of analysis of this category, Derek Parfit, concludes in his book, *Reasons and Persons* (1984), that the person is "nothing but" a sequence of mental and bodily states related in a certain way. In accordance with convention, the living capacities and needs of persons as human beings, their identification with other life as wider identity, and everything else but the self's sameness through time are dropped out - or here in revolutionary rejection of sameness, only changing streams of temporary states remain. Again we find an abstraction in which human life itself, its conditions of possibility, and its conceptions of value purpose are assumed away.

#### **1.15.5. One Ruling Value Syntax across Domains**

What is targeted here is not any of these philosophers, who are among the most genially progressive and brilliant of the age, but rather the unseen value syntax of de-lified mechanism in terms of which contemporary philosophers and scientific intellectuals reductively think. Richard Wollheim says this to explain the human person. "It is true that for mental states to arise, they must be appropriately linked to mental dispositions, they must essentially belong to things that can house dispositions, and this is where the person is required". Observe that the person becomes a requirement of linguistic ordering, not a life substance by definition. This formalist reduction has a long modern history from Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) through Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) to contemporary linguistic philosophy and postmodernism.

Wollheim then moves to explain that “persecution anxiety” is at the root of the feeling of “moral obligation”, while “depressive anxiety “ is at the root of the notion of “value”. The further Freudian reduction here is not the issue, but rather what it metonymically reveals about the life-emptied thought system which rules across philosophy and the sciences in general. A normalized stripping out of life substance and ground occurs in defining what is real, true and good.

### 1.16. What is Good? The Paradox of the Contemporary Global Condition

An unnoted paradox haunts our condition. A human ideal is shared by liberal, conservative and postmodernist theories alike that every person and community must be allowed “their own conception of the good”. Yet we have seen how precisely this possibility is ruled out in life substance by the ruling value syntax from which universal life needs and life conditions have been excluded from consideration both on the everyday level by a globally ruling standard of homogenous money value, and in scientific and philosophical discourses by forms of analyses from which the human life ground is stripped a-priori.

Postmodern thought implies that the resolution to our problem is to remain in culturally encoded bodies, but be liberated in decoding minds disconnected from any common ground. Yet this position reiterates an ancient dualism of mind and body, and continues tacitly to sustain a ruling value system whose biophysical outcome is cumulative despoliation of all life worlds. Can there be any deeper ground of value to integrate what we claim or think, on the one hand, and what the ruling money-sequence system of value requires us to do on the other? Is there any more ultimate and universal value to which all can agree to enable rather than suppress life flourishing? How can we both comprehend philosophy’s contending core ideas of value, and yet recognize an ultimate common ground to meet the profoundest global crisis of values in history?

The chapters ahead explain and critique the core principles of world philosophy’s various answers to such questions, and follow reason where it leads to recover step by step the missing life-ground of values and the ultimate meaning of how we are to live.

### Glossary

**Anti-foundationalism:** A generic term for the dominant trend of philosophy over the recent century embracing many contemporary philosophers and schools of thought whose unifying characteristic is denial of any universal necessities of self, truth or value (see also **linguistic turn**).

**Axiology:** From the Greek, *axioma*, “what is thought to be worthy”, bridging from rationally self-evident bases or axioms of mathematics and logic (deciding correct sequences) to ultimately regulating principles of value and value-systems as organizing frameworks of pro-con choices of good and bad at individual and social levels, seeking unlimited validity of explanation.

- Civil commons:** A unifying concept to designate any and all social constructs which enable universal access to life goods e.g., common life support systems.
- Coherence Principle:** See Life Coherence Principle
- Collective choice:** A concept ruled out by atomic or “agent-relative” methods of analysis, but implicit in **civil commons**. See also **social choice**.
- Consequentialism:** Often equated to utilitarianism, but holding more generally that the good or bad is to be found in its consequences, not its principle of action or intention.
- Deontological ethics:** Essentially, “duty ethics”, standardly opposed to utilitarianism insofar as it holds that good lies in the principle or duty which action embodies, not its consequences of happiness.
- Epistemology:** A central field of philosophy concerned with the nature, grounds and limits of knowledge: but also a basic if unrecognized realm of value theory insofar as its judgments rest on elective norms such as “true” and “false” and “valid” and “invalid”.
- 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, ethical egoism, subjectivism/pluralism/relativism, self-realization/teleological ethics, and virtue ethics in which the most dominant meta-ethical modern 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).
- 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) which evades this choice a denial of responsibility Sartre characterizes as “bad faith” (*mauvais fois*).
- Intrinsic and instrumental value** What is a good in itself and what is good as a means.
- Life coherence principle** Equivalent to ‘the full coherence principle’ whereby rationality or validity must be consistent with (1) factual premises and (2) valid inferences, so as (3) to enable rather

	than disable life and life-systems to qualify as rational or valid.
<b>Life sequence of value</b>	The process whereby any body of life becomes more life by means of life, measurable by the criteria of more/less fields of life enabled or enjoyed through time.
<b>Life standards</b>	Those principles and laws which protect and enable human and ecological life systems.
<b>Life-ground</b>	Concretely, all that is required to take the next breath; axiologically, all the life support systems required for human life to reproduce or develop.
<b>Life-value measure/metric</b>	Minimally, more/less life range in any domain or degrees of life function.
<b>Linguistic idealism</b>	Decoupling language from its referents within autonomously self-referential discourses.
<b>Linguistic turn</b>	(1) A sea-change in contemporary philosophy beginning with a British-led turn of analysis from the early twentieth century on to concepts, propositions and language use as the primary object of inquiry and explanation in the apparent belief that herein was found the logical form of reality and knowledge (Moore, Russell, the early Wittgenstein, Carnap, Ayer, the “logical positivists”), shifting over time to “ordinary language philosophy” led by the “later Wittgenstein” of the <i>Philosophical Investigations</i> and subsequent schools including postmodern preoccupation with “signs” and “signifiers”; (2) the decisive break from the material world in which signs become many autonomous worlds of language games and discursive practices which have no signifying relationship to the external world, or necessary relationship to each other thus the model of “language games” in the first instance and “discursive practices and “signifiers with no signified” in the second main moment. For Wittgenstein and his followers, philosophical problems arise from the logical muddles about the referents of words and confusion of different language games, and so are resolvable at the level of linguistic understanding itself (e.g., “I” or “nothing” are not open-ended mysteries of the world or cosmos, but non-referring grammatical functions). The <i>postmodern</i> movement of philosophy led from France from the second half of the twentieth century does not relate to any British school of analytic linguistic philosophy, but, similarly to the later Wittgenstein across the channel, adopts language or “linguistic circuits” in autonomous elaboration as the object of inquiry and understanding with the human subject itself, truth and decidability dissolved into multiple semiotic constructs and irreducible pluralities of meaning in a manifold

de-grounding of symbolic thought.

<b>Measures of life value</b>	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). Although life-value measures are not commensurable across fields and domains of life without reduction to fungible monetary units abstracting away all life contents, direct and accurate measure of more or less ranges of life is applicable to phenomena in any life-field or domain.
<b>Mechanical reduction</b>	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).
<b>Meta-Ethics</b>	The study of the nature of moral judgment conventionally (but not necessarily) preoccupied with the logical status of ought and taxonomies of competing theories in a-priori exclusion of all substantive ethical issues A standard occurrence of divisions into virtue theory, eontology, intuitionism, relativism, utilitarianism/consequentialism, perfectionism, as in <b>Ethics</b> , which posits each's distinguishing principle of good in a taxonomy of value systems.
<b>Metaphysics</b>	The ultimately regulating principles of existence (ontology) and knowledge (epistemology) which typically lack grounding in universal life support systems of causation, choice and identity
<b>Money sequence of value</b>	Using life and life conditions to turn private money sums into greater quantities in reiterated choice paths of money-value adding, the ruling value sequence of "globalization".
<b>Objective Values</b>	Values which are independent of individuals' affirming them (e.g., the values of life support systems).
<b>Onto-Ethics/Onto-Axiology</b>	A primary concept of life-ground value theory in which the standard and reductionist split between ontology (the philosophy of being) and ethics/axiology (critical theory of good and bad) is overcome in a non-divided unity of understanding such that the analysis of the ultimate structure of being as such (ontology) and of the ultimately regulating principles of good and bad (ethics/axiology) are integrated into one field of philosophical understanding of life value across all levels with unlimited validity.
<b>Pareto optimum (or</b>	A state of affairs in which no-one can be made better off

<b>Pareto efficiency)</b>	without making someone else worse, a standard ideal of philosophical and economic rational choice theory based on pure-type, self-maximizing dyadic exchanges of abstract assets with all other conditions ruled out.
<b>Postmodernism</b>	Referring to a wide variety of writers forming a recently dominant movement/school of thought whose unifying characteristic is repudiation of universal principles of reality, truth, value or interpretation in favor of contingent particularity and perspectival modes of thought. See also <b>Linguistic turn</b> .
<b>Primary axiom of value</b>	An axiom formally expressing the first and ultimate principle of all value and disvalue, and the measures of each across time, place or culture.
<b>Prisoner's Dilemma</b>	Famous contemporary problem of rational choice across philosophy and the social sciences in which the dilemma shows that purely self-maximizing decision does not effectively self-maximize. Myriad attempted solutions do not find the problem in the logical structure of choice itself in which pre-set dyadic choices rule out communicative cooperation and all interests beyond self-maximization. (See also <b>Collective choice</b> and <b>Life coherence principle</b> ).
<b>Proceduralism</b>	A generic pattern of leading philosophies of value which assume that universal values can only be implicit in or decided by procedures of argument (i.e., "contractarian" models of justice and norms of "the ideal speech situation"), and whose rational "procedures" distinguish the different schools (i.e., self-maximizing choice versus undistorted consent).
<b>Relativism</b>	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.
<b>Ruling Value-System</b>	A value-system which is normally presupposed and ultimately regulates the decisions and goals of a society's dominant social institutions, the individual roles within them, and the thought structures of those internalizing the regulating assumptions and conclusions as givens.
<b>Transcendental deduction</b>	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").
<b>Universal life goods</b>	All goods <i>without</i> which human life capacities are reduced or destroyed (e.g., breathable air, potable water, means of free

communication).

**Utilitarianism**

Classically defined by John Stuart Mill that “actions are right as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to promote pain”.

**Validity**

From the Latin, *validus*, or strong, validity is narrowly equated in formalist traditions to inferences which are deducible from premises. Life coherent validity also requires consistency with known fact as well as life-enabling rather than disabling purpose.

**Value compossibility**

The compatibility of formerly competing or traded-off goods yielding more coherently inclusive value provision (e.g., housing development by preservation of natural environments).

**Value neutrality**

A standard which is claimed when a value-system is so automatically taken for granted that its outcomes appear as non-normative.

**Value syntax**

Organizing principles of pro-and-con meaning, prescription, position and transformation which regulate the value system of a social order, but which are presupposed as necessary and good by those it regulates. When the syntax is locked against change or deviation, it is a *value mechanism*.

**Value-system**

Values which cohere as a stable set of regulators of judgment and action whether or not the value deciders are consciously recognized.

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Georgescu-Roegen, N (1971), *The Entropy Law and the Economics Process*, 277pp. Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press. [Unanswered critique of neo-classical economics, “the new economics”, by trained physicist and economist demonstrating that the reigning model of economic science violates the second law of thermodynamics.]

Heidegger, M. (1977), *The Question of Technology and Other Essays* (trans. Lovitt W), 182 pp. New York: Garland. [Influential work declaring that “everywhere we remain unfree and chained to technology” with value-system determination blinkered out.]

Hobbes, Thomas (1651/1958), *The Leviathan. Parts One and Two*, 299 pp. New York: Liberal Arts Press. [Early modern classic arguing on a mechanistic basis that men are matter in motion moved by appetites and

aversion towards “power after power that ceaseth only in death” resolvable only by an absolutist state.]

Hodgson, Bernard (2001), *Economics as Moral Science*, Heidelberg: Springer Press. [A scholarly and revealing critique of formal consumer choice theory.]

Hume, David, (electronic), *The Complete Works and Correspondence of David Hume* [Includes Hume’s *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* where he presents the classic argument that no “ought” can be deduced from an “is” as well as, paradoxically, the view that advocacy of “the equality of property” is a “crime deserving of the severest punishment”.]

Kant, I. (1992), *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*, 15 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Includes *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* and *Critique of Practical Reason* explaining Kant’s life-empty concept of the “categorical imperative” (“act only in such a way as make the maxim of your action a universal law”).]

Kuhn, T.S. (1962), *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 209 pp. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [Definitive analysis of scientific paradigm shifts following persistent anomalies building towards crises in the “normal science” of the day.]

Locke, John (1690/1950), *The Second Treatise on Government*, 139 pp. New York: Liberal Arts Press. [Founding classic of liberal value theory arguing for private property by labor right, but negating labor and non-scarcity provisos by introduction of money.]

Mackie, J.L. (1977), *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*, 249 pp. New York: Penguin.[Representative text of the dominant view that ethics and moral principles are merely “preferences” and not objective or universalizable.]

Marcuse, H (1964), *One-Dimensional Man*, 260pp.Boston: Beacon Press [A leading text, lacking basic value criteria, of the 1968 student uprisings in Europe and America critiquing capitalist technological culture and its reduction of life to a totalizing consumer-management culture].

Marx, Karl and Engels, F. (1975-), *Collected Works of Marx and Engels*, 44 vols. (Eds. R. Dixon *et al*). New York: International Publishers [Complete works of Marx in English featuring unexamined tension between early normative concerns and mature scientific positivism.]

McMurtry, J. (1988) *The Unspeakable: Understanding the System of Fallacy of the Media*”, *Informal Logic*, 41:3,133-50. [Defines regulating framework of the “ruling value syntax” as a system of rules selecting against what invalidates the presupposed ruling order of control over society’s means of existence, and for what validates it.]

McMurtry, J.(1998), *Unequal Freedoms: The Global Market As An Ethical System*, 372 pp. Toronto and Westport CT: Garamond and Kumarian [A systematic critique exposing the unexamined ethical assumptions and assertions of classical, neoclassical and contemporary political theory as well as policy of the global market as a ruling value system.]

McMurtry, J. (2002), *Value Wars: The Global Market versus the Life Economy*, 262pp. London: Pluto Press [Explains and tracks the underlying principles of opposing value-systems in the ‘new world order’ across phenomena of wars, social system conflicts and ecological crises, defining constitutional regulators for a life economy.]

McMurtry, John (2007), “The Postmodern Voice of Empire: The Metalogic of Unaccountability”, *The Postcolonial and the Global*, (eds. Krishnaswamy K. and Hawley J.), 328 pp. Minneapolis: University of Minesotta Press.[Systematic critique of postmodern thought system within representative volume of postmodern standpoints and responses.]

Miller, Peter and Westra, Laura, eds (2002). *Just Ecological Integrity: The Ethics of Planetary Life*, Boston: Rowman and Littlefield. [Representative text of original work in environmental ethics by philosophers, social scientists and ecologists occasion of the Earth Charter 2000.]

Mill, J.S. (1860/1996) *Utilitarianism*, 260pp. New York: Oxford University Press [Mill’s classic statement of utilitarianism wherein “all actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce pain”.]

Mirowski, P. (2000), *Machine Dreams*, 540 pp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press [Masterfully

tracks the machine model in contemporary economic theory.]

Moore, GE (1909), *Principia Ethica*, 272 pp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Features 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 *Beyond Good and Evil* explaining Nietzsche's master idea that "values are constructs of domination", and that moral will is ultimately a "will to power" in which inferior human beings "must be reduced to slaves, to tools"].

Noonan, J. (2003), *Critical Humanism and the Politics of Difference*, 189 pp. Kingston-Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press. [Examines postmodernism in the works of its leading authors (e.g., Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard and Young) and exposes a contradiction between postmodern denial of any universal human essence and the presupposition of it.]

Nussbaum, M. and Sen, A. eds. (1993) *The Quality of Life*, 453 pp. Clarendon: Oxford University Press. [Major collection of by philosophical 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 life-value criteria or life support systems.]

G. Outka and J.P. Reeder eds. (1993), *Prospectus for a Common Morality*, 302 pp. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [Collection of original articles by leaders in the field such as Alan Gewirth (a definitive account of human rights as generic directives of action entailing the necessary conditions of their fulfillment) and Richard Rorty (antifoundationalist relativization of truth and freedom prioritizing "liberal democracy"), with no common life value defined.]

Pareto, Vilfredo, (1971 [1906]).*Manual of Political Economy*, New York: A.M. Kelley [Classic of rational choice theory whose principle of "opthematicity" - called "Pareto optimality" or "Pareto efficiency" - identifies an ideal state in which 'no-one can be made better off without making someone else worse off': paradoxically consistent with few having most and most having little.]

Perry, R.B. (1969), *Realms of Value: A Critique of Human Civilization*, 487 pp. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. [Argues for the value equation the good = what is desired, meta-value theory for consumer value system.]

Plato (1961), *The Collected Dialogues of Plato* , (ed. Hamilton, E and Cairns, H), 1739 pp. New York: Pantheon. [The complete dialogues - "all philosophy is but footnotes on Plato", to quote Whitehead, of philosophy's most famous author and his pervasive interlocutor, Socrates: arguments on modes of value theory in the inclusive sense of whatever is, and is not, of worth. Includes Plato's most philosophically comprehensive work, *The Republic*, which integrates metaphysics/ontology, epistemology, moral philosophy and social and political philosophy in one dialogue, whose stated aim is a theory of justice applicable to both the individual soul and the ideal society. Plato's "Theory of Forms", which posits pure, transcendental and eternal ideas of which all material entities are but inferior, mutable copies is his/Socrates' ultimate theory of value meaning and distinction.]

Parfit, D. (1984), *Reasons and Persons*, 543pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. [The definitive work of this author and of contemporary discourse on "personal identity", exemplifying fine-grained argumentation and the conventional given assumption that "personal identity" means sameness through time rather than what the person identifies with.]

Radhakrishnan, S. and Moore, C. (1957), *Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy*, 683pp. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [Definitive collection of Indian philosophy since 1000 BCE including the full texts of the eleven principal Upanisads, the Bhagavad-gita, early and late Buddhism and Sri Aurobindo.]

Rawls, J. (1967), *A Theory of Justice*. 542pp. Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press. [The received definitive work of the twentieth century in political philosophy, complementing Moore's *Principia Ethica* as the two leading classics of normative theory of the era. Its paradigmatic starting point of rational value-judgment is the principle of self-maximizing rationality, "including wanting a larger share for oneself", the starting-point of "the contemporary social sciences". Rawl's "veil of ignorance" to decouple agents from their conditions of life follows the dominant method of understanding value in post 1950 era.]

Rescher, N. (1969), *Introduction to Value Theory*, 205 pp. Engelwood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.[This

monograph by the most published analytic philosopher of the last century exemplifies the era's formalist method and symbolic notations from which substantive issues of value are excluded.]

Robert, J.S. (2008), *Embryology, Epigenesis, Evolution*, 290pp. New York: Cambridge University Press [Critiques the one-way "genomania" which has swept over contemporary evolutionary biology and popular thought, as in sociobiology, with value choice erased.]

Rorty, R. (1989), *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, 289 pp. New York: Cambridge University Press. [With his earlier *The Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: 1979), this work is the most prominent text of the anti-foundationalist movement in philosophy, denying any common standard of truth or value].

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques (1968), *The Social Contract* (trans. G.D.H. Cole), 100 pp. New York: Penguin Classics [Rousseau's best known but widely misunderstood work featuring the grounding idea of 'giving the law to oneself' to resolve the conflict between individual freedom and state law, with citizens rationally willing "the common interest" to together achieve the "general will" of democratic government.]

Samuelson, Paul and Nordhaus W.D. (2005), *ECONOMICS*, 784 pp. New York: McGraw-Hill. [The standard global reference text and classic of contemporary economics in which the title assumes equation to economics as such and the preface invokes the value imperative to "Spread the gospel of economics anyway we can". Very clear system account.]

Sen, A (1998), *The Possibility of Social Choice*", 37pp. Trinity College, Cambridge: Nobel Lecture [Provides an incomparably rich documentation of the literature on social choice in which none conceives social choice as other than by an aggregation of individual choices, thereby excluding collective life support systems a-priori.]

Singer, Irving (1966 -1987), *The Nature of Love*, 3 volumes. Chicago: Chicago University Press. [The most comprehensive study of theories of love from Plato to Sartre, which argues against any unifying principle of value except the "grace" of love as "bestowal of value" on the love object.]

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 influential work in history, the founding work of "the moral science" in which Smith describes a linchpin of the ruling value system: "Every species of animals naturally multiplies in proportion to the means of their subsistence, and no species can ever multiply beyond it. But in civilized society it is only among the inferior ranks of people that the scantiness of subsistence can set limits to the further multiplication of the human species; and it can so in no other way than by destroying a great part of the children".]

Spinoza, Baruch (1985), *The Collected Works of Spinoza* (ed. E. Curley), 7 vols. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [Includes Spinoza's *Ethics*, a deductive system modeled on Euclid's definitions, axioms and theorems in which God or infinite substance is conceived as the rational system of the universe in its thinking and extended modes and infinite attributes which can be better (more adequately) or worse (less adequately) comprehended, from vague experience through general reasoning to scientific intuition (*scientia intuitiva*) of the logically determined whole.]

Vico, G. (1724/1984), *The New Science*, 445 pp. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press. [In which Vico argues that humanity can only know for certain that which it has created because it is directly our construction.]

Weisbrot, M., Baker, D., and Rosnick, D. (2006). "The Scorecard on Development: 25 Years of Diminishing Progress", *International Journal of Health Services* 36,2: 211-234.[Scientific identification of the pattern of degrading human life systems during market-system globalization.]

Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1968), *Philosophical Investigations*. 260 pp. New York: Macmillan. [The most celebrated work of twentieth-century philosophy leading "the linguistic turn", featuring the anchoring concept of "language games", in terms of which philosophical problems are analyzed as linguistic muddles.]

Wollheim, R. (1984), *Thread of Life*, 288 pp. Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press. [Freudian philosophical critique of the "thread of life" of an individual in which the roots of moral obligation and values respectively are reduced to persecution and depressive anxiety.]

M.E. Zimmerman, J.B. Callicott, J.Clark, G. Sessions, K. J. Warren eds. (1998). *Environmental*

*Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall (The most critically wide-ranging text in the field of philosophy of the environment with articles by such well-known figures as Thomas Berry, Aldo Leopold (the pioneer of the Land Ethic), Arne Ness (Deep Ecology), Carolyn Merchant (ecofeminist critique of Baconian science), James O'Connor (socialist ecology), Tom Regan, Peter Singer, and Paul Taylor (animal rights), and Gary Snyder (bio-regionalism), with no criterion of needs or life support systems.

### **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 20 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.