

THE PRIMARY AXIOM AND THE LIFE-VALUE COMPASS

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Contents

- 6.1. The Primary Axiom of Value
- 6.2. The Fields of Life Value
- 6.3. The Unity of the Fields of Life
- 6.4. The Common Axiological Ground beneath Different Interpretations
- 6.5. The Thought-Field of Value: From the Infinite within to Impartial Value Standard
- 6.6. The Life-Value Compass: The Nature and Measure of Thought Value across Domains
- 6.7. Ecology, Economy and the Good: Re-Grounding in Life Value at the Meta-Level
- 6.8. Beyond the Ghost in the Machine and Life-Blind Measures of Better
- 6.9. Thought With No Object: The Ground of Yoga
- 6.10. Beyond the Polar Fallacies of Religion and Materialism
- 6.11. Concept Thought: From the Boundless Within to the World of Universals
- 6.12. Beneath Nominalism and Realism: Reconnecting Concepts to the Life-Ground
- 6.13. Concepts Construct A Ruling Plane of Life in the Biosphere
- 6.14. The Tragic Flaw of the Symbol-Ruled Species
- 6.15. How We Know the Internal Value of Any Thought System
- 6.16. The Core Disorder of Contemporary Thought: Life-Blind Rationality
- 6.17. The Life Coherence Principle: The Missing Standard of Reason
- Glossary
- Bibliography
- Biographical Sketch

Summary

Given the long failure of philosophy to find any sustainable universal ground of value, the Primary Axiom of Value explains the missing set of principles and their deciding compass of value direction and measure. By regrounding in underlying fields of life themselves, *life-value onto-axiology* demonstrates unlimited validity in judging better and worse across domains, the explanatory power to resolve age-old impasses of philosophy and theory, and the self-evident capacity to meet the most ancient questions of humanity - what is the good, and how are we to live? This chapter maps the value field of consciousness, and explains how its open elective space and the mind's conceptual forms determine the world for good or ill.

6.1. The Primary Axiom of Value

X is value if and only if, and to the extent that, x consists in or enables a more coherently inclusive range of thought/feeling/action than without it

Where these three ultimate fields of value are defined as:

thought = internal image and concept (T)

feeling = the felt side of being (F)

/ senses, desires, emotions, moods

action = animate movement (A)

across species and organizations

Conversely:

x is disvalue if and only if, and to the extent that, x reduces/disables any range of thought/experience/action.

Symbolically expressed:

$+V = > LR +$ and $-V = < LR$ where $L = \text{Range of T-F-A}$ and $/ = \text{and/or}$

6.1.1. The Unlimited Validity and Applicability of the Primary Axiom

The value of all values (Vv) is distinguished from other principles of value by six features which demonstrate its ground as of *unlimited validity*. That is, it is:

- (1) *Self-evident* insofar as its denial is nonsensical;
- (2) *Universalizability* across all domains and issues of value judgment insofar as there is no domain of value to which it does not apply;
- (3) *Presupposed* in value judgments and conflicts across domains;
- (4) *Objective* insofar as its value is independent of anyone's recognition;
- (5) *Sovereign* in that it overrides any other value in cases of conflict;
- (6) *measurable in degrees of worth* insofar as greater/lesser ranges of thought, felt being and action can be decided from any given reference body of value;
- (7) *A contingent pattern* in long-term evolutionary and historical development.

These criteria together indicate a value ground of unlimited validity – what any ultimate, universal and applicable theory of value must show.

6.1.2. Sliding Scale of Good and Bad: An Introduction

All good and bad and their degrees are decidable by application of the Primary Axiom of Value. Anything qualifies as better/worse by the greater/lesser range of life value it

bears or enables in the fields of life value.

Choices are, in turn, better or worse as they enable or disable these fields of life through time, $T_1 \dots T_n$, as illustrated ahead.

All values/disvalues of all kinds - moral, aesthetic, technological, and in general whatever admits of better/worse predication - *and* their value choices are decidable by application of this sliding scale of measure (demonstrated from Section 6.6 onwards).

6.1.3. Reference Body of Value Judgment

Any such value judgment must, however, always relate to a *reference body of value* from which the judgment is made so as to move beyond *the free-standing absolutes* by which value understanding has long been bedeviled in every age and culture.

We now proceed to step-by-step explanation and testing application of this parametric of value across the fields of life by horizontal and vertical axes of measure of greater and lesser value, explaining transformative implications for value judgments and problems across domains.

6.1.4. Ultimate Value Test

All that is of worth consists in and enables life value *to the extent* of its experienced fields of thought, felt being and action (intrinsic value), *and* what underlies and enables these fields of life themselves, life support systems.

This is the generic frame of all values and evaluation by life-value onto-axiology. What does not take into account all of these parameters of value is *partial* to the extent that it does not.

6.2. The Fields of Life Value

The fields of life value - thought, felt side of being, action - include all that is of *intrinsic* value, or value in itself. It therefore follows that whatever does *not* bear thought, feeling or animate movement is not intrinsic value, although it may be of *instrumental* value.

6.2.1. Intrinsic and Ultimate Values

Life support systems - any natural or human-made system without which human beings cannot live or live well - may or may not have value in themselves, but have *ultimate* value so far as they are that without which human or other life cannot exist or flourish.

6.2.2. Vertical and Horizontal Dimensions of Life-Value

All life whatever has intrinsic value insofar as it itself moves, feels, or thinks. The measure of its value is, in turn, the extent to which it expresses or enables vertical-depth and horizontal-breadth of life range on these parameters. In short, the more life fields the better, and the more range on each and all together, the more value is borne.

6.3. The Unity of the Fields of Life

Although we can distinguish the cognitive and feeling capacities of any person, this does not mean dividing them into separate worlds as has occurred in the traditional divisions between mind and body, reason and the emotions. Life-value onto-axiology begins from *their unity as the nature of the human organism*. It thereby releases understanding from the fallacious metaphysical dualisms in which philosophy has been mired over millennia.

6.3.1. Life-Value Philosophy Supersedes Dualism

When the fields of mind and body are sundered into separate realms of existence, we confront the perennial *dualism* of the organic being. Descartes (1596-1650) is the modern Western father of this separation of thought and body, *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, but such ontological splits have variously characterized philosophy and language East and West over 2500 years.

Ordinary language expresses this schizophrenic ontology when “mind” and “body” are perceived as two separate realms. In life-value philosophy, these dichotomies are recognized as concept reifications delinked from their life-ground. Any such dualism is ruled out from the beginning by understanding the unity of the human organism underneath metaphysical constructions.

6.3.2. Primary Axiom Applies Across Species as Organically Grounded Value Measure

The ultimate principle of value defined by the primary axiom holds across human *and* non-human bearers. The value fields of thought and felt being of any organism depend physically on nervous system inheritance, while image-concept and felt-being development from there is by learning and discovery. There are no ontological divisions beyond this.

Together these fields of life across species constitute the plenum of life-value in the terrestrial condition which is not comprehended by mind-body disjunctions nor by isolated partialities of understanding like moral intention, pleasure gained, pecuniary value, and so on.

6.3.2.1. Choice as Opening or Closing to Fields of Life Value

The unification of these value fields by their experiencers is, at bottom, a *value choice*: between opening to these fields of life value as organically one, and closing to them by reified divisions. Our lives as individuals and societies are decided *by* such choices. This choice space, however, is abstracted out by metaphysical reductions (e.g., that inner life is unreal).

6.3.2.2. We Decide What We Are By What We Identify With

However different the conditions and degrees of what we identify ourselves with, we decide how what this identity is. The opening or the closing to more inclusive life is the

inner logic of choice.

For example, the human individual or society connecting to the life needs of its members and the ecological host rather than ignoring them realizes a fuller life. This is a choice process not possible for a Turing machine, chimpanzee troop, or money-capital sequence. It decides the life reality we find or lose, but its elective space is normally erased or denied.

6.4. The Common Axiological Ground beneath Different Interpretations

Application of the primary axiom of value identifies every life value and disvalue that exists or can exist; but the evidence it is applied to admits of different interpretations.

For example, plants and trees have pervasive value as a means to all other life - instrumental value, as well as ultimate value insofar as no life value can exist without them. They are value for most animals as habitat and food, and for more connected beings a primary object of natural and cultivated beauty of fellow life as well.

Yet do the world of plants and trees also have *intrinsic* value to the extent that they themselves feel or think that which makes them lives of moral concern?

6.4.1. Do Plants and Trees Feel or Think?

Perhaps the most famous book presenting evidence for the internal life of plants is Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird, *The Secret Life of Plants* (1973). It attributes “mind” to plants, but the factual evidence presented indicates a felt side of being, not mind. That is, no evidence exists for the capacity for concept or image.

The same evidence can have different interpretations. Plants might be seen as having intrinsic value as life, and greater intrinsic value if alive in both thought and feeling. Yet in fact there is only evidence for a very primitive felt side of being – slight organic responses, for instance, to adjacent plants being cut down. Yet the axiom of life value is constant no matter what the interpretation is. There is only a disagreement here on the inferences from the evidence, *not* on what is of value.

6.4.1.1. Do Rocks Feel?

Some say even rocks feel, but they present no evidence of that in the rocks themselves, as distinguished from what they have projected onto them. *Valid* value judgment of other being depends on what is evident fact, not on what is projected.

It is true that people may experience more value if they imagine rocks as the bones of our larger cosmic body, but this does not mean the rocks themselves think, feel or act. There is a lot of confusion of these positions. There is no evidence whatever that rocks *themselves* either feel or think. Yet we may still extend our being to them as elements of our larger life - like toenails that do not feel or think, but belong to and enable our life body. In such a case, a wider bioregional or world body can be what the open consciousness extends to as life-value identity – as in some first-people cultures and, as we will see, advanced contemporary philosophies.

6.4.2. One Axiom of Value: Many Possibilities of Value Both Valid and Invalid

Some may believe in “the mind of plants” or “the feelings of rocks”, or reject any such belief as pure projection, or adopt a wider life body including them. World philosophies express examples of all these positions. *Yet what all of these opposing positions agree on is the intrinsic and ultimate value of thought and feeling themselves.*

6.4.2.1. Ultimate and Intrinsic Life Values

Life value does not entail being alive, however. Nor does being alive entail significant life value. Life support systems can be unthinking water and earth, but are ultimate values so far as life cannot exist without them. On the other hand a particular seed, even a fertilized human one, has little life-value *in itself*. Yet these ultimate value distinctions are so little thought of they are reversed without notice.

It is always important to distinguish *ultimate* from *intrinsic* values, or we may conflate them and believe, for example, that because only life is of intrinsic value, non-living systems are not of ultimate value. No error could be more fatal.

6.4.3. The Unseen Common Ground of Ethics Too

Underlying the most contentious and passionate disagreements is *the life-ground of value* which has been lost within this or that reified aspect of its meaning. Disagreements on what are thought to be value foundations are typically only partial perspectives on it.

6.4.3.1. Utilitarian and Kantian Standpoints as Partial

The utilitarian, for example, properly thinks that if animals or plants truly feel pain, this capacity for pain confers on them the right to moral consideration. Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) first argued this in modern Western philosophy, and contemporary ethicist Peter Singer has pursued this line of argument with singular clarity over four decades. Yet only pain is considered here, not life capacity. Thus painless dismemberment or death is approved. If it maximizes pleasure at the same time, the utilitarian principle is fulfilled.

On the other hand, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) simply rules out feeling as morally irrelevant, and thus blocks out the entire value field of feeling in principle. He is concerned with universal principles of rational understanding and conduct as supreme values. Again a partial aspect of life value is absolutized into all that ultimately matters, and the rest is devalued or dissolved from view. Yet even the Kantian will have to concede that the felt side of being *does* have value. For it cannot be sensibly denied that it is better to have a feeling than not to - a regulating maxim of conduct Kant followed in not allowing his own sentient capacities to be impaired over 80 years.

6.4.4. The Primary Axiom of Value Remains True Through Competing Partial Grasps of It

The primary axiom of value, we may conclude, remains uncompromised through

competing partial grasps of it. Thought experiment assists understanding by two questions:

- (1) What value *contradicts* its ultimate principle? Value positions and theories may be unaware of it, but still express some dimension of it.
- (2) Can any value that *does* contradict it be valid? It is true that a desire to be free of life embodiment is often stated (including by Socrates at death), but such a value is incoherent with the long preservation of it by the speaker.

Most partisan strife is based on ignorance of this common ground of value underlying contesting doctrines and ways, the ultimate failure of human thought.

6.5. The Thought Field of Value: From the Infinite within to Impartial Value Standard

Heraclitus (6th-5th century BCE) long ago observed, “There is no limit to consciousness so deep and far in every direction does it extend”. No philosopher has since contradicted him, but most have ignored his ultimate and testable claim.

What is of supreme value in human thought is its boundless capacity of inclusion, whether or not it can be correlated to brain activities - a current preoccupation of world science and philosophy. There is no limit to *its* reach or depth of image and conception, a directly provable fact that is ignored. Mind-brain identity theory and cognitive science revealingly behave as if it did not exist. Property-dualists disagree with them, but not on this ground. They attend rather to brain-words and mind-words as different orders of language. Even phenomenologists who seek to recover the inner realm conceive mind as necessarily “intentional”, that is, directed to something.

6.5.1. The False Opposition of Spirituality and Science

In India-based wisdom traditions, in profound contrast, the onto-axiological base is that thought is infinite and without object to the enlightened who realize it. It is the “God within”.

Required material conditions of this inner infinite field do not diminish its reality. Yet scientific-philosophical materialism is structured against recognition by admitting only externally observable and repeatable data into conceptions of reality. This is a methodological partiality which is demonstrably fallacious, as we will see - not because such data and laws are false, but because the method falsely and circularly denies anything else as real.

6.5.2. Not Anthropocentrism, nor Supernaturalism

Recognition of the open elective space of human thought as of ultimate value, from the infinite within to scientific understanding without, is not anthropocentric - as philosophies prioritizing either side may well be. For it is quite consistent that non-humans are superior if they bear thought's powers to a greater reach and depth, as astronomical science suggests is possible. A superior thinking species in the universe is not excluded.

Nor is there any entailment of *supernaturalism* by recognition of the “infinite within”. It

is perfectly compatible with mindful materialism to recognize it. One can say that it is enabled by the infinite permutations and combinations of a 150-billion-neuron brain and its trillions of joining axons, combined with inherited linguistic capacities for generating unlimited meanings within complex human cultures evolved over thousands of years. Such a material basis of consciousness does not set bounds to its infinitude, but helps to explain it.

6.5.3. Degrees of Consciousness Value: From Retarded to Advanced Thought Systems

Although thought is the most inclusive field of value, it admits of vast differences of ranges of comprehension. If thought is confined to closed repertoires of self-seeking, for example, it is of correspondingly less value, falling back into instinctual program.

On the other hand, human thought may comprehend the entire terrestrial life-host as a connected life system with which it identifies - as with the EOLSS project itself.

6.5.4. The Impartiality of Life Value Measures across Species, Races and Genders

The value of all values is impartial across all divisions. It may recognize higher value in human beings so far as they bear more inclusive fields of thinking and feeling being; or lower if other life demonstrates they do not. The bearing of the fields of life value decides, *not* race nor gender nor species nor other dogmatic type.

Does this mean that if we discovered dolphins to have more complexly comprehensive symbolic and affective states than humans they are of greater life value? *Ceteris paribus*, the answer is yes.

6.5.5. More and Less Life Value With Respect to a Reference Body of Life Field

Monkeys may rate much higher than humans in range of organic movement; while baboons may outrank dogs and horses so far as their evident thought and feeling show greater ranges. The ultimate measure of value cuts across physical types in its judgments of life value.

Yet such meanings must always be qualified *with respect to a reference body of comparison* which states specifically what field of life is meant, and, where relevant, the spatio-temporal coordinates of the entities compared (e.g., a prior state of an individual or a society compared to a present state in this or that domain of life-range capabilities).

6.5.5.1. The Requirement of a Reference Body

The requirement of a reference body for value judgments is imperative because a central problem of values and value judgments is their unqualified assertion. We will explain these false absolutes and their correction in depth ahead.

At the same time, the reference body for judgment needs to be connected to a domain of life of some kind, or it becomes life disconnected (as with theoretical models with no life referents).

Once thus anchored, measures of *more/less* life value are always possible.

Wherever thought (or felt being or action or all together) becomes more coherently inclusive, there is always a gain in life value to this extent. Conversely, wherever any or all fields of life are oppositely reduced, there is a loss of life value to the same ontological measure.

6.6. The Life-Value Compass: The Nature and Measure of Thought Value across Domains

The life field of thought is the primary *dynamics* of the human world and, over time, the world itself. We need thus to define exactly how thought is distinguished from *non*-thought.

A thought is by nature what provides an internal representation of whatever can be imaged or pictured within an organism without the aid of the senses: for example, a visual memory, a dream, a desired object, a trope, an idea without any referent, or - most importantly - a project to be embodied in the world.

All human beings have the capacity for this kind of thought. Observation of, say, dogs or cats making sounds and movements in sleep indicate dreams, and thus thought, in other mammals too, and even projective consciousness in mammals with comparably developed brains.

6.6.1. Conditioned Reflex or Thought?

These creations of 'internal space' may exist in some form for all creatures with neural systems. Thought value seems to exist on the plane of images even in fish or other life forms that can *anticipate* satisfaction or dissatisfaction prior to its felt experience. This is a thought space within so far as it cannot be reduced to a reflex mechanism.

The issue is whether this anticipation of the fish or other animals involves an internal image or representation. If so, it is thought value. If not, if it is merely a conditioned reaction to an external stimulus with no thought shown. Again, the measure of life value holds constant whatever the evidence one way or the other is.

6.6.2. Thought Admits of Different Ranges of Value

Coherent respect for life depends on what the evidence indicates. A being with no evidence of thought lacks an ultimate qualification of life value - a major issue which re-emerges in deepening analysis as we move.

In general, image-thought admits of many degrees of value, and its extent of value is *in proportion to the range of internal representations it bears*.

6.6.3. Judging By the Life-Value Compass

It is by this life-value measure that we can judge the imagery of poetry as well as evaluate the thought capacity of mammals. As a slide-rule measures diverse lengths, so

the life-value compass measures thought or lack of it.

By its standard we can recognize the superiority of, say, Shakespeare's poetry compared to Alexander Pope's because the one's range of image thought is richer and vaster in coherent inclusion; just as, more so, Pope's verse is far superior to advertising jingles. We have an impartial standard to tell. By the same principle of life compass, we judge the image thought of a spider, even weaving a wondrous web, as absent because its product is type-uniform across individuals and generations with no evidence of elective thinking.

6.6.4. Absence of Thought Life Applies to People As Well As Spiders

Life-value measure applies to human character as well. When it is said of someone “s/he is ignorant”, the implicit meaning of this evaluation is the person’s radically reduced compass of thought which is judged inferior.

It is also blameworthy by abdication of what is distinctively human - thinking beyond instinctual and habit program. Yet not only unthinking individuals, but cognitive science and bio-egalitarianism ignore this deciding value difference of human life.

6.6.5. Life-Value Onto-Axiology Restores the Lost Ground

Life-value distinctions are of deep significance because they enable recognition of value and disvalue by an impartial criterion which has long been missing, the common ground from which contesting moralities and perspectives have become unmoored - *life-value itself*. The ubiquitous claim that “it is only a matter of opinion” or “perspective” is the symptom of a value world which has lost its bearings. Life-value compass restores them.

6.7. Ecology, Economy and the Good: Re-Grounding in Life Value at the Meta-Level

The implications are momentous. Consider a life-connective progression of human thought to more coherently inclusive range of comprehension - for well-known example, people’s recognizing that the throw-away remnants of fruit and vegetables can be composted to save pressure on overloaded garbage systems and to create fertile soil that is diminishing rapidly; and thereby, in large scale, create living mantle for food and flower vegetation, forest roots, cover and life habitat in urban centers to reverse their grey-black advance across the globe. The next step of life-value reconnection is to sequence bodily wastes which foul fresh, river and sea waters across the world to enable rather than blindly disable life support cycles.

Instituted by collective rules, life-coherent thought transfigures the material world to be limitlessly better. Or, conversely, ruling thought chains continue to despoil the planet by failure of life-coherent - that is, *ecological* – thinking. Material reality follows regulating thought sequences. This is why we may call life-value onto-axiology the *ecology* of value – the turn demanded by collapsing life support systems, but blocked out by models of external necessity.

6.7.1. Real Economy and Efficiency by Life-Value Calculus

Life-value gain or loss is not subjective or imprecise. They are measurable by exact margins - more or less topsoil generated or lost, less or more waste saved or squandered, trees in number to breathe or die, city areas greened by vegetation and flowers, or spreading urban wastelands. The decision trains and their results are self-evident and elective, not physical laws. In a world whose regulators are decoupled from their life-ground, this choice of value sequencing is life-and-death in planetary meaning. Behind the material world is the deciding value sequence remaking it.

Yet not even ecosystem science has a principle of recognizing life-value gain and loss across domains; while money-sequence economics rules it out in principle.

6.7.2. The First Principle of Justice and Morality Follows from Life-Value Onto-Axiology

Life-value onto-axiology restores the lost ground of choice. It applies one universal and impartial logic of value increase and loss across domains. Unlike other value calculi, life-value itself is the yardstick, not some proxy or substitute for it.

As the value measure which admits all forms of value and disvalue into its unifying frame of understanding, and discriminates for or against none except as it coherently enables rather than disables fields of life, it provides the ultimate first principle of morality and justice as well. One generic imperative follows as undeniable without absurdity: think, feel and act for life-value gain versus loss in all matters without exception. The transformative implications re-make the world consistently with its creation.

6.7.3. Grounding Divinity of Being

For the great materialist philosopher, Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-72), religions alienate human capacities by positing a God on which humanity's greatest attributes of benevolence, reason and power are worshipped as the opposite of human being. Both Marx and Nietzsche drew much from Feuerbach's re-grounding of human values in this atheist humanism.

Life-value onto-axiology, in contrast, is not concerned with whether God is believed in or not, but with whether the boundless life space of human being is understood. The 'infinite within' is neither a deity implant nor a humanist project, but present and confirmable by direct inner test. "Being" is found not by Platonic or Heideggerian remembering by reified words, but by the primordial choice of opening to humanity's fields of life themselves.

6.8. Beyond the Ghost in the Machine and Life-Blind Measures of Better

There are countless ways in which organic motions - action - work to complement and to express the fields of value of thought, and vice-versa. Yet radical behaviorists have argued that any thought not expressed in or disposed to action does not exist at all. It is a "ghost in the machine". Such is the conceptualization of the British philosopher,

Gilbert Ryle (1900-76) in his classic work, *The Concept of Mind* (1946), with his contemporary, the psychological behaviorist, B.F. Skinner, more strictly reductionist in his model of stimulus-response mechanism.

What is true about such positions is that without any action on behalf of thought or feeling, internal life is *ineffective in the material world*. Yet from the more inclusive ground of life value, thought or feeling already bears value in itself *within* to the extent of its reach and depth. Consider, for example, the vision of universal well-being which cannot be enacted in a world of selves competing for money value. It is far worse to have no such thought at all.

6.8.1. Bridging the Spiritual and Material Worlds by Life-Value Onto-Axiology

Life-value onto-axiology thus does not discount inner life. Against Behaviorism, Marxism, Mechanism and Materialism in general, it recognizes the intrinsic value of thought *in itself*. Thinking is the ground of human value prior to use of it, and may be sublime without linguistic or other materialization. When, for example, Kant speaks of the “stars above, the moral law within”, his thought is sublime in itself. So too is the inwardness which adopts the boundless as its source, the mind space of yoga.

On the other hand, the more that illumined inner life is expressed in action, the better. This is the global life-value measure. The core truth of materialism is thus preserved: only enacted ideas are *materially* real. Yet the inner life remains of ultimate value in itself. The long-entrenched dichotomization between “spiritual” and “materialist”, “theory” and “action” is bridged without losing the value of either, and achieving the superiority of their mutual inclusion.

6.8.2. Not Bigger, Faster, More Powerful: More Is Better in the Life-Value Sense Alone

More value here is not achieved by “more” in the standard metrics of “more output”, “more technology”, “more money”. “Bigger”, “faster”, “newer”, “more powerful” vehicles and systems do not mean more life-value. For all of these values are life-blind. Life-value understanding grounds in an opposite sense of “more” - more coherently inclusive in the life range enabled by it. “More” does not supplant less - as with the operationalization of these mechanical values. It encompasses its past moments within its life bearing - as better understanding preserves its earlier limits while negating them by its advance (e.g., knowing more concepts in progressively coherent inclusion).

6.8.2.1. Dialectic without Confusion

This value syntax of preservation-negation-higher-order synthesis is the inner logic of *dialectic*, but without the garble and over-reaching associated with this philosophical method.

The ultimate value distinction here is in how one recognizes a “higher synthesis” from opposing partialities. The criterion not defined by received dialectical method is whether the “higher” better enables life fields. If it does not, it is not truly “higher”. No

test of thought is more vital, or less observed. It is the missing value-decider which life-value onto-axiology grounds in.

6.8.3. Beyond Illusions of Value Substance by Numbers without Life-Value Meaning

While the life-value measure applies with unlimited validity across domains, it has been widely blinkered out by reified partial measures. The development of mathematics without any life-value referents of its notations and equations has been the central mode of decoupling thought in modernity. At the most elementary level, higher numbers of uniform units of what is unliving give the illusion of exact value substance: for example, more money, size, speed = better. Or less money cost or paid labor = more efficient.

These are variations on the ruling value formula of contemporary global society: *more commodities = more value = by the margin of what consumers are willing to pay for them and investors can gain from their sale*. The mathematicization of the countless permutations of this inner equation of value has locked thought into a mind-box which rules out life-value.

6.8.3.1. From the Fetishism of Mathematics within Ruling Value Syntax to Mind Clearing

Because such equations are first principles of capitalist political economy without standards of life-value meaning, system blindness deepens and extends with their globalization. The deciding issue of life value measure - does it enable more capacity of life range by its higher number - is blocked out a-priori. No structure of illusion is more disastrous over generational time. Yet social science, public policy and positivist philosophy typically assume that mathematical representation is the sovereign warrant of thought's objectivity.

Quantitative measures and results are thus prescribed to achieve acceptable meaning across these domains. The instrument of calculation is thereby absurdly made the substance of value meaning. In onto-axiological terms, this equation of thought translates into the generic social equation of *more money exchanges = better = more welfare*, an equation which comes to rule humanity's material reproduction across borders as inherently life-blind. In the words of the ancient *Upanishad* sages, "What is one's thought, that one becomes", only here at the level of humanity's world system itself.

6.9. Thought with No Object: The Ground of Yoga

The set-points are deeper than Max Weber (1864-1920) conceived in studying capitalist rationality as an "iron cage". They are structured into the ruling first premises of value. Let us then go deeper than the cage, and reflect upon the human thought field prior to such premises.

What is irreducibly true of human consciousness is that it is an *open elective space*. Its

capacities of image and concept formation are, as the pre-Socratic Heraclitus observed, infinite “so deep and far in every direction does it extend”.

6.9.1. Inner Space

“It occurred to me that - - “, people say, and their manifest image/conceptual thought is communicated. This inner space within which the thought occurs is more primary than any thought formation within it. It is the lost inner universe of Western philosophy. The ‘infinite within’ is not ineffable, religious or non-existent as it is so often misunderstood, but verifiable by direct thought experiment.

6.9.2. The Abyss as the Question: Terrifying or Enlightening to its Beholder

The descriptions most invoked in Eastern religious philosophies are “emptiness”, “nothingness”, “the abyss”, and, in positive terms, “boundless light” - the sky were inside one’s head, as it were. This inward infinitude is originally recognized in the Indian *Upanishads*. There is, however, a profound philosophical opposition of valuing or *disvaluing* this no-thingness across the great philosophies of the world. For conventional Western philosophers, the “great abyss” is indifferent and meaningless. For the Vedanta, Taoism and Buddhism, it is the ground of reality and en-lightening to its beholder – the ultimate choice space of human consciousness.

6.9.3. A Testable Proposition

This infinitude of inner space is, if recognized, not explained without religious mystification. Yet it is directly testable. Try to think of anything you cannot negate. Or imagine whatever vast and encompassing thought you may, and see whether consciousness does not open beyond it.

We may be able to recognize the infinitude of thought’s capacity, but it is not easy to experience this infinite field of thought with no object *in* it. An object, an image/conceptual configuration, seems always there, leading or moving to another, and the process goes on with no rest.

6.9.4. The Law of Intentionality versus Consciousness with No Object

So widespread and insistent is this referential compulsion of thought that Western thinkers assume that there is *no thought without something to which it is directed*. This may be called “the law of intentionality of consciousness”.

Although it is not referred to as a law, consciousness is assumed or described in Western philosophy as if it must by its nature always have some object *of* it. Phenomenology in the vein of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) is most explicitly based on this supposition. Mental life is always *about* something.

6.9.5. In direct contrast, the realm of *thought with no object* is the ground of understanding for Vedic and Buddhist seers who conceive its source and experience as ultimate reality and value. They ultimately refer to it as “pure light”, or rather

confusingly, “nothingness” which is best understood as “no-thingness”.

Yet in the ultimate division of classical Indian thought, Hinduism and Buddhism disagree on whether there is a soul-substance, an atman, to which the pure thought-light field is present. Hinduism says yes, Buddhism says no. This is the ultimate onto-axiological distinction between these philosophies, and has enormous significance as we will see.

Received Western philosophy simply does not conceive of such an ultimate thought ground. The idea of an empty consciousness is not imagined.

6.9.6. Released From Name and Form: The Ultimate Goal of Yoga

In the unbounded field of pre-intentional consciousness with neither concepts nor images arising in it, thought is no longer limited by any referent. It is the pure capacity of thought underlying manifestation which (here Hinduism and Buddhism agree) is “released from name and form” (“*nama*” and “*rupa*”). This is their shared metaphysics.

Opening to this undivided interior universe is the ultimate goal of *yoga*, although the countless yogic practices familiar to most are ironically preoccupied with physical positions and movements. In the classical Eastern tradition, yogic awareness means the liberation from all reference of thought to experience the infinite of consciousness without an object. This experience is considered of unsurpassable value, the *summum bonum* of all possibility. It is “the end of all longing” which the enlightened reach when all attachments to all names and forms are extinguished - the “final release” or “freedom”. The concepts for this release are *Moksha*, *Nirvana*, *Satori* respectively in the Hindu, Buddhist and Zen traditions.

6.9.6.1. The Kingdom of Heaven Within

In Christianity, liberation from selfish attachment adopts the form of “love” by the agent who finds “the kingdom of heaven within” by love of God and its correlative, “love of thy neighbor”. There are profound likenesses of this ultimate thought state to Buddhist selflessness and compassion. Yet there is a momentous difference in thought. The Christian retains the self in loving the other “*as thyself*”, whereas any self is an illusion in Buddhist metaphysics. The onto-ethical difference could not be more fundamental, as we will see.

Although the common ground between the Indian inner realm of “no-thingness” and the Christian “heaven within” is rarely identified, life-value onto-ethics begins from it as the ultimate nature of the human thought field.

6.10. Beyond the Polar Fallacies of Religion and Materialism

This “heaven within” is, however, mystified by attributing its presence to an unknowable divine source - estranging the infinitude of human consciousness which secular thought too denies. It is a taboo zone. No end of trials and ostracism for heresy, blasphemy and deviation have marked claims of the infinite within across centuries and

cultures - not only by instituted religions which reserve it for the Lord, but by externalist sciences which deny it. Religion and science ally beneath their conflict: both block out the horizonless free space within.

Life-value onto-axiology, in contrast, begins with this open elective life space as the testable nature of human thought prior to alienating deification *or* eliminative materialism. It is confirmed by trying to find any bound to it. Neither mystified as in religion, nor repudiated as in behavioralism, it is recognized as the verifiable nature of humanity's thought field in itself.

6.10.1. The Ultimate Value Field of Thought: the Middle Path between Theism and Science

Life-value understanding can agree with cognitive science that the organic human nervous system of numberless firing neuronal pathways and functions is the living foundation of the human thought field, and *also* recognize true experiences of an infinite white-light within. The brain is externally observed by neuroscientific instruments and expertise, while the infinite light within is directly experienced. They do not generate a dualism, but are compatible as biographical and autobiographical standpoints.

Life-value onto-axiology thus emancipates human understanding from the polar fallacies of (1) alienating the infinite inner world of human consciousness to a supernatural God, Brahman, or Allah *and* (2) blocking out this boundless inner-life field by closed behavioral or mechanical models.

6.10.2. Understanding God as Value: Transformative Method beyond Feuerbach

This approach seems to resemble the humanization of God advocated by Ludwig Feuerbach, as discussed above. That is, Feuerbach transformed the properties attributed to a transcendent God back into their alienated source, what he called "the essence (*wesen*) of man". This philosophical operation is known as "the transformative method".

The difference of life-ground method is that it is more onto-axiologically exact than "man's essence", and also allows that the white-light field which is experienced as divine presence need not be "alienated" as atheist humanism assumes. It can be inspirationally enabling within and not alien at all, as the lives of a Jesus, Mohammed or Gandhi testify.

So too, the retort might be, have the inner lives of deity-driven psychopaths. That is, the mind yoked to an all-encompassing idea as omnipotent and omniscient is as capable of evil as good. This is exactly why life-value onto-axiology is required to distinguish between good and evil *God concepts*. It tests their validity by the regulating principles of thought, felt being and action they prescribe. They may inspire human agency to new ranges of life-serving capacity, or apotheosize life-destructive dogmas as divine commands. The governing thought structure decides.

6.10.3. The Life-Value Measure of Gods and Religion

Religion is not good or true by faith, but by the life-enabling coherence of its meaning. By the test of faith alone, fanaticism may indeed appear as God-driven - a perennial problem of history and the world. God concepts are as virulent as the wars, persecutions and life oppressions they justify, or as emancipatory as the opposing higher visions they inspire in the world.

The issue for life-value onto-axiology is whether *any* thought system enables or disables fields of life - not only consequentially, but intrinsically by their cognitive-image scope and felt bonds of being. Deity meanings are good or evil, in short, by life-value measure. To revere or repudiate them as such - as in the dualism of religious faith and scientific rationality - is all-or-nothing prejudice on both sides.

6.10.3.1. William James’ pragmatic defense of religious belief in *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902) seeks to bridge this opposition. He argues if the faith works for the faith-holder, it is justified by its results. Here faith by itself does not decide value, but practical effects do. Yet an idea of God which works for its believer still does not rule out delusions which may oppress others. Only a direct life-value criterion can do that.

6.11. Concept Thought: From the Boundless Within to the World of Universals

The immanent reason that the “kingdom of heaven within” can be posited as the *summum bonum* is that it has no bound to its presence. It is freedom within of the field of thought value.

6.11.1. Concepts as the Organizing Ideas of Human Power

Yet concept thought is what counts. When organized as engineering knowledge, it has made humanity the sovereign power of the earth. In the famous words of Francis Bacon (1561-1626) “knowledge is power”. Unlike the ancient Lao tzu’s *Tao-te-Ching* which grounds in “non-being”, here only formed ideas compute. For both Lao and Bacon, nonetheless, there is a common logic of concepts. Each is a *bounded idea whose reference excludes all else but it*.

6.11.2. The Age-Old Suspicion of Concepts

All science is based on concepts, and the physical sciences on concepts which are rigid designators: exactly denotative concepts across material place and time. Western thought is led by concepts, and increasingly in modernity, concepts following science. Yet because concepts form dividing lines between what is referred to and what is ruled out, the realm of conceptual thought has not been trusted by Vedanta or Buddhist schools of thought since the ancients and, most outspokenly, not by Zen Buddhism.

Concepts here are understood in an opposite way to modern rationality and science. Their dividing lines of meaning are rejected as a “net of illusion” - that is, *distorting partialities which draw lines of mind not found in lived reality*. Concepts, it is claimed, cannot but miss the edgeless reality or “It” which is not divided by word-lines and

always overflows them. Even the concepts of “Buddha-mind” and “enlightenment” entail divisions that are not there, and this is why students’ asking what they mean is flailed by Zen-master swatters.

6.11.2.1. The Problematicization of Concepts by Eastern and Western Philosophy

While contemporary Western philosophy begins with concepts as its ultimate baseline of thought (even reifying them as self-subsistent Forms with Plato and other idealists), Eastern Philosophy has started from a more primary thought space, the boundless within *prior* to “names and forms”.

This idea lies at the inner sanctum of Asian thought and its idea of enlightenment across Vedanta, Buddhist and Zen philosophies, but the twentieth century Western philosopher, Theodor Adorno (1906-69), argues too that concepts are inherently misleading. This is a core principle of his “critical theory” and concept of “dialectics” which seeks to overcome the inbuilt partiality of concepts by a perpetually moving negation of them in the “dialectic of enlightenment” (the title of his 1947 book with Max Horkheimer). Then again, before them Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) obscurely implies a similar dialectic of concepts when he speaks of “concealing” and “unconcealing” as the inherent nature of thinking.

6.11.3. A Survival Characteristic: Determination of Meaning By Negation of What It Is Not

All of science, technology and what is most of all studied in places of education is nonetheless concept thought with no such critical consciousness detaining inquiry - except in the contemporary era when recurrent conceptual paradoxes have been generated by the findings of quantum physics - for example, wave and particle concepts of light.

At the most general level, wherever concepts occur, they have one underlying defining nature. Each rules out what it is not. *Determinatio est negatio* is a philosophical aphorism for this inner logic of conceptual thought. More basically and pragmatically, however, conceptual divisions are a *survival imperative* for humanity at every turn.

Without the concepts of the edible and the potable and their opposite in every language, for example - each ruling out the other by strict lines of division - decisive communication of the difference upon which people’s lives depend could not be communicatively signified.

6.11.3.1. Postmodern Undecidability

Postmodernists may, like Jacques Jacques Derrida (1930-), think that nothing is finally decidable because of different perspectives and positions, all of which self-undercut in the deconstruction of their meanings. This is the principle of “undecidability”.

Yet this postmodernist route has an unexamined downside. If we leave communication to endless elaborations of differences leading to no deciding meaning, we become

functionally insane. This is not necessarily a state which postmodernists reject, as the case of Gilles Deleuze (1925-95) *inter alia* makes clear. Postmodernity's "free flow of desire" can find its epiphany in swarms of particularity converting the organism into proliferating differentiations of tiny beings.

6.11.3.2. Meeting the Ghost of Skepticism: Decidability by the Life Coherence Principle

Nonetheless, "the finger pointing to the moon is not the moon", says Zen. And, one may add, "the word 'free world' is not freedom". Nonetheless concepts can draw lines of comprehension that exactly reflect objective reality and value, whatever the perennial arguments of philosophical skepticism against this possibility. The skeptic may haunt philosophy like a ghost which cannot be put to rest, but one form of argument has not confronted him.

What no skeptic ever refutes is the lines of differentiation between what enables life more inclusively and what reduces or disables it. These *lines of life value* are as undeniable as the known facts demonstrating them - for example, that poison under whatever name or in whatever language is an exact object of consumption which normally makes people ill or die.

6.11.4. The Generic Definition of all Concepts Prior to Confusions

Whatever might be said pro and con on concepts, one positive principle always holds true which enables understanding to be freed from paradoxes and obfuscations. *Any concept consists of a unifying idea which stands for a set of particulars*: or otherwise put, concepts are *universals* which refer to all instantiations of a type, with no confinement to past or present cases. Concepts have in this way conferred godlike powers on humanity to think across the past, present and future in unifying frames of meaning without confinement to particular life moments.

For example, the concepts of "human", "water", "seed" or "chair" refer to all instances of these entities there are, have been or ever will be, in fact or fiction. Humanity can thus think in terms of these timeless entities and properties and their derivatives and plan in terms of them. The permanent entities designated by concepts are what Saul Kripke (1940 -) has named "natural kinds". There may be disagreements about what these things and properties are, but this core nature of a concept or a universal is incontrovertible.

6.12. Beneath Nominalism and Realism: Reconnecting Concepts to the Life-Ground

A concept does not, however, entail a transcendental absolute, an idea in the mind of God, or an eternal form separate from and transcending the particulars it unifies - as philosophical Idealists since Plato have thought. Nor, on the other hand, are words or concepts mere "veils of illusion" or blocks to unmediated awareness - as philosophers of India since the *Upanishads* and the *Dhammapada* have claimed.

Concepts are words which unify particulars under one name or idea which refers to what these perceived particulars *have in common*, and sound *criteria* are the essential requirement of their exact meaning. The age-old mystifications and controversies around concepts - that they are magical syllables compelling divine favor, transcendental eternal forms of which material entities are imperfect appearances, inherently misleading lines of partiality blocking higher awareness, mere names without truth or reality beyond convenience, the ultimate object of philosophy's analysis, and so on - are inferences *from* their defining nature which life-value onto-axiology treats as such. Philosophers' preoccupation with received competing interpretations of them derives from a deeper ground of meaning which is not identified: the power of concepts nowhere found in Nature which enables the creation and communication of limitless meanings and constructs across selves, time and place and death itself.

6.12.1. Nominalism versus Realism

Philosophies have focused instead on the abstract ontological status of concepts with two schools dominant, one reifying them as autonomous forms in a higher realm of reality (hence "Realism"), and the other debunking them as merely names without objective grounds (hence "Nominalism"). This polarity of positions has been a central issue of debate from Plato through medieval scholasticism into contemporary metaphysics. "Nominalists" are those who think words are merely useful tools which refer to nothing beyond the particulars they designate. "Realists" are those who hold that universal terms like "good" or "table" designate something real that transcends their instances, as Platonists think, *or* an inseparable "essence" of them, as Aristotelians and Thomists think.

Life-value onto-axiology goes underneath these either-or disjunctions to identify the complementary partial truths of their positions.

6.12.2. Underneath Linguistic Philosophy in Meaning Determination

Life-value onto-axiology concurs with the nominalist rejection of concepts as transcendental pure forms, but at the same time rejects the dominant nominalist position of Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) who denies there can be even criteria for concepts: arguing that there are only different uses in different contexts with no common meaning. This is Wittgenstein's canonical theory of "language games" in his *Philosophical Investigations* (1957).

In contrast, life-value philosophy requires exact criteria of basic concepts and their referents as regulating meanings without which thought and action can be dangerously lost in a relativist swamp of 'anything goes' in manifold games of language usage - one of the great problems of the world today. When words come to mean only what their users think sells best, for example, a meta-shift of meaning in global market culture, some value compass is required not to sell off truth in accordance with dominant language games. Wittgensteinian theory, however, "leaves everything as it is" while denying the legitimacy of criteria to tell true from false or bad from good. This is all part of the relativist drift of meaning of the twentieth century, and neither mainstream philosophy nor its linguistic schools have recognized the deadly problem.

Rising disasters from criterionless discourses call for deeper investigation into the underlying value syntax *of* the language games themselves. This onto-axiological level of meaning is, however, ruled out by linguistic method itself. Theory again fits ruling power like a glove.

6.12.3. Usage Not Enough

Gautama Buddha used the term “convenient designation” for concepts and words, a description with which Ludwig Wittgenstein implicitly agrees 2400 years later. A concept is not something mysterious whose definition solves problems, Wittgenstein argues, but “a tool” to be used in different ways to suit the “language game” being played.

Yet life-value understanding of concepts as ideas which unify various particulars under a name for what they have in common demands analysis goes deeper than language-game tools. There must be some coherence with terrestrial reality or, more exactly, with objective life necessity. This is why life-value onto-axiology moves beneath both what Buddha and Wittgenstein contend a concept is, a mere name within language usage (nominalism), and what the opposite pole of belief contends, that a concept is a real and eternal “universal” dwelling autonomously in a supra-sensible sphere or divine mind (platonian idealism).

It endorses the theory of “natural kinds” which holds that there are permanent forms of nature for which universals are “rigid designators”, a position which is in accord with modern science. Yet it is by now clear that *more* than natural kinds are universals - namely, the unlimitedly valid standard of life-value itself. It provides natural kinds with corresponding value meaning for their reproduction and flourishing, re-setting stationary kinds to dynamic meaning through time.

6.12.4. Value Universals: the Grounding Regulators of Thought

Recognition of the *life-value universal* - to wit, the primary axiom of value - is what life-value onto-axiology provides and defines - one might say the eternal form of all value that exists or can exist. Yet it does not subsist in a in a transcendental realm or divine mind (like Platonic or Neo-Platonic Forms), nor is it a physical type (like Natural Kinds), nor is it a mere name or sortal category (as in Nominalism). It is the missing first principle and measure of all worth.

6.13. Concepts Construct A Ruling Plane of Life in the Biosphere

Concepts themselves require no reification or mystification to recognize the powers of human thinking *in terms of types* rather than material immediacy alone. All language and knowledge depend on these concept universals for their every step. Reason and science of all kinds are constructed of them as the set-points of modern meaning, method, and communication. Everyday assumption, however, is apt to overlook the new plane of terrestrial existence which human concepts form in the planetary biosphere and their determination of the world to good or evil construction. Concepts, laws and the regulating value syntax they express have, indeed, become the ultimately governing

system of planetary reproduction itself. This is the bridging truth of idealism and materialism which philosophy loses in opposing them.

6.13.1. The Ruling Thought System behind the Mega-Machine

Yet if this regulating order is progressively decoupled from the needs of life support systems and of humanity itself by its regulating value syntax, it leads to disastrous outcomes in proportion to its material powers of violating organic and ecological sequences of reproduction. In the case of the money-sequence system and the knowledge powers it funds and deploys, the inner logic of their development *together* is what is most importantly unexamined. Ever-advancing scientific conceptions are structured for control and prediction (the means) to serve and universalize the money-sequence value system (the ruling end) as the reigning order of mind and decision. Yet the human and institutional agents following its order become locked into it by assuming its system of meaning and value to be imposed by the external world it regulates through them. This is the system fetishism which binds societies across ages and now the globe itself.

Jointly operating on ever-increasing scales of globalization, the totalizing money-value order is conceived by even critics as a ‘world mega-machine’ which seems to rule on its own.

6.13.2. Life-Value Concept Structures: The Permanent Evolution

On the other hand, the concepts themselves and the knowledges they inform are not ultimately bound by the ruling value system they serve. Scientific laws of soil fertility, potable water and sewers, organic hygiene, building materials and structures, energy use and electricity, and so on are all structures of conception whose regulating principles outlast their controlling system of power. These organizing ideas of the human thought field’s long evolution are humanity’s ultimate means of material advance. They form a rule-governed understanding passed through generations in ever more inclusive feedback loops of material comprehension.

Humanity’s cumulative knowledge store has already grown past fallen empires, cultural divisions and the organic deaths of almost all those contributing to it. However both transcendental idealizations and materialist eliminations of this regulating idea-substance of the world have failed to penetrate the life-blind value syntax governing its decision structures. Unguided by life-value compass, their operationalization can continue to despoil the life support systems the ruling value syntax is blind to. Or humanity can advance by life-coherent purpose and method, “the life-value turn” spelled out in the final chapters of this study. This is humanity’s meta-choice and ultimate power. The human thought-field is the decision space. It is not confined to immediate identity with the organism or to instinctual repertoires. Its capacities for complex inter-communication by universals, cumulative evolution of tool extensions, and transformations of individual and collective organization can go either direction. Human thought forms have thus come to order the world, and their socially regulating value sequence decides how.

6.13.3. The Godlike Powers of Words

Humanity's new level of terrestrial being is the demystified meaning of "made in the image of God". Consider the godlike qualities of universal concepts which explains their susceptibility to magical thinking. Word concepts are immaterial in their regulating meaning. They have capacity for sovereign direction of the world. They can be deathless in meaning across civilizations and millennia. And throughout they operate across and beyond the divisions and limits of the spatially limited materiality of other terrestrial being. While humanity already lives on this plane of symbol universals, life-value onto-axiology is the missing compass of direction.

6.14. The Tragic Flaw of the Symbol-Ruled Species

The potentially fatal problem emerges when conceptual constructions serve a ruling value system whose demands override objective organic and ecological system requirements. The generic disorder here is *reification* – conceiving ideas as self-subsistent powers. At the macro level, it can turn system-fixed ideas into ghost-forms ruling over peoples as their ultimate standard of value meaning. No life-disconnected frame of thinking has been more persistent across civilizations. It has endured since ancient Egyptian and Hindu priests ruled societies by incanting sacred syllables and sequences as god-compelling magical forces that others must serve and die for.

The contemporary world has not overcome this inherited disorder. Slogans are reified as ruling powers to human life is accountable, rather than the other way round. Detached from the living world as autonomous realities above human choice, their demands override life necessity itself. We know this well enough from myriad sacrificial rounds in which endless natural and human beings are stripped of their lives to serve god constructions. Consider today the magic syllables of "freedom", "productivity" and "development" which designate a god-system's demands to consign countless millions of people to impoverishment, disease and death with not gain but loss of life means. Regulating every step is a man-made symbol system.

6.14.1. Philosophical Therapies

Philosophers have rarely provided a therapy to thought-system disorders at the social level. They too normally presuppose its value syntax as their framework of meaning. Yet we can recognize system worship by a life-value criterion: *when its value sequences displace life means provision as the regulators of material reproduction itself*. While the money-value system has been long opposed at the level of private capital ownership on the external level, the ultimate disorder in the ruling thought syntax itself has not been identified.

Instead, life-decoupled money markers and their sequences rule as perceived orders of necessity with human beings and natural life systems as the engineered functions of their expansion. Mantras of "growth and prosperity", "productive force development and economic laws" command mechanical sequences which rule societies in disconnection from organic and ecological life needs. Just as the fetish-god of a tribe can replace the life of the tribe as what is revered, so too can a reified value-syntax in

the civilized world.

6.14.2. Value-System Symbols Substitute for Life and Life Means

While we may easily recognize the life disconnection of a fetish object, a ruling value syntax is self-concealing. It is built into the mind as the regulator of its ideas: as, for example, the absurd equation of quantities of money-marker exchanges to the well-being of a people's material lives. When the symbols or markers are substituted for the reality in such *value-system reification*, the regulating order may become so decoupled from the means and conditions of people's existence that it depredates both in their name, as in the incantation of "higher standards of *living*" for more commodities sold. Ultimately this is a problem of deranged thought structure, but cannot be seen if it regulates thinking itself.

When the ruling thought system is closed, the mind itself comes to be understood as a machine and its sequences as laws of nature.

6.14.3. Thought's Meta-Choice: Life-System Connection or Disconnection

When they are life coherent, in contrast, concepts and images are connected to objective life-value referents, from clean water and air to lyric tropes. When disconnected, the ruling ideas and living world come apart. If, for example, a ruling symbol system is confined to internal relations between its pecuniary signs and equations, they regulate with no connection to life coordinates. This is their rigor of metric and deductive necessity. Money demand thus stands in for people's needs to abstract out life means a-priori. .

Thus we may understand why when climate destabilization occurs by carbon-effluent overloading of the atmosphere following from the life-blind symbol sequences, solution can only be conceived in terms of money-sequence markets of pollution rights. Re-setting economic reason to criteria of life coherence is inconceivable. Prior to ruling-class interests, the ruling value-symbol system is the syntax of acceptable thought.

6.14.4. Life-Disconnected Symbolic Systems: The Tragic Flaw of the Species

Since concepts are ideas which abstract from the particular entities they subsume and exclude, they have opposing possibilities of life value. They emancipate human thought from submersion in the moving physical present, but also permit it to become blind to life means.

In our era, the regulating money-value system is presupposed as necessitated by economic laws, and so rules out alternative conceptions, as spelled out earlier in *The Global Crisis of Values*. Thought and decision are made consistent with the money-value sequence, or they are selected out. Insofar as this thought-system rules against any alternative form of life, any non-conforming order is perceived as the enemy. As George Orwell narratively describes in *1984* (published in 1948, but widely refused publication before and since), a totalitarian thought system "makes any alternative mode of thought unimaginable".

What makes it evil it is not only the totalization of one thought program, but its blindness to life value itself. Such a program may always be objectively recognized by these generic properties.

6.15. How We Know the Internal Value of Any Thought System

Conceptual thought like image thought admits are measurable in terms of the life-range metric. That is, in the first instance, *thought of any kind is greater in value in proportion to the range of phenomena it comprehends.*

6.15.1. Examples in Physics and Logic

Einsteinian physics (1879-1959), for example, is of more value than Newtonian physics (1642-1727) to the extent that its laws subsume a wider range of natural phenomena (e.g. extra-terrestrial events), and thereby explain anomalies which the latter cannot explain (e.g. that the velocity of an object is not absolute, but relative to the rigid reference body from which it is measured).

In accordance with the same principle, mathematical and logical theories advance when they take into account what other theories do not - for example, "Gödel's theorem" which proves the incompleteness of mathematics by showing there is no sound system in which every mathematical truth is deducible. This theorem proves what is often overlooked, that mathematical truth is ultimately unprovable. Given that mathematics is itself often reified as a higher order of understanding to which all knowledge must submit to be valid, Gödel's finding has significance beyond its formal contribution - it identifies the inherent limits of mathematics.

6.15.2. Evaluation of Concept Formations across Domains

Consider the following general principles of value-judgment which regulate the main regions of concept-thought beneath axiological awareness.

- (1) Any conceptual tradition, A, is superior to any other tradition, B, if A can solve problems and anomalies in B that B cannot solve utilizing the resources available to its tradition.
- (2) Any political policy is better than any other political policy to the degree that it takes more into account of the resources and the interests available for its implementation, and more comprehensively promotes the well-being of those who are affected by it.
- (3) Any interpretation of literature demonstrates its superiority to any other interpretation to the extent that the depth and breadth of the textual significations its meaning subsumes is more encompassing than its rivals.

6.15.3. The Unifying Meta-Principle of Thought Evaluation

In every case, *the value of thought's conceptions is proportionate to the coherent inclusiveness of the range of comprehension of phenomena it enables.* The narrower its range and depth of conception, the less value it has to understanding; while the broader

and deeper its coherent comprehension, the more it has. Again, the philosophical method of *thought experiment* assists critical understanding. Seek to find any true judgment of any thought, position or theory to which this universal principle of value judgment does not apply.

Conversely, thought constructions which are merely consistent with themselves in self-referential elaboration are of no value beyond that, of disvalue to the extent that they are life-blind in ordering and implementation, and evil to the extent that their violation of life requirements is systematic in depth and range.

6.15.4. A Recurrent Historical Derangement of Ruling Thought Systems

In general, human evil in the world is driven by life-incoherent thought systems - humanity's profoundest problem. Yet across the ages it has been invisible to those who internalize the ruling framework of meaning and value as given. This is the reason why an ultimate ground of life-value is required to evaluate symbolic systems themselves.

Such a second-order ground of value has been lacking. Internal criticism within thought systems is common and even pervasive, but only so far as it is consistent with assumed first principles. The free press, for example, is never so free as to question the money-capitalist order. Nor do linguistic philosophers question linguistic method. Nonetheless second-order examination of assumed premises is necessarily deeper and wider in comprehension. This is what philosophy is meant to do and does at its best – the meaning of “the examined life” first proposed by Socrates.

Unthinking repertoire, in contrast, is as instinct is to the beast or herd. It is the hidden danger of the symbolic species. Once supposed as given by laws of nature, divine author or external necessity *inconsistent with life requirements*, a thought system is locked into life-blindness. This is the recurrent derangement of the human mind across history and cultures.

6.15.5. Evaluating Superiority and Inferiority of Ways of Thinking

Principles of value judgment here are straightforward. The more closed a thought regime is to examination of itself, the more dogmatic it is as a thought framework. Conversely, the more it opens to more inclusively coherent conceptions, the better it objectively is – for example, the Copernican versus the Ptolemaic theory, even before officially sanctioned. The principle of evaluation is impartial across time and schools of thought.

At the level of daily life, consider how the primary axiom of value applies before and after the grip of racist and sexist stereotypes on people's thinking. The reigning thought system is more open and coherent in conception, and enables the fields of life to become more comprehensive in felt being and action. It is objectively better on all life fields of measure. The logic of these conclusions is self-evident once specified. As philosophers put it, “it fits with intuitions”. Yet the life-value measure has been continuously obscured by partialities of conception which perpetually bedevil the human mind. When the first premises of how we think and live are grounded in the universal life support

systems of consciousness itself, the blinkers fall away.

6.15.6. Always Degrees of Better and Worse

When value judgment is thought through, it does not prescribe or assert “good” or “bad” *simpliciter* regarding states of affairs. Rather (1) life-value always admits of *degrees* of measure, more or less in all parameters of life fields, and (2) its judgments always adopt a clear reference body from which judgment is made (e.g., a value performance with respect to this or that life range and dates in time).

Typically, however, this *reference body of value judgment* is not specified in value judgments or thought systems. Thus absolute judgments of good and bad are unmoored in any spatio-temporal context and become fixed by habit - the tenacious moral inertia across cultures and times. In contrast, life-value consciousness is a process which involves thought, felt-being and action fields at once. Thus if a more coherently comprehensive thought system governs so as to enable all fields of life (for example, the germ theory and hygienic practice in everyday life sustained by life-protective public regulation and health practice at a daily level), life becomes objectively better in the world by the measure of the life enabled by it compared to without it – as before and after bubonic and cholera plagues. Conversely, what prevents or destroys this common life good is evil – that is, life-value destructive - to the extent that it does so and in accord with the reference body of judgment. Behind both directions of objective good and ill lies the social value sequence selecting for it.

In fact, societies as well as individuals are continually in the process of deciding in which direction they advance or regress. A major problem has been that false flaggings of pandemics and terrors, cures and methods escalate when they net private profits. Yet here too, life-value compass tells true from false threats and cures.

6.16. The Core Disorder of Contemporary Thought: Life-Blind Rationality

Behind epidemic of confusions lies a confusion about the nature of reason itself. At the unexamined core of ruling models of “rational choice” is an axiomatic principle which is unexamined. It is taken for granted as the first principle of rational thought, however badly it leads in the world. From neoclassical economics to contractarian and decision theory to public policy determination, a life-blind standard rules. Even Marxian revolutionary critique assumes it as the regulating logic of class struggle on both proletarian and capitalist sides.

All presuppose without question, that is, *that consistent self-maximization is the equivalent of rational thought itself.*

6.16.1. Limitless Self-Maximization as Reason

This ruling assumption of over a century of theory is perfectly expressed in the capitalist-market order whose every decision space assumes self-maximization in money or priced commodity terms as the sovereign driver of thought and action. *Homo economicus*, as David Gauthier approvingly observes in *Morals By Agreement* (1986),

“*always wants more*”. Twentieth-century economic and political theory in general also presuppose this principle as axiomatic, as do evolutionary biology and behaviorist psychology. It is the meta-program of the age.

This meta-program of thought is tracked in the organizing principles of contemporary justice theory and their alternative in *Deep Principles of Justice: Grounding In Life-Value Meaning*. Its binding rule by corporate globalization is shown to violate life support systems at all levels in *The Unseen Global War of Rights Systems and Its Principles of Resolution*. And both its subjugation of scientific rationality and release from its domination are explained in *Reclaiming Rationality and Scientific Method: The Life Coherence Principle as Global Imperative*.

Vilfredo Pareto, following Adam Smith, formalized this first principle of rational thought as, moreover, the producer of “optimality” (i.e., “*the best of all possible worlds*”) by self-maximizing exchanges in a “free market”. Pareto’s famous idea, first presented in the *Manual of Political Economy* (1906/1971), is what is now known as “*Pareto optimal*” (he himself used the term “*ophelimity*”) - that is, an “equilibrium” of affairs in which none can be made better off without another being made worse off. None who appeal to the principle, however - and it is incanted across disciplines – recognize that a Pareto-optimal condition is compatible with a few having all assets and the rest in debt to them. Such implications of this thought system do not compute. Formal sequencing of thought in mathematical form bewitches reason.

6.16.2. Political and Moral Philosophy: The A-Priori Given Across Domains

Not only have the disturbing implications not been tracked, but thought on justice too is bound by this ruling first premise. For notable example, John Rawls explicitly presupposes this defining principle of rationality as given in his canonical *A Theory of Justice* (1971). It is his regulating standard of reasoning from behind what he calls a “veil of ignorance” by which, he argues, any viable conception of social justice must be produced. His now much emulated procedure of reaching agreement on the good is one in which rational choosers of a social contract are life disconnected *ex hypothesi* - featureless logical spaces following self-maximizing choice as their sole standard, with no children, no interests, no goals, and no life support systems. This is a “principle familiar in social science”, as Rawls reports, and it explicitly includes “to want a larger share for oneself” (p.143). Rawls then proceeds on the basis of this principle of decision - no-one knows who s/he is - to generate a very long argument on justice in which human life needs and ecological life requirements never appear. Rather the proxy of “sufficient income” without criterion or life-ground stands in for organic and ecological life needs. That this procedure is paradigmatic across theory and policy discloses much about our wider problems.

6.16.2.1. Revealingly as well, the major *counter*-arguments disseminated across the philosophical world since Rawls are even more doctrinally life-insensitive. They come from a fellow Harvard philosopher, Robert Nozick (1938-2005), who argues in *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (1993) for repudiation of even the liberal constraints on self-maximizing property accumulation set by Rawls’ “difference principle” (i.e., that the worst should be made more well-off by more wealth to the rich). Few observe that

Rawls' position itself is a theoretical correlative of "trickle-down theory" propounded by the rich too. Rawls and Nozick's positions have been studied as the core of contemporary political philosophy across America and elsewhere since their publication.

6.16.3. Narrowing the Range of Thought to Consistency with Ruling Value System

Within the scope of this ruling debate about ultimate principles of justice, three mind-locks hold:

- (1) rationality is equated to consistent self-maximization;
- (2) agreement or disagreement occur within bounds of inquiry in which the life requirements of people, other species and their environments are boxed out;
- (3) the pro and con positions do not criticize money capitalism, but justify it in direct or indirect ways.

The thought space for debate is thus radically narrowed to argument for inherited-property and money-accumulation right with no limit *versus* a principle of helping the least advantaged which is not easily distinguishable from an idealized rationalization of trickle-down benefits for the poor (that is, by others' receiving more income as an incentive to produce more wealth to benefit the least). Grounding agreement lies in the ruling idea that those having more are justified in having it: either by original title with no limit (Nozick and company), *or* by the bigger social pie they create with more money incentive (Rawls and company). Political philosophy of record over 40 years has by and large assumed these parameters of debate.

All seek to self-maximize *as* rationality - to get as much as s/he consistently can. One *a-priori* seeks not only a larger share, but a share with no upper bound. Orthodox economic theory, from which the principle comes, hypostacizes it as an economic law. The equation of rationality to self-seeking is in these ways presupposed as given across disciplines and domains: with contractarian philosophy, decision theory and neoclassical economics specifying it as an axiom of reason itself. Organic and ecological life requirements do not factor into any version of this ruling thought structure across theory, policy and practice.

6.16.4. Thinking about Values and the Regulating Value Syntax

The ruling paradigms of reasoned choice on how to live are thus operate within a regulating thought frame which is life-blind, but unnamed. That is, the ultimate requirements and values of upbringing the next generation, providing for the universal human necessities of life, and conserving environmental hosts through ecological time are defined out without notice.

At the most generic level of theory and everyday life, a *ruling value syntax* governs which is not visible to those who presuppose it. The regulating structure of its subject, verb and modifiers remains constant beneath myriad expressions through time. In money capitalism, thus, the subject is money capital, its verb is to become more without limit, and its modifiers are money-demand value or equivalents: with competing money capital subjects and the human and natural resources they purchase, exchange and

dispose of always used to become *more* money capital. *Rationality* in this onto-axiological grammar, in turn, is regulatively presupposed in five moments submerged in one imperative of self-serving value gain presupposed since Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and John Locke (1632-1704). Analysis discloses five steps of assumption here which are not distinguished:

- (i) Self-maximizing strategies in
- (ii) Conditions of scarcity or conflict over
- (iii) Desired payoffs at
- (iv) Minimum costs for the self to
- (v) win/gain more.

6.16.5. The Evolutionary-Economic Thought Axis

This is the thought syntax of “rationality” regulating the world today. It is assumed without question, and market theory and evolutionary biology are variations of its search program. Both models are governed by (i) to (v) as the inner logic of their *joint value axis* (as introduced in Sections 1.7.1, 4.2, and 5.15.1) This a-priori sequence of assumptions is tracked as both a formalist meta-program and a ruling way of life in the chapters referred to in 16.3.

This is the ruling value syntax of modernity. It governs contemporary human consciousness as a frame of mind which is presupposed beneath question. It is most militantly expressed in the regulating assumptions of neo-market doctrine and neo-Darwinian biology where only what conforms to (i) to (v) can be seen in man or beast. Its inner logic thus forms a *biological-economic axis of ideation* which forms the ruling onto-axiology of the age. Its doctrinal meta-program is re-set to life coherence step by step in Section 12.5.

This underlying onto-axiological syntax is not identified nor understood *as* what it is because it is assumed as given by laws of nature and reason at once - the ultimate structure of presupposition which explanation engages at various levels through this study. Two lines of thought experiment reveal its instituted grip on the mind:

- (1) Seek to find clear *exception* to its regulation in any ruling decision structure across institutions and domains of power; and
- (2) Seek to identify any social or ecological world problem for which its regulators do *not* select.

Everyday moral intuitions may psychologize the disorder of this ruling value syntax as “greed”, but this surface truth overlooks how limitless self-maximization is built into this thought structure’s criterion of *rationality* and its globalizing normality of rule.

6.16.6. The Underlying War of Value Systems

Humanity’s evolved *thinking vocation* entails an opposite set of regulating principles, but their pursuit is overridden by the ruling value syntax. That is, the five moments of higher learning and research are governed by opposed value principles which are ruled

out in the market, and increasingly selected against even in the academy:

- (i) *To maximize learning advance as purpose by*
- (ii) *Knowledge sharing without limit for*
- (iii) *Understanding as value in itself at*
- (iv) *Any cost of difficulty to*
- (v) *Develop humanity's more inclusive comprehension of natural and human phenomena.*

Insofar as the money-sequence syntax of value subordinates human thought to its demands, these principles of human learning and research are ruled out - along with, over time, evolved academic freedom. That is, the sovereign value and purpose, relational method, and cost-benefit understanding of higher education and research themselves are made to serve the money-value system as the ultimately regulating syntax of knowledge growth and application.

6.17. The Life Coherence Principle: The Missing Standard of Reason

Rationality has long been the central normative concept of the thought field and regarded as the proper guide of civilization by the sciences and philosophy. If life-coherent rationality and decision is understood and observed, this privileged place as the proper pilot of humanity is well justified. Yet if its purpose and method is systematically mutated as in (i) to (v), the worst may result without humanity's knowing what has gone wrong. Unexamined regulating presuppositions invert the very structure of what reason seeks to know and how.

6.17.1. Two Modes of Consistency as Rational Inquiry

When all is said and done, the nature of rational thought has nothing to do with pecuniary self-maximization. Its first principles have long been uncontroversial in science and philosophy, They are forms of coherence or consistency between statements and facts *and* between statements themselves. These form the criterial core of all modern science, cognitive disciplines and truth seeking in general.

6.17.1.1. Received Standards of Reason Are Life-System Blind

While there are vast differences in emphasis and methods of consistency between claim and facts (the correspondence principle) and among assertions themselves (the coherence principle), they usually have one major deficit in common which makes them vulnerable to exploitation and distortion by the money-value syntax. Almost all are indifferent to life requirements. Empirical science is most essentially concerned with correspondence between facts and claims. Yet if disputes and agreements focus on this standard alone, whether the factual inquiry and results enable or disable life is irrelevant. The dismal record of science in serving any funder follows from this deficit.

Logic and contemporary philosophy, on the other hand, are typically indifferent to 'empirical questions in preoccupation with *consistency among propositions or claims*. Whether they have life-value or not is again beside the point. Indeed *inconsistency* with life ordering is a convention of academic philosophy's inquiries. Arguments across

areas redound with life-contradictory hypotheses - minds with no bodies, split memories and double identities, life-impossible assumptions of space colonies and time travel, concepts of justice with no relationship to organic human beings, signifiers with no signifieds, and - in general - elaborate conceptual edifices with no life-system referents.

In general, the issue of whether goals of research serve life sequences as opposed to money sequences simply does not arise. Their meanings are conflated. “Bring it to market” has become the post-1990 rule of the academy itself. Accordingly, the lion’s share of research funding now goes to what corporations seek for private profit with no regard to objective life requirements, even the reproduction of life support systems themselves.

6.17.2. Validity by the Life Coherence Principle

Concept thought as we have seen is constructed of unifying ideas which enable almost all provision of life-value on which humanity depends. Yet when regulating symbol systems are life-decoupled and generate directives blind to life requirements, cumulatively destructive consequences follow. How are such problems to be met if rationality means only consistency with the evidence and other claims without taking account organic and ecological life needs?

The answer to this question has universal applicability to human reason. It is *the principle of life coherence*. To formulate its meaning in maximally concise terms, it is thinking which proceeds in accordance with:

- (1) Reliable evidence and
- (2) Valid inferences
- (3) *To enable rather than disable life and life-systems.*

This set of criteria yields validity in all domains of science and philosophy, and it constitutes the process of truth by human reasoning. Much of the analysis ahead will rely on these defining criteria of rationality and cognitive thought in general.

6.17.3. The Necessity of the Life Coherence Principle of Rationality

In truth, none of these three requirements of reason can be denied without absurdity. It cannot be rational to ignore or flout empirical evidence. Nor to be inconsistent among the claims which are affirmed. Nor to follow a life-blind course of assertion. Yet reason’s three-fold requirement of consistency with facts *and* other statements *and* life-coherent direction is not normally satisfied.

The life-coherence requirement is typically dropped out. It is not built into method as the other two requirements of consistency are, and it is blinkered out a-priori by the ruling value syntax.

Yet a version of principle (3) is already implicit in good science. It is negatively satisfied by the *precautionary principle* when it is followed: with the onus of proof falling on the party introducing any method or product which might cause harm. This

prescription is as old as the “do no harm” principle of the ancient Hippocratic oath for medical doctors. Yet it is increasingly overridden a-priori by the ruling value syntax of the global market. In its place is the private-corporate code of “managed risk” which is perfectly consistent with doing harm, as the concept of “risk” entails.

Analysis will re-enter this life-and-death issue of reason, truth and ethics in substantive depth the concluding sections of this study.

6.17.4. From Reasoned Thought to the Felt Side of Being: The Meta-Problem

Reason is all very well, many readers may respond, but what people *feel* is another matter. As the most eminent philosopher of English-speaking modernity, David Hume (1711-76) asserts in his *Treatise on Human Nature*: “Reason is the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them” (2.3.3.4). More deeply, the global market of which he is an intellectual harbinger is understood as good because it serves these passions and wants with consumer objects of choice. Still further, this global system is propelled by the limitless desire for more money as the nature of capitalist competition to which developed societies have been bound as if to an iron hoop. How then can the life coherence principle in particular, and life-value ontology in general, be consistent with the feeling life of humanity?

6.17.4.1. Introducing the Great Reduction of Feeling Life

As we see ahead in *Good and Evil Within: Opening the Terra Incognita of the Felt Side of Being*, philosophies across schools have supposed with convention the feeling side of life as the animal side of humanity, irrational by nature, fixed in unconscious drives or otherwise devalored as blindly partial. Tied by human nature and ruling system alike to self-seeking animal impulsions, a life-coherent feeling life by choice is blocked out of understanding.

The best humanity can do, it has been concluded, is to manage humanity’s insatiable desires within the resolving mechanism of “the market’s invisible hand” which transforms private avarice into “the motor of human progress”. This has been the ultimate ruling answer to the human predicament since before 1776, the year of publication of Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations* and the American Revolution. What analysis explains ahead, however, is that the felt side of human being has been radically reduced from Plato to Psychoanalysis by metaphysical presuppositions which assume away its vast elective field of inner life and the intrinsically good and evil directions in which it can choose to go. To this unmapped value field of feeling life - “where we live” - exposition now turns.

Glossary

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

Analytic An umbrella term covering any school or method of philosophy for which logical rigor and distinctions are prioritized and

- philosophy:** referents restricted to linguistic entities.
- Anti-foundationalism:** A generic term for the dominant trend of philosophy over the recent century whose unifying characteristic is denial of any universal truths or values.
- A-priori:** Derived independently of sense experience e.g., $2+2=4$. Truth by definition and tautological deduction is the mathematical model, but presuppositions are often falsely assumed a-priori.
- A-posteriori:** “After the fact”, dependent on sense experience. Agent-relative - A standard philosophical term signifying individual choice as in “agent-relative ethics” which assumes that value agency is confined to individuals.
- Axiology:** From the Greek, *axioma*, “what is thought to be worthy”, the ultimate category of value reason, ideally building from rationally self-evident bases or *axioms* of value a complete system of value (aesthetic, epistemological, moral, etc.) with unlimited validity across domains. See also **Onto-axiology**
- Capital:** Wealth that can be used to produce more wealth without loss by consumption or waste.
- Capitalism:** See Money Sequence of value and Value Syntax.
- Civil commons:** A unifying concept to designate social constructs which enable universal access to life goods. Life support systems are civil commons so far as society protects and enables their reproduction and provision for all members.
- Coherence theory of truth:** That a belief is true so far as it is consistent with a whole system of beliefs. See Life coherence principle.
- Correspondence theory of truth:** In general, the ancient idea that claims must correspond to facts to be true. This idea has given rise to questions about what are the criteria of “facts” and “correspondence”, to which the reigning answer is scientific confirmation. See Validity.
- Collective agency:** A concept which is little understood in philosophy and the social sciences which dominantly focus on, respectively, agent-relative methods of analysis or aggregates of individual choices. It is best understood by the rule systems people (s) make or follow.
- Common life interest:** A concept which disambiguates the categories of “the common interest”, “the public interest”, and so on to specify what these concepts normally omit, the shared life support systems of all.
- Deep ecology:** A movement founded by Arne Naess whose leading ideas against environmental resourcism are that “the well-being and flourishing of non-human life have value in themselves independent of their usefulness for human purposes” and “humans have no right to reduce the richness and diversity of life forms except to satisfy vital needs” (a term left undefined).

- Determinism:** A problematic term typically, but falsely, counterposed to freedom of choice. The meaning adopted by life-ground ontology is to delimit (de-terminate) a known range of material possibility within which individual or collective choices can occur otherwise put, individual and social freedom of choice within material limits.
- Development:** A central term of value in contemporary global discourse which does not distinguish between opposed forms of development or growth - for example, more commodities sold for profit (market development/growth) and more means of life available for people's lives (human development/growth).
- Dualism:** A central and controversial doctrine in philosophy in which reality is conceived as divided into two unbridgeable and incommensurable orders of being – primarily, mind and body, *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, the dualism instituted in modern Western philosophy by Descartes. Related forms of dualism have been perpetual in philosophy since the ancients - spirit-matter, man-nature, temporal-eternal, appearance-reality, and reason-emotion.
- Either-or reduction:** A regulating structure of normative thinking which assumes the logical form of *p or not-p* (“the excluded middle”) thereby is eliminating the range of other value possibilities, including degrees of each in mutual inclusion.
- Epistemology:** This is a central field of philosophy concerned with the nature, grounds and limits of knowledge a generally unrecognized realm of value judgment and theory insofar as judgments rest on elective norms of “true” and “false” and “valid” and “invalid”.
- Ethics:** That which is concerned with what is good and bad in human action, including competing positions of utilitarianism, deontological/formalist/duty ethics, emotivism/non-cognitivism, evolutionary ethics, intuitionism, naturalism, perfectionism, phenomenological ethics, postmodern ethics, subjectivism/pluralism/relativism, self-realization/teleological ethics, and virtue ethics. Perhaps the most enduring received meta-ethical debate is between consequentialism (judging by consequences, e.g., utilitarianism) and non-consequentialism (judging by the intrinsic principle of judgment and action e.g., Platonism and Kantianism). Moral philosophy is often equated to Ethics, but is in principle more restricted in reference to ought-to statements which entail prescriptions or prohibitions whose violation is thought to deserve guilt or punishment.
- Existentialism:** Classically defined by Jean-Paul Sartre as “existence precedes essence”, which means that human choice of what one does (existence) precedes any set fate, determinism, role or external design (essence) ruling out this choice, with those denying their

responsibility of choice as guilty of “bad faith” (*mauvais fois*).

Fields of life value: This concept refers to the fields of thought (concept and image), felt side of being (sentient and affective), and action (organic movement through space-time), the triune parametric of all value whatever as explained by the Primary Axiom of Value.

Idealism: In philosophy, not a moral or political category, but one to denote an onto-axiological system which holds ideas to be primary in explaining the world/cosmos, knowledge and value. Idealism is the longest reigning tendency in philosophy, with many philosophical schools from Plato on, normally opposed to **Materialism**.

Inclusivity principle: The more coherently inclusive the taking account of in thought, feeling and action, the higher the value understanding.

Intentionality: A central supposition of twentieth-century philosophy, most of all associated with Phenomenology, that consciousness or mind always has a referent or is *about* something.

Intrinsic and instrumental value: What is a good in itself and what is good as a means.

Life-blind norms: A characteristic tendency of the ruling value systems of established societies and of their received ideologies to blinker out the life-disabling effects of their regulating principles.

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.

Life-ground: Most simply expressed, all the conditions required to take your next breath. Axiologically understood, all the life support systems required for human life to reproduce or develop.

Life sequence of value: The process whereby anybody of life becomes more life by means of life a process which admits of regressive, reproductive and progressive modes and degrees, each measurable by the criteria of more/less fields of life enabled or enjoyed through time.

Life standards: Those principles and laws which protect and enable human and ecological life systems.

Life-value measure: more/less life range in any field of life (thought, felt being or action).

Life-value onto-axiology: A value-system which regards life and means of life to more coherently comprehensive ranges of life as the sole real good, including the life support systems required to enable this process.

Linguistic The dominant tendency of philosophy to decouple language from

- idealism:** its referents within autonomous and self-referential discourses.
- Linguistic turn:** Major philosophical movement of the twentieth century associated with the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein, but moving far beyond Wittgenstein and his school in its influence (e.g., anti-foundationalism, postmodernism). By confining philosophical problems and discourse to issues of language or sign systems, the l.t. implicitly disconnects philosophy and reflective inquiry from the material problems of the world.
- Marxism/Marxian:** The theory of historical materialism which argues that the material mode of production of any society determines its legal, political and ideological forms (including morality), and that all significant change (including values) is by laws of development of productive forces outgrowing their ownership integument. (See Marx, **Bibliography**).
- Materialism:** In philosophy, not the popular idea of an acquisitive ethic, but of a broader onto-axiology which is also anti-acquisitive – as with Mo Tzu, Helvetius and Marx over 2300 years. Opposed to idealism, it means materiality (space-time occupancy) alone is real and determining, with organic intelligence and scientific method determining legitimate knowledge.
- Measures of life value:** These refer to the ranges of the fields of life value which are maintained, gained or lost at the margins in reference to a prior or compared state (e.g., at the collective level, literacy rate growth, caloric and protein intake compared to health requirements, and housing ratios per capita to ratios of able-bodied citizens to available meaningful work of value to others). Life-value measure is applicable to phenomena in any life-field or domain by identification of more/less range of life capacity through time.
- Mechanism:** Doctrines according to which all phenomena are matter in motion or governed and predictable by physics-like laws. See also **Mechanical reduction**.
- Mechanical reduction:** Whatever reduces life or life-systems to mechanical systems so as to rule out non-mechanical life properties (e.g., the irreversibility of life processes, non-substitutability of constituents, or fields of internal life).
- Mega-machine:** In onto-axiological terms, a system that runs by a-priori technical formulae disconnected from life needs to reorganize the world to fit a life-blind global system as transitory constitutive functions.
- Meta-Ethics:** The study of the nature of moral judgment conventionally preoccupied with the logical status of ought and taxonomies of competing theories in exclusion of substantive moral issues.
- Metaphysics:** The ultimately regulating principles of existence (ontology) and knowledge (epistemology) which typically lack grounding in universal life support systems of causation, choice and identity

- Money sequence of value:** Using anything whatever as means (including money derivatives) to turn private money sums into greater quantities in reiterated choice paths of money-value adding.
- Natural kinds:** A concept introduced by Saul Kripke to refer to basic names like those for water or the human species which retain their meaning in every context whatever, and which are “rigid designators” of their referents, not merely conventional signs but necessary in all worlds.
- Nominalism:** See **Universals**.
- Objective Values:** Values which are independent of individuals’ affirming them (e.g., the values of universal life support systems).
- Primary Axiom of Value:** An axiom formally expressing the first and ultimate principle of all value and disvalue, and the measures of each across time, place or culture i.e., x is of value if and only if, and to the extent that, x consists in or enables more coherently inclusive thought/felt being/action. See also **Fields of life value**.
- Pragmatism:** An *a-posteriori* theory of knowledge and value whose defining idea is “what works”. Naturalistic, experimentalist, developmental, and instrumentalist in its various forms, it repudiates all dualisms, but like science does not answer the question ‘works for what?’
- Proceduralism:** A generic pattern of leading philosophies of value which assume that universal values can only be implicit in or decided by procedures of argument (e.g., “contractarian” models of and norms of “the ideal speech situation”), and whose rational “procedures” distinguish the different schools.
- Reification:** To regard an abstraction or concept as a self-subsistent entity; with Platonic reification an hypostasis of what is in common among particulars into an independent entity standing above them as alone ultimate and real.
- Relativism:** A generic term for the view that there are no objective or universal values because all values are by their nature relative to the contingent cultures, preferences, individuals, practices and world-views in which they are embedded.
- Ruling value system:** See **Social value system** and **Value syntax**.
- Second-order Shift:** A move from first-order value-system (e.g., to maximize pecuniary possessions or equivalents) to a second-order level of value understanding and choice within which the first-order value-system is only one regulating possibility. This is a logic of distinction which is straightforward in non-normative matters (e.g., the first-order of red and blue, and the second order of color), but not at the normative level wherever a ruling value

	program is assumed as without alternative.
Social justice:	The baseline and measure of social justice is defined by the constant principle of its opposite suffering from need by the life-capacity loss entailed by the deprivation of life means.
Social Value System:	A society's value-system which is normally presupposed by those governed by it and which ultimately regulates the decision norms and goals of a society's dominant social institutions, the individual roles within them, and the thought structures of those internalizing its regulating assumptions and conclusions. Also referred to as "ruling v.s."
Transcendental deduction:	Logical analysis in which the necessary presuppositions of the intelligibility of a claim or position are deduced as self-evident.
Universals:	Applied to general terms like 'red', 'table' or 'human being' in which an ancient debate from Plato through medieval scholasticism to philosophy today has involved the issue whether 'universals' refer to eternal forms independent of their instances ("idealism" or "realism") or are explicable as merely convenient designations for resembling particulars ("nominalism").
Universal life goods:	All goods <i>without</i> which human life capacities are reduced or destroyed (eg., breathable air, potable water, means of expression for free speech).
Validity:	From the Latin, <i>validus</i> , or strong, validity is narrowly equated in formalist traditions to inferences which are deducible from premises. A balanced understanding of validity includes this sub-type of validity, but requires for full validity consistency with evidence as well as life requirements.
Value compossibility:	Transforming formerly competing or traded-off values into synthesis yielding more coherently inclusive value.
Value neutrality:	A standard which is claimed when a value-system is so deeply taken for granted that its outcomes appear as non-normative although achieved by the regulation of strict criteria of value and value judgment (e.g., the canons of scientific method).
Value syntax:	Organizing principles of pro-and-con meaning, prescription, position and transformation which regulate a value system, but may be invisible to those who presuppose it. In the ruling value syntax of contemporary global society, the <i>subject</i> is money capital whose <i>verb</i> is seeking to become more without upper limit, and all <i>modifiers</i> are money-demand or its equivalents with competing money capital subjects and the human and natural resources they purchase, exchange and dispose of always used to become <i>more</i> money capital. Rationality in this onto-axiological grammar is regulatively presupposed as (i) self-maximizing strategies in (ii) conditions of scarcity or conflict over (iii) desired payoffs at (iv) minimum costs for the self to (v) win/gain

more.

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Includes the whole *Tao-te Ching* by Lao tzu, and canonical Ch'an Buddhist writings.]

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that grave and important task which philosophy throughout has hitherto pursued”].

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Biographical Sketch

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