

THE VALUE FIELD OF ACTION: RECONCILING HUMANITY AND THE BEAST

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Summary

This chapter analyzes the third ultimate field of value, the terrestrial life field of action. It shows why relevant theories - action theory, natural struggle for survival, vitalism, will to power, reverence for life, and ideal communication - fail to provide a coherent moral understanding of natural and human action and the common life interest of society.

8.1. From Inner Life to the Value Field of Action

“Axioms in philosophy”, says the poet John Keats in an 1818 letter, “are not axioms until they are proved upon our pulses”. The prior chapter has considered the “proof upon our pulses” of the Primary Axiom of Value - mapping the felt side of being as an ultimate field of value which can be better or worse in marginal or extreme degrees. It

can feel in horizonless harmony with the heart-mind of Buddha, or contract into the hellish pain of the rangeless point. So too we have learned that human consciousness allows for polar value possibilities between brute ignorance and locked dogma, on the one hand, and thought so reaching its conception knows no bound of coherent inclusion. Chapters *The Primary Axiom And The Life-Value Compass* and *Good And Evil Within: Opening The Terra Incognita Of The Felt Side Of Being* have thus explained the vast value fields of life within, and why they have been lost. Very well, readers may say, life-value onto-axiology has explained the value fields of inner life, but we must continually act in the world for good or ill. *What of action?*

8.1.1. Delimiting the Life Field of Action

The action field of life-value denotes all levels and types of organic action found on earth, from the insect's miraculous complexity of moving communications, reproduction and inherited food systems to the harmonized actions of co-operating complexes of vertebrates in natural formations of predation, flight and spontaneous freedom; from the movement of our own arms, trunks and legs to the orbits of our opposable thumbs and limitless meanings spoken in symbols; from the faster, stronger and more skilled feats of athletes to the election of citizens to act as governments for societies.

8.1.2. The Externalist Fallacy Repeats in the Life Field of Action

Yet most modern philosophy and science since the founding figure of Descartes (1596-1650) have denied animal action as any more than the unfeeling motions of a natural machine. This is why Descartes did not worry about nailing his wife's dog to a board – its motions were only those of an “*automaton*”. Descartes is not an exception. Over 200 years later the quintessentially scientific T.H. Huxley (1825-95) eloquently defended Descartes' model of understanding. “What proof is there”, he asked in “*On the Hypothesis that Animals Are Automata and its History*” (1874), “that brutes are other than a superior race of marionettes, which eat without pleasure, cry without pain, desire nothing, know nothing - - -?”

Descartes and Huxley commit “the externalist fallacy” explained in Section 7.6. So does most of the mainstream of science over centuries since. Yet philosopher Peter Singer has convincingly argued that actions like “writhing, yelping, or other forms of calling, attempts to avoid the source of pain, and many other signs” demand the recognition of pain in animals (1973). They are not automata, life-value onto-axiology adds, because *automata cannot act*. They perform no unprogrammed response *to* actions and can be turned on and off without resistance or withdrawal.

Yet philosophy in general has continued to conceive ‘*action*’ as human only. Behind this assumption lies a epochal devalorizing of animal actions and the infinite field of action value they bear. This is why industrialized humanity can systematically destroy this sublime life field without remorse or inhibition. Life-value that is not recognized does not exist.

8.1.3. The Intrinsic Life-Value of Sentient Action in Nature

Feeling life itself is not directly observable from outside, but there is likely no animate action at all without feeling *of* it. Experiencing the organism's action in some way is what all animate beings have in common - all *do something to keep going and feel this doing at some level*, however slightly - even the most primitive creatures feeling their way and eating rather than not. The meaning and value of *life* here begins with the feeling *of* its actions – what machines cannot do except in science fiction. The boundless biodiversity of it across terrestrial life is the intrinsic value of the whole field.

Each mode of life action is of intrinsic value *to the extent* of its sentient life ranges and the interactions it produces. This is its *measure*. Conversely, all life is reduced by any loss of being *able to act* - which every creature avoids or overcomes in action up the scale of life-value bearing. The value lies not in what the life *wants* (as explained in Section 3.5), but in what it can sentiently do in the fields of life. Life-value loss is in the loss of this life, infinitesimal or vast in meaning. Extinction of a *species'* life is, thus, a permanent disvalue to the extent of the fields of life which have been irreversibly lost. A species extinction spasm is what the global system's actions have together brought, and this destruction is foundationally evil by life-value measure.

We have intuitive ideas of this evil, but no clear principle of its meaning. What is destroyed is not only this experiencing action of whole species, but its countless interactions with other species - as with the “charismatic” species like tigers and polar bears, whose extinction may signal the unravelling of a whole ecosystem of sentient action. This is not a *subjective* issue of value, as the term “charismatic” may mislead us to think. It is profoundly material in nature.

8.1.4. The Issue of Good Extinctions

The value field of action lost by the extinction of a variety of mosquito or parasite, in contrast, may relieve higher fields of action to more inclusive ranges of being – songbirds from cowbirds destroying their young, for example, and harrying the deprived mothers of their free singing lives. At the level of disease-bearing flies or rats which have no end of replacing action fields when gone, the extinguishing of their fields of action can be a significant net *good* for the surrounding fields of life action, and this is a matter which is again an ultimately *objective* issue once life-value principle and measure are recognized.

8.1.5. The Epistemological Bearings

Because the epistemology of the life-value calculus is always a process of more coherently inclusive taking into account, leaving no loss to ecosystem life unrecognized on the value field of action through time, it avoids the absolutism of positions like “evolution is always a process of extinction, so what's the problem?” or, at the other extreme, “one must not ever knowingly kill any life”.

Recognition of these extremes as false *follows from* life-value onto-axiology. Its life-value calculus resolves contending false partialities like “all life is sacred” (including

septic flies), on one hand, and animal life is “only the motions of an automaton”, on the other.

8.2. From Intended Doing to the 10,000 Chariots of Life

What contemporary philosophers conceive as “action” simply precludes these onto-ethical issues. Little of the life field of action registers *as* action, let alone as of intrinsic value.

Within philosophy’s field of “theory of action”, only the actions of individual persons compute. There are manifold contesting views of what a person’s action consists in, but all agree on a given general onto-ethical criterion. *Only what a person intentionally does* counts as an action.

8.2.1. Philosophical Theories of Action: Understanding the Limits

“Action Theory” has become a standard specialty of philosophy in which the intentional acts of persons are the limits of conception. In the main, this area analyzes out competing possibilities within this limit, and attaches different theories to different ideas – for example, regarding the distinction of “*actions*” from “*events*” and where the lines of demarcation ought to be drawn.

While all this may seem arcane, there are significant stakes involved - for example, what is the person to be *held responsible for* in the action? Where does her action begin and end in guilt or liability for it? How is the agent’s intention to be prioritized within the set of conditions producing the event? Or is intention merely epiphenomenal within a deterministic material sequence? These questions have challenged philosophers over millennia.

8.2.2. From Individual Acts to the Terrestrial Field of Action and Social Responsibility

Whatever the answers to the questions posed by theories of action, they standardly examine one type of action only, *intentional* action of individual *selves*. Life-value onto-axiology is more holistic and value nuanced. It begins from the *action field* as a whole including natural and social action, and comprehends levels of action by the ranges of sentient motion they bear and enable.

Responsibility too is grounded more widely and deeply than individual actions in social rules and their enabling or disabling of life capacities. Fundamental shifts of understanding follow from these deeper grounds of understanding. For example, the standard assignment of guilt by selecting the individual intention (*mens rea*) which deviates from the norm as the cause of wrongs is rejected as an atomic, contextless reduction which presupposes these norms themselves.

8.2.3. Biodiversity as Ultimate Issue of Value

Global biodiversity is also understood as a foundational value of the world field of

action whose destruction by man-made systems raises the repressed questions of *system evil* and *collective guilt* which received theories of action and moral evaluation avoid or blinker out.

Life-value analysis overcomes this deep-structural limitation by starting with protection and furtherance of the biodiverse world of action as an ultimate value in itself, the more so the richer the biodiversity involved – with good or evil proportionate to its gain or loss. Focus on intentional individual actions, in contrast, blocks out this entire foundational problematic. The value of biodiversity itself, however, is more inclusively and exactly construed than the standard version. It subsumes human biodiversity of created forms (e.g., types of music and play), discriminates between higher and lower biodiversity (e.g., mammalian and insect), and in general follows the primary axiom principle of more coherently inclusive ranges of life action as better. These are all dimensions of a wider life-value ecology of value framed in Section 8.7.3.1.

8.2.4. Regaining the Life-Ground of Value in Understanding the World of Action

Action in the narrow sense, what people intentionally do, is thus conceived by life-value onto-axiology as the crowning tip of the life-value whole, but *not* the only or even central issue of action value. On the other hand, intentional individual action is not rejected as illusory or insignificant, as mechanical determinism and methodological collectivism do. It is recognized in full importance, but placed within a much wider concept of action to include all of the biodiverse planet of action through generational time and social-system determination of it as primary.

Life-value onto-axiology may here be seen as refining primitive intuitions into principled form. “The system is at fault” is often said, but ethics and moral theory do not enter this deepest level of analysis which life-value onto-axiology adopts as foundational. On the level of purely natural action, first peoples have revered what we call “Nature’s action field” as the living body of all value bestowed by the Creator, and demand that human action respect it. Yet anthropomorphic images without scientific analysis and within bio-regional and tribal limits of concern do not provide us with the generic life-value principles we require today.

For millennia across times and cultures, nonetheless, Nature’s immense life field of action has been spontaneously attuned to as of ultimate worth. The great value field of animate life - birds flying, fish jumping, creatures leaping and running - has been long treasured outside of science and philosophy, but usually at a pre-reflective level.

8.2.5. Infinitely Compassable Community of Species Life

Before global civilization became submerged in the subordinating calculations of instrumental reason and industrial technology, the immediate world of life movement seems to have been a vast common life-ground of intrinsic value - good and bad - in myths, legends and epics across peoples. And still today, we can the spontaneous disposition of children everywhere to take on the actions of all other beings as themselves. This great life field of natural action value might be understood as the basic birthright of the human species, but the world factory of modernity has largely

annihilated it, and we remain without a value compass to comprehend it.

The near-prehistoric Lao Tzu, however, uniquely brings the whole of the boundless lost field of life action into positive value understanding. He refers to the Tao, the way of Nature, as a “kingdom of 10,000 chariots” in the *Tao-te Ching* (circa 500 BCE). We may decode his life-value meaning as follows. Human consciousness can be attuned to and one with each and all other forms of action, riding in their chariots of being as enlightened human life in its most coherently inclusive form. The entire world of life action can be enjoyed as symphonically compassable within the horizons of one own fields of thought, felt being and action.

8.2.6. The Fall of Man

Childhood remains a window on this life-ground consciousness which, as the *Upanishads* tell us, we lose by our dividing the world by concepts - and, as life-ground philosophy adds, with no common life interest to unify across the divisions.

This unifying life field of action is metonymically expressed by first peoples when speaking of whales, bears or ravens, in short, other species, as “brothers”. When the chariots of action of other life in Nature are lost to human affiliation, this loss might be thought of as the Fall of Man. Romantic poets like William Blake attribute the lost value realm to the loss of (in Blake’s words) the powers of the “human imagination” which have fallen into “Newton’s single vision and sleep”.

Life-value understanding, in contrast, claims objective value prior to human imagination bestowing it. It understands ‘the Fall’ at an objective level - the loss of the vast kingdom of spontaneous life action and enjoyment in an industrially re-made world denuded of other species within which human beings themselves are reduced to programmed functions.

8.3. How Can the Rule of Killing Power and Terror Be Good?

The field of spontaneous life action, on the other hand, is haunted by a many-faced terror which industrial society has left behind. In natural society, humanity’s constructions are formed and built to defend *against* natural actions - against being deprived, attacked, predated, eaten alive any moment by the actions of other life, including by other human beings as alien tribes.

Here in reality, one action of life above all is prized - *the power to slay other life*, and the more immensely so, the more heroic. Rig Veda warriors, Ulysses, Beowulf and all the heroes East, West and South are greatly good because their actions can destroy the Other. The supreme value in the field of action lies in powers to annihilate alien life, with the gods worshipped for powers to do it without limit.

“This is the language of the world”, says the Indian *Mahabharata* while pointing to a higher realm of bodiless release. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) leads modern thought in saying that the human condition itself is a “war of all against all” (*bellum omnium contra omnes*) in “the State of Nature” resolvable only by an absolute power of

civilizing sovereignty with powers of life and death over everyone.

8.3.1. The Modern Way: Humanity Must Conquer Nature

We are confronted here by an underlying principle of animal action which Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) rejoiced in - *to subjugate and destroy other forms of life to expand one's own*. For man, this means being at best the beast at the top. For John Stuart Mill (1806-73) in his essay "On Nature", in stark disagreement, this law of the jungle is abhorrent - a perpetual exposure to life maiming, disease and death which he denounces in defense of industrial civilization and against any "return to Nature" or romanticization of it.

Mill puts the case powerfully: "The things which men are hanged for or imprisoned for doing to each other, are nature's everyday performances - - [while] the large proportion of animals pass their existence in tormenting and devouring other animals". "Protracted tortures and suffering - - the instinct for domination - - the wanton cruelty - - the odious scene of violence and tyranny death - - ruin and devastation" all proceed with "the most callous indifference".

Mill thus argues in the face of this condition that there is no reconciliation of human with natural values. Only human intervention in the spontaneous acts of nature and the animal world can release us from a kind of hell on earth. "The arts of human life", Mill argues - and observe that all are intentional and nowhere else found in the action world - must be, "to dig, to plough, to build to wear clothes", "bridges - - wells - - embankments - - - The ways of nature are to be conquered, not obeyed". Spontaneous biodiverse action in Nature bears no recognized value in this world-view. Only "artificial education" so that "good sentiments become so habitual, and so predominant over bad" and "sympathy cultivated to goodness and nobleness" can prevail over the natural "instincts of selfishness" and "brutality".

8.3.2. The Pessimistic Way: The Value Field of Life Action Is to Be Disconnected From

It is certainly true that the life realm of action is the field of life within which all actual destruction takes place. This bleak general fact has caused some thinkers like Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) to condemn the entire action world as an endless round of embodied appetite and dissatisfaction that is intolerable to go on bearing. It would be better in Schopenhauer's view, which adopts strains of Hinduism and Buddhism, to seek past the "will to life" altogether for a detached consciousness without any desire for life at all.

8.3.2.1. Whether or not we agree with the idea of detachment from the life realm, the problem of the planetary life condition that provokes it is undeniable. Underneath all the goods of life which have so far been affirmed in this investigation lies a brutal universal fact that no-one can truthfully deny or escape. *Life destroys itself violently and continuously in its process of reproduction*. That is, the pessimist may plausibly claim, its ultimate ecology of value.

Natural life's pervasive competition for life means and space at every level may thus be condemned rather than celebrated as a system of *unbearable disvalue*. The lower and less offensive life is, the more of it quickly dies by being eaten alive. How, then, in view of all this, can the life field of action be coherently conceived as an ultimate realm of value *in itself*?

8.4. Facing the Ultimate Problem of Terrestrial Life

It is here that the ultimate metaphysical problem of world life is posed. It is beyond human causation, and it appears to be a permanent structure of the life condition. Life itself, many philosophers have implied, is a built-in tragedy and oppression for which philosophy is to be pursued as “the consolation”. This is the famous title concept of *The Consolation of Philosophy* by the emperor-condemned Boethius (480-526). He was inspired by Socrates who welcomed his own death by execution for the higher, pure realm of perfect ideas to which he expected to go.

Whatever we might think of such philosophy, which is an ageless subcurrent in the history of civilized thought, the nature of life as embodied action is, one way or another, repudiated as evil by its nature.

8.4.1. The Grounding Challenge to a Life-Value Onto-Ethic

Even if we rule out from consideration the systems of artificial killing deployed by man against man and other life forms and even if we bracket from our view the killing fields of Nature, we are still left with the problem of certain death for every one of us. Inevitable organic degeneration and death for “every moving thing in the moving world” is built into the life condition of the whole material action realm.

All that acts dies. Yet worse, all that dies is first pursued, diseased, starved or in some way deprived of what is most dear to it. Not even the most advanced humanity can escape the fate of knowing certain death is coming, and usually by degeneration of the capacities of life and action which life has been directed to developing and preserving. Herein lies the deepest paradox of value in the embodied condition.

8.4.2. The Idealist Solution: Release from Embodied Life by Thought

The ultimate condition of mortality and pain for all moving beings is ultimately why Mahayana Buddhists, Jains and Vedanta Brahmins seek long before Schopenhauer to be liberated from embodied life itself – to decouple to a realm of pure consciousness free from the horrors that all desiring flesh is exposed to.

This is also why in the West, Gnostics cultivate a vision of a pre-fallen state where the divisions into separate selves have not yet been formed. We might say that all religious thought systems and many philosophies are designed to cope with this division into selves, lonely struggle and certain death. Only by grounding in a state beyond this world, it is believed, can this ultimate problem be faced or resolved. The master skeptic himself, Socrates, supposes this pure ideal realm beyond terrestrial existence for “the release of the soul from the chains of the body”, as he says in Plato's *Phaedo*. His

conception has endured for millennia, in Augustinian Christianity most clearly, but also as an ultimate idea of civilized thought.

8.4.3. The Onto-Axiological Contradictions for Life-Value Philosophy

This idea of human life and action as “fastened to a dying animal”, in poet W.B. Yeats’ immortal figure, poses a metaphysical problem to life-value onto-axiology most of all. Whether recognized or not, one great underlying paradox of all embodied life is posed: *All are condemned to suffer the opposite of what they are impelled by nature and ethic to protect.*

If this-worldly life is structured such that all individual lives, who normally seek above all to live, are most of all made certain to die, and all of Nature as well as past civilizations are ordered by a logic of killing and subjugating other life for means to carry on doing so, and all decline and die in *any* case, how can one *not* value release from this world?

8.5. The Counterarguments of Life-Value Theory

The question appears unanswerable on the face of it. Yet if we apply the ultimate principle of distinction of life-value understanding - that which enables more comprehensive ranges of life versus that which does not - we discover the answer by posing a deeper question that it entails: *What change of any regulating principle of the terrestrial life system can be conceived by which any of the natural laws of non-human predation and individual death for all could be made better enabled through time?*

The question answers the problem from within the life realm itself. No better way can even be conceived. What *law of nature*, including of certain death for humans and predation for most other life, can one rewrite to make terrestrial life better? If one can think of none, and no-one has, rejection of what cannot be naturally better is incoherent. Repudiation of what cannot be better in principle on the basis of “another life” elsewhere has no evidence for it. Moreover, rejection of embodied life is self-contradictory as long as one continuously chooses to keep one’s life going every moment in countless ways. Denial of any value to what one has continues so protect and serve every moment is absurd.

These arguments are not met, however, from Socrates through Schopenhauer to the present.

8.6. The Life Values of the Predatory System of Nature

Yet is it really true that none of the “natural laws of non-human predation and individual death” can be improved on? Let us consider the harshest law of nature, the predation cycle wherein, as Mill puts it, “the large proportion of animals pass their existence in tormenting and devouring other animals”. Certainly there can be no doubt that Mill is right. Almost all life lives by feeding on other life, and much of this is terror for the prey.

Yet there can also be no doubt that it is by *nature's cycles of predation that the plenitude of biodiverse life in active interconnection is produced.*

8.6.1. Nature's Value System and the Primary Axiom

Let us explain this meaning. The predator chasing and, in the normally small percentage of instances, actually catching its prey, is not only a universal form of action which enables the *predator's* reproduction, but also stimulates in the present and through time the very flourishing varieties of action of all animate life, *including the prey.*

Consider the action life of any small or prey animal in Nature. Whether it is a mouse, a songbird or a deer, it is perpetually alert to possible predator presence, and the flashing speed and dexterity of its body movements are beyond any found in civilization. If we compare corresponding domesticated animal life, the action value and experience internal to it is an anaesthetized caricature in comparison.

What largely explains the difference is that the experiencing animal action in the wild is of the prey looking out for its predators; while the predators themselves have greatest action value in being life capable of catching the prey. Myriad moments of every life-action process within and outside the red moment are thus enabled by the law of predation in Nature. In this light, we may consider its governing form of action as a natural system of life value expressing the primary axiom of value.

8.6.2. Biodiverse Action Value Created by Predator-Prey Order

Reflection on this regenerative and creative principle of the natural life-value system will not easily find exception. Careful observation of the songbird, for example, cannot discover one element of the bird's motions, colors, postures, flights, landings, and calls - all constituents of its action life-value - which does not also enable it to escape predator seizure.

While human images and conceptions fix on the relatively rare ratio of bloodshed in the awesome life field of action, this fixation occurs by closure to the life-action whole. How many times have we even seen predation occur in Nature, as distinct from what is shown in typically orchestrated entertainments? One might say that not Nature but perception has come to select for action violence because it is more exciting to watch at a primeval level, and so its presence has been multiplied while screening out the richer field of action in its symphonic infinitude of modes.

8.6.3. Rethinking the Pacification of Nature

An ultimate onto-axiological question may be posed. Is there in fact any moment of life action in the great animal kingdom of calls, sounds, and colors in infinite self-moving modes which is *not* generated by the intertwined predator and mating patterns in the vast plenum of natural action? This is not a question posed by Mill or other known value theorist. It can only arise from a standpoint which first recognizes in principle the great and intrinsic value field of natural action as such.

The ancient pacific vision of the “lion lying down with the lamb” overlooks this inner logic of life-value in Nature. At the same time, the progressive industrial breeding and domestication of animal life on earth eliminates this life-value field on the ground. Behind a rising reduction of wildlife and biodiversity in the world lies the general failure to recognize the ultimate value in itself of the life action field. “The law of the jungle” is a generic term which already preconceives it, on the contrary, as evil in nature.

8.6.4. The Ecocidal Implications

Finding an elaborated and reproducible food supply for innumerable predators to substitute for their innumerable prey is not viable in any case. Nonetheless the phenomenon of *predator as pet* has redirected more food to this silent transformation than scores of poor countries have to eat at the very same time as the wildlife world is cumulatively erased. The ruling value system again governs beneath individual intention as ecocidal.

On the other side, geometrically multiplying populations of former prey animals without predators to consume them have - and this is known - become plagues on natural life support systems and biodiverse life. Goats, pigs, rabbits, deer have deracinated the soil, vegetation and tree covers and habitats in formerly thriving bio-regions, from Asia and ancient Greece to modern Australia and Muskoka. Without understanding of the life action field as a whole, much can go very wrong.

8.7. The Absolutist Fallacy of Reverence for All Life

Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965) expressed an absolute “reverence for life” which famously moved him not to kill the flies in his operating theatre in Africa as a missionary. He describes his life ethic in terms that seems to instantiate life-value onto-axiology. In his 1936 essay, “The Ethics of Reverence for Life”, he powerfully writes:

The man who has become a thinking fellow - - accepts as good preserving life, promoting life, developing all life that is capable of development to its highest possible value. He considers as evil destroying life, repressing life that is capable of development. That is the absolute, fundamental principle of ethics, and it is a fundamental postulate of thought.

8.7.1. The Shared Life Ethics of Schweitzer and Gandhi

On the face of it, life-value onto-axiology agrees with Schweitzer on every point. The life-and-death difference, however, is that ‘reverence for all life’ lacks any principle to identify or explain why mammalian life with a nervous system and consciousness is worth more than a slug or a fly. As other known positions of this principle, the *immense life-value involved in the difference* is blocked out. Schweitzer like Mohandas Gandhi (1869-1948) makes his position absolute and indiscriminate without recognizing the problem. Schweitzer says (italics added): “the *absolute* ethics of the will-to-live must reverence *every* form of life, seeking so far as possible to refrain from destroying *any* life, regardless of its particular type”.

Schweitzer acknowledges that “man is subject to the puzzling and inexorable law of being obliged to live at the cost of other life”. For him even killing an indoor fly is “violence against life”. Gandhi and the Jains go further. They hold that even breathing so that “tiny microbial things” may be swallowed is violence against life. Jains who influenced Gandhi thus wear masks. The problem of such life ethics is constant across variations. The lack of any principle of life-value measure is, however, self-undercutting. That is, it rejects positions to *protect* life as violence *against* life, and so ends in absurd conclusions.

8.7.2. Life-Value Onto-Ethics Solves the Problem

Absolutist “life ethics” entails beneath notice a respect for life forms that despoil life *because* it rules out the immensely greater life-value of the beings they plague. Equality of life right leads to bizarre implications. Consider the malaria parasite and its mosquito host reproducing from blood and infection. Is such life sacred? The life reverence principle has no criterion or standard to distinguish at this life-and-death level.

The primary axiom of value supplies this missing criterion of more and less life-value. Unless *e*, there is some evident thinking or feeling side of being a fly or parasite - as distinguished from mechanical reflex actions - its life-value is unsubstantiated beyond these motions. In contrast, there is a boundless capacity of thinking and feeling evident in human beings and other higher mammals which malaria-bearing mosquitos and other insects and pests bite, infect and infest with no evident life function. Eliminating a near null life-value to protect boundless life-value is, then, *coherent* life reverence and respect while revering any merely parasitical and ecologically unsupportive form of life is not. Life-value onto-axiology recognizes the vast life-field value which lies in the *difference between them* which is not recognized by absolute life reverence. In truth, such life reverence contradicts itself even in the philosophies of such great souls as Schweitzer and Gandhi. What life-value analysis spells out is what they have omitted – the measure of life value itself.

8.7.3. The Life Compossibility Principle

Life-value measure does *not* mean lesser life value can be therefore be sacrificed to greater, or even sacrificed at all. On the contrary, life-value onto-axiology entails that the most inclusively possible life fields and value are to be sustained and furthered. The primeval pattern of blood-sacrifice is well known to us, and we seem to be developing beyond it. Yet in fact we retain its pattern of thinking when we assume that either this or that must be sacrificed to achieve what we want. A life-value must be forfeited or “traded off” - say, animal habitat for homes.

Life-value judgment, in contrast, affirms the life-value of both sides whether or not one form of life is greater in value than the other, and seeks always to sustain both so far as this is life-coherently possible. In the case of human dwellings and habitat, both may become more biodiverse and interesting by both being affirmed in their united management. Birds, for example, love clearings as well as trees, and are drawn to feeders in greater numbers and variety where there is human action enabling this. Far from one being sacrificed to the other, wildlife to human homes, both together become

life richer by intelligent human action. This is an expression of life-value ontology's *compossibility principle*.

Even pests from which human life action requires freedom to flourish do not need to be sacrificed. Life-value logic entails that all forms of life are normally better preserved - even if one is of far greater value than those bothering it. This compossibilist approach is normally possible by separate life niches where they conflict. Thus although sacrifice of rats everywhere in homes is necessary, human-made screen systems with no exposed edibles to attract them overcomes the evil of killing them. The same goes for flies, bugs, and mice. More generally, sacrifice of *any* life form is chosen against so far as this choice is consistent with flourishing higher life. We may bear in mind here the general criterion of '*true development*' explained in Section 5.10.3.1.

8.7.3.1. Life-Value Ecology

The principle of life compossibility goes a very long way. Sacrifice of life value is in fact seldom required once this principle guides decision rather than the either-or sacrificial value regime of contemporary civilization - from pervasive herbicides and pesticides as 'necessary' for human well-being to erasing bird habitat for 'development'. The problem here is deeper, however, than mere anthropocentrism. The either-or sacrificial mindlock applies even more destructively within the human species itself - for example, the assumption that unemployment is necessary for economic advance - "either unemployment or stagnation". In truth, the values of contending life interests are almost always compassable. What is lacking is inclusive life-value judgment.

Development *or* environment, houses *or* trees, pesticides *or* infestation, jobless people *or* no advance, war *or* loss of freedom - these exclusionary disjunctions pervade every quarter, and material holocausts trail in their wake across the planet. The principle of life-value compossibility is opposite. It seeks coherently inclusive possibility in which no life-value is sacrificed by human action, the logic of *life-value ecology* at the human level.

8.8. The Human Turn to Symbolic Life, Self-Made Rules and the Civil Commons

Nature, as Mill argues, is blind to life-value loss, however profuse its life creation. Its ecology is sacrificial in principle - "natural selection" entails destruction of what is not selected. It falls to humanity to develop life-value consciousness as more inclusively coherent by rule and design.

How utopian! some might reply. Yet this very idea is already implied by the concept of "humanity" - as in "we must show some humanity here". "Humane" is another concept which implies the same ultimate standard of affirming life beyond self and seeking to prevent its suffering or destruction. It is a defining principle of human being found in Confucianism after Mencius (379-281 BCE?) and Jewish prophets like Isaiah (circa 710 BCE) before the Jesus of the Gospel of Thomas and subsequent Christian saints like St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226).

8.8.1. Revolution of the World of Action by Language

Language begins the human turn from the animal's immediate identity with the organism. With cultural transmission of symbol systems across generations, conceptual and image universals become the frame of human action beyond bodily desires and environmental triggers alone.

Human evolution thus develops beyond the blind mechanism of *genetic* transmission and natural selection determining life reproduction at the pre-human level. *Sociobiology*, however, falsely confuses genetic lines with genetic determinism – blinkering out the manifold variations of human forms of life *within* the same inherited gene pool. What is missed by this mechanical reduction is the *cultural* level of evolution which human rules decide beyond genes in radically different ways.

In fact, humanity's cumulative collective inheritances of language and rules of action are not determined by material conditions of even genes and environment *together*. They distinguish the human species as *self creating* on an emergent plane not elsewhere found in Nature. Certainly human beings cannot fall upwards, eat air for nutrition, or (yet) reprogram genes to produce white skin. Yet they can and do imagine these and countless other possibilities, and then organize the world to make them occur in accordance with rules and symbolic plans which they construct themselves.

8.8.2. A Higher Ontological Plane: Life-Enabling Norms Nowhere Else in Nature

In short, human forms of life are no longer directly regulated by genotypes and environmental conditions and cues as in the pre-human world, but by *self-made norms* within the wide limits of physical laws. Certain common human-made forms nowhere else found in Nature's vast world of biodiverse action are revealing of the human creator across cultures: not only shared languages, but the growing and preparation of foods, the making of clothing and external instrumentation of bodies, interfamilial exchanges of goods, the prohibition of excrement in the lived environment, mutual care of some kind across age and gender differences, non-violence to the young and helpless, and ceremonial disposal of bodies at death.

What is most revealing about these *cultural universals* is that all are *life-enabling by community-rule constructions*. And yet all vary immensely and unpredictably in their specific rules and actions – thereby revealing unseen *choice spaces* of individual and social self-determination within natural laws which cannot predict either level of human self making.

Each of these community constructions is rule-governed and symbolically transmitted, all extend fields of action, and all are found in every form of human society. Yet *none* is inalterable as physical laws are. All are open to social choice in their construction and reproduction which may be more or less life enabling, that is good or bad, better or worse, in objective life-value terms. These human-made cultural universals not only admit of radical cultural variations, but *perversions* which are directly identifiable by life-value principle – for example, funerals that bury the living with the dead, or life disabling cosmetic adornments and mutilations. Here as elsewhere, humanity makes

itself good or evil by its rules.

8.8.2.1. Civil Commons Forms

These deep structures of human action across times and tribes are non-existent in other species, although there are inchoate forms of them in other mammals with developed nervous systems – for example, elephant graveyards without a life-protective hygiene function. In general, each of these cultural universals provides *common life security* to community members, and may progress to higher levels of enabling the lives of all across classes.

This is the plane of the *civil commons*. Its socially created structures of action are unified by one meta-principle - the *regulating of society to enable its members' universal access to life goods*. The civil commons begin with language, but even it can be subverted through elective enclosure by priesthoods and corporations.

While civil commons are self-evident once made recognizable by a defining principle, they have not in fact been recognized in their unifying elective pattern by even Rousseau, Marx, Polanyi, Chomsky and other great contributors to understanding the elements at work. What is least of all recognized is their evolving realization of the primary axiom of life-value. What is simply blocked out by contemporary economic and philosophical theories is that these civil commons make possible the *individuation* of society's members – the long labor within the human field of action we know as history.

Human life for the individual as well as society advances or regresses by its civil commons constructions. For example, wherever universal access to life goods of any kind develop - from language itself to shared water provision and flood controls, to universal health and education, to knowledge and art commons, to public life spaces and universal pathways, to disability support and old age security - the *action-regulating order* is the civil commons in some form. It is the ultimate but now amnesiac infrastructure of human development across the world's cultures.

8.8.3. Cumulative Human Learning across Age and Death: The Civil Commons Bearer

Cultural evolution is well enough known, but less explicit in understanding is that human life can increase in the cumulative action of learning and continuously transmit it to others despite the radical decline of individual capacities of action by aging and in spite of death itself. Unlike the action world of any other natural being, humanity's distinguishing life capabilities of learning, expression and communication grow long after flight-fight peaks of physical capacity have passed and can continue in symbolic action long after death on the organism level. This is the immortality of learning which distinguishes the human condition, and is one level of the life-value solution to the problem of death which has long haunted philosophy.

The advance of human civilization and the individual at once depends, in fact, on this ever growing commons of understanding. Today, unprecedentedly, universally

accessible knowledge stocks *can* transmit in nano-seconds around the world in ‘cyber-space’ without price barriers. Yet as with the ruling global corporate order itself, criteria to tell truth from falsehood, good from bad - or more exactly, what coherently enables rather than disables human life and life conditions - are absent. This is the challenge which life-value onto-axiology meets.

8.9. Demystifying the Life Principle: From Life Force to Life-Value Axiology

Friedrich Nietzsche is known as the premier philosopher of “the life principle”, but he conceives of the human action field in opposite terms - as driven by the predatory savagery of a natural aristocracy which a slavish moral community seeks to bring down to its level. In works like *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche affirms life as the logic of predatory action for higher humanity and the beasts alike, with the *blond bestie* his heroic archetype. Reconciliation of humanity and the beast occurs not by lifting man up from the law of the jungle, but rather by restoring it at the human level.

The reader might be startled that such a view of life could be conceived as affirming ‘the life principle’. Philosophers might reply, “He does compared to his philosophical antagonist, Arthur Schopenhauer, who advocates extinction of the will to life altogether”. Readers not trained in philosophy might think that both philosophers speak in extremes. Yet we must bear in mind that the leading contemporary expert of human stories, myths and legends, agrees with Nietzsche’s predatory model. Indeed he affirms it as undeniable in his signature work, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (1949): *Man is a beast of prey, that is simply a fact of nature*”.

8.9.1. Predator or Post Predator: The Ultimate Choice of Humanity?

Economic historian Thorstein Veblen and renowned scientist Albert Einstein disagree. They argue that a socialist rise above “the predatory stage of human development” is an imperative of human life survival and advance. Again we see that those holding to a ‘life principle’ of action have altogether contradictory positions. When contradictory positions have the same meaning applied to them, a deep confusion in principle is evident. We might agree with Veblen and Einstein, but they do not provide any unifying explanation of life-value or its measure to ground us in directive principle across situations and times.

8.9.2. The Élan Vital

In *Creative Evolution* (1907), his most famous work, Henri Bergson (1859-1941) posits an underlying life force - an “élan vital” which, he argues, the accepted theories of evolution and science by clock-time cannot explain.

This vital force, Bergson argues, is the invisible driver of life’s overcoming of the downward entropic drift of the cosmic system. Yet it is impossible to apprehend through scientific categories because they are externalist and mechanical. Bergson’s philosophy highlights the lack of any *internal* dimension to science’s existing categories of observation - in particular, the felt nature of time as what he calls “*durée*” (duration). His position opposes any concept of time or evolution conceived in terms of mechanical

measures, homogenous numbers or clock-time order. Bergson's work thus leads inquiry into the great value field of the felt side of being examined in *Good and Evil Within: Opening the Terra Incognita of the Felt Side of Being*. Yet he conceives of this field of life only partially with respect to experiencing time.

8.9.3. No Inner Logic of Life Proliferation nor Individual Life-Value

Authors and writers like George Bernard Shaw and Nikos Kazantzakis and the statesman, Charles de Gaulle, were deeply influenced by Bergson's idea of a "life force" at work in creative evolution, and so its resonance with some of the period's leading original minds deserves pause. Shaw's famous comedy, *Man and Superman*, is a direct play on Bergson's once very influential idea, with Shaw portraying woman as "the life force" seeking to continue the human race through man who is "held helpless in its grip".

More generally, the sheer propulsive energy of life generation in new lives staggeringly beyond surviving members is not explained by science, but reduced to comparative survival and extinction ratios. The life process's astonishing plenum of cumulative life multiplication and diversification to progressively more life value bearing in the macro trend is demonstrable over evolutionary time, but life-value meaning or direction is not an issue for 'value neutral science' nor analyzed by ethics and moral philosophy (see Section 4.2). Even Bergson sees only the creative nature of the exception.

We may note, however, that this nature of life inherent proliferation to more inclusive complexities through ecological time dimly expresses the primary axiom of value – almost as if in the slow-motion testing of evolutionary trial. On the other hand, this undeniable propulsion to ever new life impelled to be more is perfectly indifferent to individual life and death. Life-value onto-axiology does not, however, stop at either "creative" or "destructive" conceptions of this process, nor with the mechanical accounts of survival ratios. It comprehends the life-blindness of Nature as the moral vocation of humanity to supersede.

8.9.4. Life Value Affirmation with No Life-Value Ground or Measure

Contemporary paleontologist, Stephen Jay Gould (1941-2002), seeks deeper than mechanical science to understand the unpredictable nature of evolution, but unlike Bergson he focuses on the nature of pre-Cambrian life (as evidenced in the Burgess shale) and its fantastically multifarious life forms before the Cambrian life explosion adopted a new direction. How is science to explain the near total transformation of life from the vast pre-Cambrian array of designs each startlingly different from the other to the five-point structure evolving into infinite variations? What survives is a like a "lottery" concludes Gould in *Wonderful Life* (1989). He dwells in awe on the now extinct but "wondrously" shaped pre-Cambrian creatures, and names the unpredictable lines of extinction and succession by his own term for these leaps of evolution, "punctuated equilibrium".

Gould avoids Bergson's concept of "élan vital", but he does not explain his own superlative value ascription of "wonderful life". As in the sciences overall, axiological

bearings are absent. No coherent principle of value judgment is defined. The ‘wonderful’ *value* implied by Gould remains at an exclamation level. We see here again life-value affirmation; but with no principled meaning. A striking anomaly thus arises. According to Gould’s account, life after the “Cambrian explosion” narrows in surviving phyla towards one dominant design, and it is *within* its meta-form which subsequent biodiversity occurs. So which life is better, before or after? For paleontology or evolutionary biology, there is no answer.

In life-value onto-axiology, the answer is plain. The ‘five-pointed’ phyla have only one meta-design of action, but this design produces infinitely more forms and compasses of life action than before it. Moreover, new fields of thought and felt being emerge as mammalian evolution unfolds. The post-Cambrian evolutionary path is thus, for the life-value metric *correspondingly better* in demonstrable ways.

8.9.4.1. The Ironic Life-Blindness of Pro-Life Positions

The sciences in general are insensitive to and rule out any *criterion* of value of life forms, even if some like Gould and E.O. Wilson let their *biophilia* show. Why or how to distinguish the *life worth* of a Burgess-shale worm or extant spider from a modern dolphin is unknown. The underlying misological view among life-affirming natural scientists is that the unique development in this or that form of expert interest defies any logic of value across differences. Thus Gould, like others, rejects the very use of concepts like “lower” and “higher” life forms. This is the fashionable postmodern view. Yet difference in life-value between a higher mammal’s action world and a sea worm is objectively demonstrable. The former’s life ranges and complexities of action are vastly greater in scope and coherent articulation, and these express life-value fields of thought, image and feeling a sea worm or the like altogether lacks. On the surface, insistence on rejecting any concept of “lower” and “higher” life forms seems open and egalitarian, but in fact it is dogmatic and life-blind *in the vastly greater life-value it negates*.

There are many kinds of distortion of life-value affirmation, as we have seen, all lacking any criteria principle or measure – for the most dominant example, the equation by the so-called ‘right to life’ movement of an unevolved embryo to a human being. Whatever its form, scientific or ideological, such distortions always derive from lack of principled life-value bearings.

8.10. Understanding the Obscured Logic of Better/Worse Development

Life-value onto-axiology observes a more complex and value-graduated reality, and so apprehends what is fatefully unseen. There is, on the one hand, undeniably higher forms of life which have been physically and culturally evolved - that is, *more coherently inclusive ranges and expressions of moving life* - since myriad pre-Cambrian sea creatures under six inches long. It is precisely because this vast life-value difference is recognized that the *reverse* pattern of higher to *lower* can also be identified as it occurs – namely, the systematic reduction of life-value by extermination of biodiverse action in conformity to industrial money sequences.

These opposing *value directions* of the world field of action can prevail either way – the

social rule-system choice which is spelled out ahead. What is of interest at this point is the nature of these conflicting tendencies whose regulating principles of value opposition have been obscured across philosophies and the sciences.

8.10.1. Evolution as Experimental Process of Life-Value Advance or Life-Blind Regression

If one understands terrestrial life as akin to an infinitely modulated experimental process in which every form of life seeks beyond itself in ever new modes which are selected for their advantages in a continuous testing through, an underlying, long-term throughline of life-value direction emerges which is substantiated by the known evidence. Its overall pattern suggests:

- (1) an advancing progression of natural and human life-value bearing over which the human species has by its technological powers become the lead decider ; but also
- (2) a life-value regression in the opposite direction by the cumulative effects of money-value capitalism on global life-carrying capacities of every kind.

Biologist Robert G.B. Reid explains in *Biological Emergences: Evolution by Natural Experiment* (2007) how the “autocatalyzing” organism is a coordinating system which reduces infinite interactive possibilities to predictable pathways of homeostasis while remaining sufficiently flexible to allow for emergence of new types of life -”evolution by natural experiment”. Life-value onto-axiology puts such biological findings within a larger framework of value direction in which *change for better or for worse* is comprehended by objective life-value principles. For wide-lensed example, terrestrial evolution from the pre-Cambrian period on shows the implicit form of a *trial-and-error testing ground* which selects on the whole through massive extinctions for more bio-diverse life ranges in ascending values of life capacity and enjoyment. Now at the forward end of this experimental process which has produced the infinitely biodiverse life ranges of Nature, however, a countering industrial money-value system blindly depredates this billion-year-old birthright of life inheritance.

In this meta-pattern of our condition lies humanity’s ultimate challenge - to move past the ultimate chaos which this ruling value system causes to life-coherent regulators of reproduction. Nature’s experimentation here becomes humanity’s conscious project of planetary life recovery to correct an epochal human experiment which has gone fatally wrong.

8.10.2. The Unnamed Causal Mechanism of Terrestrial Life Regression

The late-industrial system of money-and-commodity growth has, more exactly, systematically looted and polluted subsoil, soil, forest, fresh and sea-water, air and atmospheric conditions so that unmistakable declines of each and all of these life infrastructures have moved towards collapse of their evolved life-carrying capacities. Seldom are these depredatory patterns understood in their ruling-system determination. Yet every despoliation of planetary life conditions is led by *one globalizing form of action*, money-capital growth by commodification of all that exists. In the long run, either this causal mechanism is re-set to coherence with universal life requirements, or the devastation deepens. This is the ultimate choice-space of humanity.

In the graphic account of ecologist Paul Hawken's 2009 address to the University of Portland leaving class: "Every living system is declining, and the rate of decline is accelerating - - - Not one peer-reviewed paper published in the last thirty years can refute that statement". Yet neither Hawken nor others so well informed address the onto-ethical mechanism determining these effects, nor the life-value steering required at the system-wide level.

8.10.3. From Confused Life Affirmation to Life-Value Principle and Measure

The problem is not lack of life affirmation, but of understanding deeper value-system deciders. For example, even in macro-evolutionary analysis which is distinctively life-affirming, Henri Bergson's still popular notion of a "life force" or Robert Jay Gould's notion of "wonderful life" lack precise meaning and explanatory substance. In the case of Bergson's now famous vitalist philosophy, we may discern three problems of logical and scientific failure:

- (1) the concept of a vital force is not formally defined;
- (2) its referent is not directly verifiable, or falsifiable; and
- (3) its meaning is not analyzable in terms of any measure.

The primary axiom of value and its corollary principles, however, overcome these limitations in principle. For:

- (i) Life value is exactly and criterially defined.
- (ii) Its referent is directly verifiable, and falsifiable (as this study has explained in Chapters The Primary Axiom And The Life-Value Compass Good And Evil Within: Opening The Terra Incognita Of The Felt Side Of Being).
- (iii) Its life-value measure is self-evident in nature - more/less life enabling in these fields of life value: with this measure admitting of degrees and margins of life-value gain or loss to any exactitude required by reference bodies of judgment (as illustrated in chapters The Primary Axiom And The Life-Value Compass Good And Evil Within: Opening The Terra Incognita Of The Felt Side Of Being and section below).

8.10.3.1. Life-Value Measure: Defining Illustrations

Because life-value measure of more/less is specifiable from any reference body of judgment to any degree of elaboration, it can be as mathematically fine-tuned as required by *the margins of more/less inclusive range* within any life field or domain. For straightforward example in the value field of action, consider the greater or lesser ability to use one's limbs through ranges of motion and temporal spans – already the implicit life-value metric of all orthopedic medicine across species.

Or, more broadly, consider the development of the eye or sentient range across species evolution since the Cambrian explosion. Or, where the life-value profile of development is clearest, in *homo sapiens*, reflect on the advance of literacy range - the ability to read and use symbols - across terrestrial humanity over 3000, 300 or 30 years. These and other life capacities and capabilities show a pattern of *objective life-value advance* in range of function and expression. This is always, however, a clearly *contingent* pattern of life-world betterment which can be locally or cumulatively reversed from within - as

in the barbarian-victorious Dark Ages, or as in the money-sequence globalization of today. Which direction is decided by the rules of how we live.

8.10.3.2. Philosophy's Proxies for Life-Value across Cultures

Philosophy has been concerned since Socrates and Confucius with this question of 'how to live'. This problem may be said to ultimately define the subject. Yet a principled life-ground of value and measure has always been lacking. Progressive or regressive direction in how to live has been lost in perpetually contesting *proxies* of value "Dharma" in India, or "the Five Relations" in China, or "the Market" in the West. None are grounded in life-value coordinates.

8.11. Humanity and Nature: Animal Rights in Life-Value Perspective

In contemporary Bioethics, some reconnection to life coordinates has occurred with concern for protection of non-human life. It has been preceded by the notion of *ahimsa* or "harmlessness" to other life which is ancient in India, and other strains of thought identified in Section 8.8. The idea of "animal rights", however, is relatively new and widespread and deserves the attention of life-value analysis.

8.11.1. The Argument for the Equality of Life

Philosopher Paul Taylor, for instance, paradigmatically argues in *Environmental Ethics* (Taylor, 1981): "It is the good (wellbeing, welfare) of individual organisms, considered as entities having inherent worth, that determines our moral relations with the Earth's wild communities of life. - - - We can think of this good of an individual organism as consisting in the full development of its biological powers - - preserving its existence through the various stages of the normal life cycle of its species."

Taylor thus claims an equality of all species of the animal kingdom to a "full life". The logic of his position is egalitarian and kind. While it may seem to resemble the 'right-to-life' position of the anti-abortion movement, it claims right to life only for independent organisms beyond intra-uterine development. In any case, the widely-held position represented by Taylor repudiates "the claim that humans by their nature are superior to other species" as "a groundless claim - - an irrational bias in our own favour". He therefore argues that humans must equally respect the individuals of all non-human species. No-one ought to violate any individual animal's right to continue its existence as "*a teleological centre of life pursuing its own good in its own way*".

8.11.2. Species Impartiality of Life-Value Judgment Does Not Imply Equality of Species

Analysis has already shown that an indiscriminate "reverence for life" ends in a *reductio ad absurdum*. That is, such positions are logically committed to erasure of the difference in life-value between, say, a garden slug and a human person.

Life-value onto-axiology meets such problems, as we have seen, by recognition of distinctions among organisms in their life-value: while *also* affirming the

compossibility principle of life-value, so that lower-value life coexists with higher-value life so long as this does not *disable* the higher form to violate *its* life. This understanding has been called “life-value ecology” in Section 8.7.3.1

8.11.3. Coherent Respect for Life

Categorical certitude that every form of life should be able to live out its “natural life span”, however, is indifferent to this qualification. The ecological whole is blinkered out, and this life-value difference is annulled. Its position simply asserts the absolute right of all life to forms to a “full life”. Yet we know from observation that, in fact, very few animals have a full life cycle in Nature without humans ever violating them. The basic question that is unanswered by the right-to-life position is, then: If almost every member of other species dies before it ever reaches close to a full life without humanity touching them, then what can this “right to a full life” be based on? How can the concept of a natural “right to a full life” be more than a fabricated projection?

8.11.4. The Reconciliation of Human and Natural Life Values

The right to a “full life” of animals is thus self-confuting because it violates the natural life of animals themselves. Must, then, the conclusion be, as Mill argued, that Nature is evil after all, and humanity must civilize it all the way down including saving creatures from early deaths? Life-value onto-axiology steers between all such extremes. It rejects any absolute right to a full life of animals, but also rejects the philosophical position of a diabolical Nature.

What, then, of the irreversible terrible pain of predated animals which concern humane people in general? Here life-value onto-axiology takes account a nervous-system dynamic common among the vertebrates which alone or most suffer from the evil of irreversible pain in Nature. The suffering of early death in animals who can feel it is attended with opiates or endorphins released in the brain at the crisis moment. This is a general fact in “the rules of the game of nature”, to cite T.H. Huxley’s conceptualization. There is opiate relief as ‘the game is over’. The same remedy is used by physicians, the “doctor’s best friend”. (as explained in *The Transcultural Idea: The Good as Happiness, the Bad as Pain*).

The predator-prey cycle in nature's kingdom of animate action, in sum, may systematically destroy life in the individual, which life-protective rules supersede in the human species. Yet Nature’s method of evolving more vital and biodiverse ranges of action in the wildlife realm seems impossible to improve upon, and includes opiated pain for the worst suffering of the prematurely dying. Moral reconciliation may thus join aesthetic wonder in affirming the great natural field of action as of unsurpassable life-value.

8.12. Tracking the Loss of the Common Life Interest and Ground

In the long evolution of life action from the primitive proprioceptive exploration to the developed communities of humanity governed by conscious life-value standards, terrestrial life becomes progressively *better* in life-value terms by biodiverse fields of

living motion becoming more so in color, design and variety of action; while simultaneously humanity progressively organizes its self-created forms to enable more coherently inclusive ranges of thinking and feeling movement, from games of play and arts to life-infrastructure building. This is the common life interest and ground *in action*.

On the one hand, then, human civilization can choose steer in accordance with life-value standards to higher and higher levels of compossible life-capacity development, and has already done so in its civil commons advances. Every major life-value progression from language, community water provision, and protection from external attacks all evidenced from the earliest human societies on to every civil commons of today in universal health-care, pensions, public libraries and education, and ecological conservation can be understood in terms of this unifying pattern of *how to live better across cultures*. Conversely, life-value onto-axiology recognizes that such cooperative vehicles of humanity's life advance can be and persistently are undercut by forces of sectarian privilege seeking more for itself *as* the common good. This is what Marx called 'the class struggle', but missed its base, the civil commons of universal life provision.

8.12.1. Turn to Money-Value Competition as Ruling Global Order of Human Action

What is most momentously lost within the plans and enactment of the private money-sequence form of action ruling the world today is regulation by the requirements of organic, social and ecological life and life support systems themselves. Since the reigning ultimate imperative is to "compete in the global market", civil commons infrastructures are defunded by ever lower taxes for corporate money sequences and private capital gainers, while new rules of trade and investment lower wages and eliminate jobs and environmental and safety regulations as competitive advantages to transnational corporations. Following from this globally governing value system of action, any organization *not* serving the ruling private-value imperative is rejected as "non-competitive" and defunded in one way or another.

This is called the "new world order", but in fact more destabilized ecologies, species habitats and reproduction, degrading human life support systems and more insecure lives for the growing majority have been the systemic results.

8.12.2. The Loss of the Common Life Interest by Choice Theory and Practice

The choice between life-blind and life-coherent regulators is the ultimately deciding value choice, the onto-axiological cross-roads of human action at all levels. Yet the alternatives are not only unrecognized because they challenge the ruling order, but because the very method of understanding social choice rules out this level of comprehension. That is, *rational choice* is presupposed as individually *self-maximizing choice*, getting what one wants by the least costly means for oneself.

This is an *a-priori* axiom of decision theory across disciplines and domains, but its silently coercive constraint is unexamined. What it means is that the *common* life interest (i.e., protecting social and natural life support systems) simply cannot arise as

an issue within this regulating framework of self-maximizing preference. Rather “social choice” is presupposed as only an aggregation of individual choices with no common life interest conceived.

8.12.3. The Case of Amartya Sen

An incomparably rich documentation of the literature expressing these unexamined assumptions is provided by Amartya Sen’s Nobel Lecture of 1998, “The Possibility of Social Choice”. Sen’s summative account confirms what has been lost to view. Common life support systems and social decision are excluded *a-priori* from what is called “*social choice*”.

Social and natural life support systems are thus blinkered out in principle, and only atomic preferences and their aggregates compute. Correspondingly, public discussion at media and political debate levels assumes that “social choice” is only a sum of individual preferences (elections) or individual commodities bought (market demand).

8.12.3.1. Fallacy of Division Presupposed

What even the reader of this page may be at first unable to discern, so embedded is this frame of mind as a given of the era, is that when aggregates of individual choices are equated to “*social choice*”, a *fallacy of division* is built into the equation. For the properties of a whole are not the same as the properties of its constituents. For example, the common interest of a people or society is to keep its social and natural life support systems intact, but the self-maximizing interest of individuals is to pay lower taxes. The result in the real world is that life support infrastructures degrade and break down without funds to sustain or renew them. This problem is now evident throughout the world’s “greatest market democracy” itself.

In this way, the social choice bases and common interests which define any society’s reality and public good - their evolving social and ecological life support systems - are assumed away by the ruling framework of social decision. The consequences begin to overwhelm most of humanity.

8.12.4. The Fatal Consequences for Common Life Support Systems

To recognize the life incoherence of this ruling paradigm, one asks: how then any society can choose to provide for its *common* life interest? Virtually all of decision choice and decision theory in Economics and Philosophy - Pareto Optimum, Arrow’s Paradox, Prisoner’s Dilemma, The Problem of Collective Choice, and Contractarianism - come up against this problem. Yet none can solve it because they remain within an atomic choice and interest framework of decision and action.

How, then, can even the most basic social choices and common interests compute through this framework of understanding? They cannot. Paradoxes multiply. Since only sums of individuals’ choosing for their own interests and preferences can register, how can even the most obvious universal life necessities of all compute? Again they cannot. Unless a serendipity of agreement of individuals on their collective interest somehow

makes its way into reality of what society decides to do, their common life goods are ruled out in theory as well as practice – as has increasingly occurred.

8.12.4.1. Atomic Social-Choice Model Is A-Priori Blind to Society’s Advance and Decline

What then of all *civil commons* by which the species’ life and evolution are advanced? How can this ruling model of social choice explain even what has *already* happened by socially instituted rules for the common life interest?

Consider the universal human life goods blocked out of view - universal education, public healthcare, city centers and parks, libraries and museums, pollution reduction enforcement, labor and building safety regulations, wilderness reserves, ocean mangroves and dykes, bridges and water control dams. How is *any* chooseable by adding up self-maximizing atomic choices? None has been. Here we may observe how the ruling logic and framework of social choice is blind to the existence and formation of the most basic common goods of civilization. While current global life-ground collapse demonstrates the ultimate disorder at work, it is conceived through the ruling value syntax as “market freedom”.

8.12.5. The Market Incapacitation of Species Evolution

If the common life interest which forms the basis of human society remains screened out without recognition or re-grounding, the derangement continues unseen. It might be thought that such a baseline problem of the dominant model of social choice must have been observed by philosophers and social scientists of record over 50 years. Consultation of the literatures will show problems of irreducible anomaly persistently emerging (such as “prisoner’s dilemma” discussed ahead), but no coherent concept of the common life interest is yet conceived.

Observation of global public policy trends over 30 years on the ground shows, on the contrary, that already evolved social constructs of the common life interest are systematically defunded, deregulated and privatized as “market reforms”. This privatizing commodification of humanity’s natural and social life supports themselves is, ironically, represented as “democratic”. Yet if only choices for self-serving money gains and commodities register to this value calculus, goods of the common life interest are ruled out *a-priori*. This is where market logic leads.

8.13. Contemporary Critical Theory: Turning Away from Ontology and Base

The problem of no common life ground or interest, only private right and preference, is profound. It has become so deeply structured into the mind reflexes of the age even intellectual giants of the Left cannot find a way out. Philosophical discussions between two Marx-affirming powerhouses of learned and emancipatory thought, Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979) and Jürgen Habermas (1929), exemplify the problem. As we see ahead, the life-ground of humanity and its common interest is brushed aside as metaphysics, or reduced to the instinctual level.

Revealingly the theoretical empty-hand that here emerges on the Left here accompanies the simultaneous rebirth of market fundamentalism in the “Reagan-Thatcher revolution” launched in the same years to defund, dismantle and market civil commons across the world for the next 30 years.

8.13.1. Diverse Philosophies of What Ultimately Matters

Habermas and Marcuse agree in their debate published by *Telos* in 1979-80 that there have been diversely failed ways of understanding what ultimately matters in our lives. Some speak of “human life” as *Dasein*, others of “existence”, others of “the essence of man”, others of “existential choice” (*existentiel choix*), others of “instinctual drives”, and still others of “ontological foundations”.

An “entire substructure of human behavior” has gone historically wrong according to both philosophers. But agreement ends there.

8.13.2. Bad Abstract Concepts

Habermas is revealing in his critique of why twentieth-century philosophy has little to offer. “Gradually we noticed”, he says, that the famous proclamation of bringing philosophy “back to earth” were “false”. “What (Martin) Heidegger (1889-1976) had done essentially”, continues Habermas, “was to replace the transcendental categories of Husserl [1859-1938] with his own”. Grounding concepts like “existence” and “anxiety” evaporated into “bad abstract concepts”.

8.13.3. Decoupling from the Life-Ground

Habermas claims that the abstractions of Heidegger are “bad” because they are “ontological”: that is, they suppose ultimate universal structures of human being. Like the anti-foundationalist and postmodern movements forming in philosophy in general, any common life interest or ground of humanity has become unfashionable to assert.

Habermas as others in this epochal turn does not reason against what is repudiated, but moves with the dominant mainstream in supposing that problems of language and communication are what must be resolved.

8.13.4. Free Communication on the Basis of the Market Mechanism

Yet Habermas surprisingly says at first that the “turning point” for him and others was the publication of Marx’s *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* (1844-45), an early work of Marx which went beyond the Communist Party’s “petrified practical and theoretical Marxism”. Yet Habermas has just rejected “ontological claims” and Marx’s *Manuscripts* are as onto-ethical as social philosophy gets.

Habermas not only does not retain Marx’s concern for the materialist substructure of how humanity reproduces and develops its nature, but he assumes - again as the age does - that this problem has *already* been resolved by the market mechanism. The “self-regulating market”, he later declares after the fall of the Soviet Union, has already

proved to be the necessary technostructure (emphasis added) for *any* “modern society which wishes to survive” (1991).

8.13.4.1. Language the Ultimate Recourse

Habermas goes to where twentieth-century philosophy in general has gone. “The principle of language”, Habermas suggests, “is the one to which we must take recourse”- specifically for him, “the *telos* of free agreement inherent in reason as language”.

Here we see the emergence of Habermas’s now world-famous “theory of communicative action” which disposes of any ultimate ground on which reason and communication is to be based. Indeed what he misleadingly calls “the life-world” (*Lebenswelt*) means for him only the “*background convictions*” of speakers (Habermas, 1984, 1987).

8.14. The Ideal Speech Situation: More Proceduralism without Life Content

In understanding the principles of the “ideal speech situation” by which speakers are to be regulated to achieve valid consensus lies, for Habermas, the ultimate guide of social action. No deeper foundation can be relied on than the ‘free agreement’ process *in abstracto* - decoupled from any ground of accountability beyond the discussion itself.

Essentially what Habermas identifies are individual rights in discourse to overcome blocks against “free agreement” among speakers. These are to be deduced, he says, from the *telos* or purpose implicit in “reason as language”. His method deserves distinct explanation because it is independently important in philosophical analysis, and deployed by life-value analysis too.

8.14.1. Philosophy’s Method of Transcendental Deduction

Transcendental deduction is logical analysis in which the necessary presupposition of a claim or position is deduced as self-evident – for example, the necessary presupposition that to speak of an effect assumes a cause of it. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) is the first formalizer of this method, and Habermas, who is influenced by Kant, applies this method to human discourse. He seeks to show that there are implicit standards of reasonable discussion.

What is worth noting is that these are *universal* principles Habermas claims. He does not follow the trend of denying universal principles, as in claiming that there are always different meanings in different contexts and language games (Wittgensteinian linguistic philosophy). Nor does he follow the postmodern method of deconstruction which always leads to different perspectives and meanings which are irreducibly plural. Habermas derives universal standards of free speech and consensus as constituting an “ideal speech situation” which, he argues, is implicit in the organizing presuppositions of language itself.

8.14.2. Ideal Procedure without Life Substance

Here Habermas follows both linguistic philosophy and postmodernism in operating wholly within the realm of words. More specifically, he is another leader of the *proceduralist* movement that has dominated philosophy in the last century. What others like John Rawls (1921-2006) do for justice and morality, Habermas does for speech interactions. He converts all problems from substantive issues and actual life conditions to an ideal format within which rational deduction/ discussion can proceed.

Unnoticed, contemporary philosophy's contending schools have all delinked from the world's life-and-death problems into idealized models of issue discussion. So has economics into algebraic symbols without even linguistic substance. Common life requirements are dissolved within vacuum-sealed procedures of formal deduction from which reality is abstracted out.

8.14.3. Habermas's Ideal Speech Standards Defined

Habermas's model follows the master pattern. His position is elaborate in delivery, but its innermost principle is released into plain view in his debate with Marcuse. Throughout, he decouples from life needs and ground to generate an "undistorted" framework of communication exchange. Like the "undistorted market" of ideal dyadic exchanges in formal economic theory, no life base nor coordinates remain.

Yet Habermas's principles are worth defining. They reveal what might be *the communication rights of individuals* within a discussion: the right of all participants to initiate or participate in a discourse; to be unbound from role privileges and one-sidedly binding norms; to be able to question or defend any factual or normative claim; to be allowed to move the discourse to higher levels of abstraction and examination of assumptions; and to be motivated only by a desire to reach consensus on the truth of statements and the validity of norms.

8.14.4. The Missing Life-Ground of Communicative Action

Life-value onto-axiology endorses these norms of reasonable communicative action, even if they seem only applicable to an academic seminar. More deeply it insists on what these communication rights have completely disconnected from - *the life-ground of universal organic, social and ecological life requirements to which consensual procedures need to be accountable to be life coherent.*

Much of the rest of this study is devoted to spelling out this foundational meaning from which contemporary theory across schools has disconnected.

8.14.4.1. The Unspoken Function: Screening Out World Problems

What Habermas provides are norms to govern speech in the air. There is, once more, no capacity of these principles to recognize or to understand global problems beneath talk. The same incapacity afflicts contemporary linguistic philosophy and epistemology, as we have seen, and most moral and political philosophy as well.

However grave the ignored problems might be, *the capacity of these principles to direct attention to them does not exist* within the mainstreams of philosophy and science. Mass extinction spasms of other species by “the technical-administrative apparatus” of the market mechanism or its depletion of the social and natural infrastructures on which human life depends cannot compute to these parameters of inquiry.

In the case of Habermas who seeks “the organization of a free, general articulation of will”, their terms of legitimacy are perfectly indifferent to whether the life means and infrastructures which enable people to speak at all are sustained or not – in particular, those outside the speakers’ linguistic circle. The impoverishment of a foreign-language majority by the consequences of such discussion cannot be detected by these de-grounded norms of communication.

8.15. Life Coherence: The Lost Baseline of Human Reason

Habermas also insists on this disconnection from the life-ground by everyone else. In preconscous conformity to the ruling value syntax, he repudiates any common life-ground at all – even that proposed ahead by his senior in the Critical Theory tradition, Herbert Marcuse. It does not occur to Habermas that despite his ideal principles which call for examination of assumptions that his *own* position rules out just such examination of the most basic assumption there can be - the assumption that the universal life necessities of communicative action will be minimally met before it can proceed or be possible at all.

Habermas again follows the traditions of linguistic and analytic philosophy from which life support systems are blinkered out *a-priori*.

8.15.1. The Undetected Logic of Life-Blindness and Injustice

What, for example, is to prevent those fulfilling the terms of “the ideal speech situation” from leading a cumulative fouling of the atmosphere and the waters which all their communicative actions ignore? Or which of its standard rules out their collaborating in silence with the looting of the lives and lands of others not speaking their language? As long as their concerns do not reach wider than the ideal norms of their communication *with each other*, these dire externalities cannot compute.

8.15.1.1. Not only Habermas’s ideal speech situation but virtually every leading model of contemporary philosophy and science builds an analogous technical edifice decoupled from universal life requirements and support systems. Their regulating frameworks of analysis are constructed so as to pre-consciously exclude them.

Sometimes the exclusion is even built into a special rule of prohibition. For example, mainstream political philosophy and liberal discourses affirm the necessity of government’s “*neutrality between conceptions of the good*”. It thus follows that any accountability of government to the universal human life necessities of citizens is another “conception of the good” which it must avoid to be neutral. Public authority’s ultimate obligation is thus ruled out as invalid.

8.15.2. Who Decides Which Life Is Better? Repressing the Common Life-Ground *a-priori*

Herbert Marcuse is an exception. He insists on the common life interest as the basis of critical discussion. In the face of repudiation of his position as “authoritarian metaphysics”, he declares “two irreducible value judgments” (numbers added):

- (1) “It is better to live than not to live, and
- (2) it is better to have a good life than a bad one”.

8.15.3. The Closed Circle of Life-Ground Disconnection

Who could disagree with such an open logical form of self-evident claims? one might ask. Yet in philosophy there has come to be a rigid wall between universal principles grounded in the common life interest *and* procedures of recognizing and resolving individual preferences. The latter is assumed as the source of legitimacy, and so the former is ruled out or assumed to follow only from this source.

The fire-wall has become so fixed that even Marcuse’s benign “irreducible value judgments” are attacked by Habermas and others since. Behind this rejection lies what is not seen, the ruling value syntax governing assumptions. Sovereign consumers who decide what is good for themselves is a silent major premise internalized as a rule of thought. Again, common life interests are silently boxed out.

8.15.3.1. Who Decides What the Better Life Is?

Habermas accordingly raises a question which speaks for the era within which he writes. “*Who determines* what the better life is?” he demands. Marcuse revealingly replies: “That’s the one question I refuse to answer”. Again, the circle of discourse cannot intelligibly reconnect to a common life interest. Even Marcuse refuses to define what he means.

That life-grounded value foundations are abstracted out of inquiry is a long problem of learned thought. Habermas is typical in his repudiation of any stated common ground of value because he, as others, assumes individuals must decide everything for society to be free. One “can never speak for others”. Marcuse, on the other hand, refuses to respond with any deeper ground of value meaning. Objective grounds of life-value remain blinkered out across disagreement.

8.15.4. Undecidability the Next Step

Jacques Derrida (1930-) goes further. A primary leader of postmodern understanding, he seeks to show that in the end no common meaning is even *possible* because of irreducible differences of perspective brought to individual interpretation and manifold readings of texts. Any collective “project of action”, he concludes in his *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas* (1999), is therefore “totalitarian”. For it overrides irreducible differences and plurality of meanings. We see here how common life interests and ground can come to be *unthinkable* within the contemporary mind.

8.16. The Common Life Interest as Universal: The Ultimate Choice Space of Action

Yet when we consider the two principles stated by Marcuse, they seem self-evident across perspectives and norms of free speech - that it *is* better to live than not, and to have a better life rather than a worse one.

So the question arises. How is reason to cut this Gordian knot of disconnection from any common ground of value? The answer here is that as soon as the first general proposition of value is agreed to - that it is better to live than not to live - the second follows. For if it is good to live, it is good to live without diminution of life: that is, to live better rather than worse. The question of “*who* determines what the better life is” is beside the point. For the questioner has already made the choice to live better than worse by performing countless actions to do so – to eat good food rather than bad, to drink potable water from reliable sources rather than not, to hold a good job rather than renounce it, and so on through all the universal means of life flourishing which have already been chosen, but not examined in their underlying principle of what is good.

8.16.1. Universal Human Life Necessities Are Not an Opinion

The mistake which Habermas makes and Marcuse neglects to see is to assume that the nature of a better life rather than a worse one is subjective. For it is a matter of universal fact that any person is *objectively* better/worse off with/without clean air to breathe, water to drink, nutriment to eat, shelter to sleep in, care when ill, meaningful work to do, and so on. Otherwise their capacities of living are reduced without exception.

Conversely, they live less well or worse to the exact and objective degree that they are deprived of any or all of these means of life. This is why they are called *necessities*, but with no criterion to identify true from false claims. Life-value onto-axiology recognizes the criterion that neither philosophers nor policy makers have spelled out. *Any life-means necessity for anyone everywhere is that without which anyone's organic life capacity is reduced.* No-one decides this principle of better rather than worse life. It denotes an ultimate and general life-and-death fact with no scientifically known exceptions. It may be diverted form or substituted for by commodities without life standards, overlooked and ignored, denied in the case of others, and abstracted away by theorists, businessmen and political parties. Yet its universal principle of better/worse life is undeniable, and its degrees of objective difference are objectively demonstrable.

8.16.2. Chosen Action within Realm of Life Necessity Decides Better or Worse Life

The *choice space* of individual and social decision is *whether* human life necessities and life means are aimed for and provided, or not. This choice space is recognized, in turn, or blocked out, at many levels. It may be theoretically considered or *not*, chosen for or not, rationally discovered and defined or not, grounded in as economic and social bases or not, articulated as public policy or not, and understood as the foundations of all coherent human value judgment or not. It is the ultimate choice space of both individuals and societies, and decision between seeing or unseeing determines whether people know how to live well or ill.

Whatever perspectives may be, the life necessities by which human life lives, lives well, or is immiserated are the defining substance of *the common life interest*. Public rules of government and funding may be decided to ensure them by civil commons, or to abdicate this obligation by “letting the market decide”, or whatever; but the objective criterion and measure of these life necessities cannot be coherently denied.

8.16.3. Polar Possibilities of Action Determined by Decision Structures

Just as the value judgment - to live is better than not to live – has already been performatively decided by one’s continued life, so too the better life is already variously chosen for by this decision - to prefer clean to polluted water, nourishing food to tasty toxins, and so on through all life means and support systems. If regulating value-systems are irrational by disconnection from what enables rather than disables people’s lives, then many or all may produce and drink plastic-leached water, manufacture and eat junk, foul their common life conditions and so on: but *not* because objective life values and disvalues are “unknowable”, or “ineliminably conflicted” or “must be decided by free individuals”. The goods of life necessities are as objective as the organism requiring them not to be incapacitated immediately or downstream.

Life overall is always better individually or collectively to the precise extent of its enabling means. People anywhere without any one of these life goods lose their life capacities to the precise extent of their deprivation. No-one decides this correlation itself, but they do decide whether to recognize it or not as individuals or societies, whether to act or not on this recognition, and whether to do so towards universal or partial provision, and so on. This is the ultimate decision frame of how human beings live, however much it is strangely avoided over millennia of philosophy.

Life-coherent theories resolve towards this recognition of what is objectively better for people’s lives, and this is the deepest thought movement of history from Lao Tzu and his successors to Karl Marx and his. What is wanting is their *criterion*, but it is not to be found from the works of Plato through Jean Jacques Rousseau to Karl Polanyi, John Rawls, Herbert Marcuse and G.A. Cohen. The complete set of these universally enabling life goods without which anyone’s life is reduced, and with which none is, is the moving line of life-ground understanding and action spelled out in *Deep Principles of Justice: Grounding in Life-value Meaning*.

8.16.4. Legitimacy and Primary Goods without Common Life-Ground or Means of Life

We may put the matter in symbolic formula: *Human life (H) enabled by (E) these universal necessities (UN) in adequate degree (AD) is an objectively better life than without (Vv).*

While the principles of a better rather than worse life can be as self-evident as any principles can be, none have been more studiously blinkered out, including by philosophy and political-economic policy. More sales for private profit *over* more means of life for human life and life conditions is, instead, the reigning structure of rules and action – so much so that even the founding theorist of communicative action

presupposes this “self-regulating” market rule as the given of “any modern society that wishes to survive”.

Or, as John Rawls in his canonical *A Theory of Justice*, “primary goods” have been assumed to be all located in an abstract self - individual liberty, money and self respect - without universal life means or support systems entering conception. How, we may ask, have leading contemporary thinkers so entirely lost humanity’s common life ground and interest from view?

8.16.5. The Lost Life-World

Habermas informally admits a substantive life problem of contemporary civilization - “we are sitting in all this shit” - but he can see no way out other than an ideal speech situation to get consensus on what to do. “In every concrete situation”, he proclaims as an ineliminable impasse, “there are very *different* definitions of our common interest”. When Marcuse persists that there is a common interest “that anyone can see”, Habermas deploys the era’s paradigmatic diversion to the self: “What gives you the authority to say: I, Herbert Marcuse, can easily demonstrate what serves the general interest today?” (p. 138).

Prior text has explained this common interest as objective and universal in the human life goods and necessities of all that it subsumes – that without which *any* suffer life capacity loss. Yet Marcuse has no answer to Habermas’s question. He appeals rather to unexplained “instincts” with no life standard to govern them. In the end, two of the greatest thinkers of the twentieth century who recognize a calamitous disorder of the System have no resources to meet it but the force of “instinct” or a non-existent “ideal speech situation”.

Glossary

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

Analytic philosophy: An umbrella term covering any school or method of philosophy for which logical rigor of conceptualization and argument define philosophical understanding.

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.

Axiology: From the Greek, *axioma*, “what is thought to be worthy”, the ultimate, but under-theorized 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. Onto-axiology is axiology which grounds in the nature of being. Life-value onto-axiology grounds in life-value as defined by the Primary Axiom

of Value.

- Anti-foundationalism:** A generic term for the dominant trend of philosophy over the recent century embracing many contemporary philosophers and schools of thought whose unifying characteristic is denial of any universal ground, truth or value.
- Biophilia:** A term coined by Erich Fromm which means “love of life” which he distinguishes from its opposite “necrophilia”, the “love of death” or repressive inflexibility. Biophilia is distinguished from life-value onto-axiology in attending only to the affective or felt side of life affirmation without principled distinctions among fields and ranges of life value and disvalue.
- Capitalism:** A socioeconomic system in which all values are conceived in money terms and maximum sale of commodities for maximum private profit is the ultimate value governor of thought and action. (Strictly speaking, the adjective money before capitalism is required to ensure distinction from other forms of capital). (e.g., life capital). Money capitalism is defined by its value governor, **the money sequence of value**.
- 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 Principle:** see Life Coherence Principle
- 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 as societies - the ultimate and ongoing choice process of societies which govern the lives of all, but are normally presupposed as given.
- 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, shared life support systems.
- Deep ecology:** A movement founded by Arne Naess whose leading ideas against environmental resourcism are that “the well-being and flourishing of non-human life have value in themselves independent of their usefulness for human purposes” and “humans have no right to reduce the richness and diversity of life forms except to satisfy vital needs” (a term left undefined).
- Deep naturalistic fallacy:** Does not merely identify the good with a natural property, but identifies the survival-of-the-fittest order of nature with human order, and assumes this order as both necessary and good for human survival and development.

- Consequentialism:** Often equated to utilitarianism, but strictly holding that the good or bad is to be found in its consequences, not its principle of action or intention.
- Deontological ethics:** Essentially, “duty ethics”, standardly opposed to utilitarianism insofar as it holds that good lies in the principle or duty which action embodies, not its consequences.
- 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 – principally, more commodities sold for profit (market development/growth) versus 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 - most famously, mind and body, *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, the dualism instituted in Western philosophy by Descartes. Dualist divisions have been perpetual in philosophy since the ancients, and in respect of the felt side of being include reason-emotion, subjective-objective, and spirit-matter.
- Either-or reduction:** A regulating structure of normative thinking which assumes the logical form of *p or not-p* (“the excluded middle”), thereby eliminating the range of other value possibilities, including both in more complex mutual inclusion. See also **Dualism**.
- 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:** One of the three recognized basic areas of philosophy that which is concerned with what is good and bad in human action, including competing positions of utilitarianism, deontological/formalist/duty ethics, emotivism/non-cognitivism, evolutionary ethics, intuitionism, naturalism, perfectionism, phenomenological ethics, postmodern ethics, subjectivism/pluralism/relativism, self-realization/teleological ethics, and virtue ethics. Perhaps the most enduring received meta-ethical debate is between consequentialism (judging by consequences, e.g., utilitarianism) and non-consequentialism (judging by the intrinsic principle of judgment and action e.g., Platonism and Kantianism). Moral philosophy is often equated to

Ethics, but is in principle more restricted in reference to ought-to statements which entail prescriptions or prohibitions whose violation is thought to deserve guilt or punishment.

Existentialism: Classically defined by Jean-Paul Sartre as “existence precedes essence”, which means that human choice of what one does (existence) precedes any set fate, determinism, role or external design with those denying responsibility of choice being in “bad faith” (*mauvais fois*).

Externalism: Any standpoint or theory which denies the inner fields of thought and feeling or, conversely, restricts reality to space-occupying states. See also **Mechanical reduction**.

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.

Globalization: A concept which admits of many different meanings but whose dominant meaning is globalization of capitalism. See **Capitalism**.

Hermeneutics: theory, methodology or philosophy of interpretation of texts.

Human value identity: This is a concept which understands value identity as that which is identified with by a self as its value meaning (e.g., the value identity of a person who identifies only with his possessions including life as private property, *and*, at the other pole, the h.v.i. of a person or society which identifies with all of the life process without exclusion).

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

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

Internal and external goods: This is the basic distinction between what is a good in itself and what is a good as an external possession.

Justice: See **Social justice**

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

Life coherence principle: The onto-axiological principle whereby positions or systems 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 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-world:** Concept deployed by some continental philosophers like Husserl and Habermas which does not refer to life but to background beliefs. See **Life-Ground**.
- Life sequence of value:** The process whereby any body of life becomes more life by means of life 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 support systems:** Any natural or human made system that enables the life of the biosphere in a sustainable way so as to meet human needs.
- Life-unconscious:** the life-unconscious arises out of life desires being conditioned to repressive forms – for example, the desire for oneness with life conditioned to be a craving for a power-machine vehicle dominating nature. See Bernays, Edward W. in **Bibliography**.
- Life-value metric:** more/less life range in any domain or degrees of life function or expression.
- Life-value onto-axiology:** The value-system which regards life and means of life to more coherently comprehensive ranges of life as the ultimate and universal good. (Also referred to as life-value onto-*ethic* when emphasis is on the normative dimension of the axiology.) See **Axiology**.
- Linguistic idealism:** The dominant tendency of philosophy to decouple language from 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) in confining philosophical problems and discourse to issues of language or sign systems.
- 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).

Megamachine: 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) referred to also as “metaphysic” when a doctrine lacks consciousness of the underlying principles of its assertion. //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. The money sequence of value ultimately regulates and is expressed in myriad forms of so-called “globalization”.

Moral Philosophy: Moral philosophy is often equated to Ethics, but is in principle more restricted in reference to ought-to statements which entail prescriptions or prohibitions whose violation is thought to deserve guilt or punishment (e.g., in life-value onto-axiology, the prescription/prohibition not to harm life). See also **Ethics**.

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.

Need: That without which life capacity is reduced.

Objective Values: Values which are independent of individuals’ affirming them (e.g., the values of universal life support systems like the earth’s atmosphere).

Open question argument: Whenever identity of the good with a natural property is claimed, the question of value that always remains is - but is it really *good*? (e.g., “pleasure”).

Onto-Ethics/Onto-Axiology: A primary concept of life-ground value theory in which the standard and reductionist split between ontology (the philosophy of being) and ethics/axiology (critical theory of good and bad) is overcome in a non-divided unity of understanding such that the analysis of the ultimate structure of being as such (ontology) and of the ultimately regulating principles of good and bad (ethics/axiology) are integrated into one field of philosophical

understanding.

- Pareto Optimum (or Pareto efficiency):** A standard ideal of philosophical and economic rationality in which no-one can be made better off without making someone else worse based on pure-type dyadic exchanges of private assets *in vacuo*.
- Onto-axiology:** A concept which supersedes the standard reductionist split between ontology (the philosophy of being) and ethics/axiology (general theory of good and bad).
- Objective Values:** - Values which are independent of individuals' affirming them (e.g., the values of universal life support systems).
- Pareto Optimum (or Pareto efficiency):** A standard ideal of philosophical and economic rationality in which no-one can be made better off without making someone else worse based on pure-type dyadic exchanges of private assets *in vacuo*.
- Phenomenology:** A major school of contemporary philosophy in which human consciousness as such is adopted as the direct object of analysis prior to the subject-object distinction, causal explanation or scientific claims.
- 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**.
- Proceduralism:** A generic pattern of leading philosophies of value which assume that universal values can only be implicit in or decided by procedures of argument (e.g., "contractarian" models of justice and norms of "the ideal speech situation"), and whose rational "procedures" distinguish the different schools.
- Profit:** The positive difference between input of value and output of value whose dominant type is private money inputs and private money outputs to the maximum gain of money-capital owners. Profit from the positive difference between public investment and the life-value gain of citizens is its civil commons form.
- 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:** A society's value-system presupposed by those governed by it which ultimately regulates the decision norms and goals of the society's dominant social institutions, individual roles within them, and the thought structure of those internalizing it. See also **Value Syntax**.
- Second-order** A move from first-order value-system (e.g., to maximize

- Shift:** 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 principle of its opposite which it overcomes systematic suffering from need by the life-capacity loss entailed by the deprivation of life means.
- Soul:** The ultimate elective depth of the person or community, the feeling core opening beyond self as the felt bonds of being which admit of infinite possibilities.
- Transcendental deduction:** Logical analysis in which the necessary presuppositions of the intelligibility of a claim or position are deduced as self-evident (eg., the necessary presupposition that all humanity is European in the statement “Columbus discovered America”).
- Truth:** See **Validity**.
- 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 *without* which human life capacities are reduced or destroyed.
- Validity:** From the Latin, *validus*, or strong, usually reduced to rigorous logical consistency of inferences from premises (philosophy) or repeatable demonstration of empirical claims (science), with neither required to be consistent with life requirements. **See Life Coherence Principle.**
- Value compossibility:** The compatibility of formerly competing or traded-off goods yielding more coherently inclusive value provision (e.g., housing development including preservation of natural environments for multiplied value).
- Value neutrality:** A standard which is claimed when a value-system is so deeply taken for granted that its outcomes appear as value free although achieved by the regulation of strict criteria of value and value judgment (e.g., the canons of scientific method).
- Value-system:** Any stable set of regulators of judgment and action, whether or not the value deciders are recognized.
- Value syntax:** Organizing principles of pro-and-con meaning, prescription,

position and transformation which regulate a value system, but may be invisible to those who presuppose it. In the ruling value syntax of contemporary global society, the *subject* is money capital whose *verb* is seeking to become more without upper limit, and all *modifiers* 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 *more* money capital. Rationality in this onto-axiological grammar is regulatively presupposed as (i) self-maximizing strategies in (ii) conditions of scarcity or conflict over (iii) desired payoffs at (iv) minimum costs for the self to (v) win/gain more.

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Mill, John Stuart (1963-91), *Collected Works*, 33 vols. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. [These volumes contain the works cited in this essay, *On Liberty* and *On Utilitarianism* and the essay, "On Nature" from his *Three Essays on Religion*.]

Miller, Peter and Westra, Laura, eds (2002), 326 pp. *Just Ecological Integrity: The Ethics of Planetary Life*, Boston: Rowman and Littlefield. [Representative text of original work in environmental ethics by philosophers, social scientists and ecologists on occasion of the Earth Charter 2000.]

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

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

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

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

Nietzsche, Friedrich (1964), *The Complete Works of Nietzsche* (ed. O. Levy). New York: Russell and Russell. [Includes the works in value theory referred to and critiqued throughout the Theme Essay, such as *The Genealogy of Morals* and *Beyond Good and Evil* which explain Nietzsche's master idea that "values are constructs of domination", and that moral will is ultimately a "will to power": with "slave morality" too as a will to power moved by *ressentiment* against the rule of "nature's aristocracy", to whose "free expression" inferior human beings "must be reduced to slaves, to tools". Martin Heidegger and Michel Foucault diversely express the Nietzschean value ontology - the former in a dichotomy of *Sein* (Being) and *das Mann* (loosely, superior and mass man), and the latter in the organizing idea of a ruling knowledge/power alliance with no limit.]

Noddings, Nel (1984/2003), *Caring: A feminine approach to ethics and moral education*, 275pp. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. [This work leads in developing a concrete relational morality of *caring* with no onto-ethical ground.]

Noonan, J. (2003), *Critical Humanism and the Politics of Difference*, 189 pp. Kingston-Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press. [This study exposes a deep-structural contradiction between postmodern denial of any universal human essence *and* the presupposition of just such a value essence for human life to self-determine differences.] // [This pathbreaking study examines postmodernism in the works of its leading authors (e.g., principally Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard and Iris Young), and exposes a deep-structural contradiction - between postmodern denial of any universal human essence *and* the presupposition of just such a value essence - for human life to self-determine - which Noonan shows is implicit in "the principle of difference" itself, and in submerged humanity's continuous uprisings against ruling systems of oppression.]

Nozick, R. (1974), *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, 367pp. New York: Basic Books. [A very influential work rejecting liberal arguments for equality of rights in favour of rights of private property to trump any kind of redistributive ethic, argument or policy.]

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

Nussbaum, M. (1999) *Sex and Social Justice*, 476pp. New York: Oxford University Press. [Major work of an outstanding Aristotelian liberal and feminist, revealing in its attention to "separateness", "the separate individual" as the ground of value understanding, the "fundamental fact of ethics", thus entailing

abstraction out of life support systems as a methodological given.]

Olson, M.(1965) *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*, 176pp. Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press. [Along with Arrow's Paradox, the classical and more comprehensive statement of the problem of collective action based on individual choice functions alone.]

Ostrom, Elinor (1990) *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*, 280 pp. Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press. [Recipient of the 2009 Nobel Prize in Economics, Ostrom confines her study to small-scale commons organized and governed by individuals without government funding, legal enforcement, or life-value criterion.]

G. Outka and J.P. Reeder eds. (1993), *Prospectus for a Common Morality*, 302pp. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [This collection of original articles includes internationally recognized leaders in the field with, as elsewhere, no common life interests defined.]

Pareto, Vilfredo, (1971 [1906]), *Manual of Political Economy*, New York: A.M. Kelley [Classic of rational choice theory and economic reason whose famous principle of "Pareto optimality/efficiency" is based on dyadic asset exchange with no relation to life value.]

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

Patel, Raj (2009), *The Value of Nothing: Where Everything Costs Much More than We Think*, 250pp. Toronto: Harper-Collins [Useful work on global market failures and commons options.]

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

Plato (1961), *The Collected Dialogues of Plato* (ed. E. Hamilton and H. Cairns), Pantheon Books: New York. [The complete dialogues in which Socrates' and Plato's idealist "Theory of Forms" posits pure, transcendental and eternal ideas of which all material entities are but inferior, mutable copies.]

Polanyi, Karl (1944/2000), *The Great Transformation*, 315 pp. Boston: Beacon Press. [This canonical study lays bare the life fabric of violent transition from pre-market village society through the utopian free market cataclysm to the 1944 understanding of community instituted by public institution and the welfare state.]

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

Rawls, J. (1967), *A Theory of Justice*. 542pp. Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press. [This is the leading work in the field whose paradigmatic method assumes self-maximizing rational choice "including wanting a larger share for oneself" and abstract agents and institutions decoupled from life needs and collective support systems.]

Reid, G.B.R. (2007), *Biological Emergences: Evolution by Natural Experiment*, 517pp. Cambridge Mass: MIT Press.[This work by a biologist explains how the "autocatalyzing" organism is a coordinating system which reduces infinite interactive possibilities to predictable pathways of homeostasis but is sufficiently flexible to allow for emergence of new types of life.]

Rescher, N. (1969), *Introduction to Value Theory*, 205 pp. Engelwood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.[This monograph by the most published analytic philosopher of the last century exemplifies the era's formalist method and symbolic notations purged of substantive issues of value.]

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

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

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques (1984), *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (trans. M. Cranston), 182 pp. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books [Rousseau conceives human beings in their natural state of human language, reason and species sympathy before private property, division of labor and vain desires corrupt and alienate them.]

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

Russell, Bertrand (1983-), *Bertrand Russell: Collected Papers*, 29 vols. London: Allen and Unwin. [Includes Russell's prolific corpus of philosophical and public works, including his regret of twentieth-century philosophy's wide abandonment of "understanding the world itself, that grave and important task which philosophy throughout has hitherto pursued"].

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

Sartre, Jean-Paul (1972), *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. 2 Vols. London: Verso Books. [Sartre's major work after his earlier 1953 classic of existential phenomenology, *Being and Nothingness*, seeking to synthesize individual existential choice with Marxian dialectical reason.]

Schopenhauer, Arthur (1818/1957), *The World as Will and Representation*, 3 vols. London: Routledge. [This is Schopenhauer's definitive work, the classic "pessimistic philosophy" in virtue of its depiction of cosmic life as a round of blind desire, competitive struggle and suffering which leads reason to "denial of the will to live".]

Schweitzer, Albert (1936), "The Ethics of Reverence for Life", *Christendom*, 1, 225-39. [This is perhaps the most crystalline argument for Schweitzer's flagship "new ethics" rebutting prior ethics for "an absolute ethics of will-to-live [which] must reverence every form of life, seeking so far as possible to refrain from destroying any life, regardless of its particular type".]

Searle, J.R. (1995), *The Construction of Social Reality*, 238 pp. New York: Free Press. [Searle argues clearly for the irreducibly symbolic and rule-governed character of objective human reality not possibly explicable by physical particles and fields of force.]

Sen, Amartya (1977). "Rational Fools: A Critique of the Behavioral Foundations of Economic Theory", *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 6, 317-44. [This classic article argues against the purely selfish understanding of self-maximizing rationality.]

Sen, A (1998), *The Possibility of Social Choice*", 37pp. Trinity College, Cambridge: Nobel Lecture [This lecture provides an incomparably rich documentation of the literature on social choice, demonstrating there is no conception of social choice in received social science or philosophy other than as an aggregation of individual choosers.]

Singer, Irving (1966 -1987), *The Nature of Love*, 3 volumes. Chicago: Chicago University Press. [The most comprehensive study of theories of love from Plato to Sartre, it argues for love as "bestowal of value" on the love object without life-value considerations.]

Singer, Peter, *Animal Liberation: Man's Inhumanity to Animals* (1983). 302 pp. Wellingborough, Northamptonshire: Thorsons Press. [This is the definitive work by the best known advocate of animal rights, who deploys utilitarian ethics and the pain-reduction principle to argue against the standardized cruel abuse of domestic animals in factory food production.]

Smith, Adam (1776/1966), *An Inquiry into Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. 2 vols. New York: A.M. Kelley. [Possibly the most influential work in history, the founding work of "the moral science" of modern economics.]

Spinoza, Baruch (1985), *The Collected Works of Spinoza* (ed. E. Curley), 7 vols. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [Spinoza's most studied work, the *Ethics* is a deductive system modeled on Euclid's definitions, axioms and theorems in which God or infinite substance is conceived as the rational system of the universe in its thinking and extended modes and infinite attributes which can be better (more

adequately) or worse (less adequately) comprehended.]

Tompkins, P. And Bird, C., *The Secret Life of Plants* (1973). 402 pp. New York: Harper & Row [This book provides extensive evidence for the sentience of plants.]

Taylor, Charles (1989), *Sources of the self: the making of the modern identity*, 601pp. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. [This is a standard work in what is called “communitarian ethics” for its grounding in historically developed social relations as distinct from abstract liberal selves maximizing in a “value-neutral void”, but without any common life interest or base.]

Thoreau, Henry (1965), *Walden, and other writings*. 732 pp. New York: Modern Library. [Thoreau’s classic writings affirming a life of harmonious simplicity and awakens in Nature and his explanation of opposition to war by non-violent civil disobedience.]

Trungpa, C. (1988). *Shambala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*. 202 pp. Boston: Shambala Press [A leading example of contemporary conception of religious illumination and practice as that of a “warrior path” of happiness, here the Tibetan Buddhist “vehicle of the thunderbolt”.]

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

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

Whitehead, A.N. (1938), *Modes of Thought*, 172 pp. New York: Macmillan [Whitehead’s most well known lectures on his “process philosophy” which conceives Nature as “alive”, “feeling”, “purposing” and ever “creative” in the energy flows described by physics (the totality of which processes he conceives as God), as opposed to “dead” and “inert” in the Newtonian tradition.]

Wilson E.O. (1984) *Biophilia* (157 pp.) Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press. [An eminent entomologist proposes the “biophilia hypothesis” of an innate “affinity with nature ingrained in our genotype” to explain “why humans care for other species unrelated to them”.]

Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1968), *Philosophical Investigations*. 260 pp. New York: Macmillan. [Perhaps the most celebrated work of twentieth-century philosophy, it leads what philosophers have come to call “the linguistic turn” of philosophy with no reference to the world beyond “language games”.]

World Commission of the Environment and Development (1986). *Our Common Future*, New York: Oxford University Press.[This famous work endorses “five to ten times” more commodity system “growth” with no life standards of “sustainable development”.]

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

Biographical Sketch

John McMurtry holds his B.A. and M.A. from the University of Toronto, Canada and his Ph.D from the University of London, England, and has been Professor of Philosophy at the University of Guelph for over 20 years and University Professor Emeritus since 2005. He is an elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, and his many articles, chapters, books and interviews have been internationally published and translated.