

## TRADITIONS AS MORAL ANCHOR IN AN AGE OF CRITERIONLESS RELATIVISM

**John McMurtry**

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

**Keywords:** analytic philosophy, anti-foundationalism, armed force, axiology, class, consumerism, deontology, development, duties, ethics, evil, excellence, external and internal goods, financial practice, justice, life support systems, life value, Marxism, money game, morality, practices, relativism, ruling value system, story model, truth, universalizability, virtue ethics, war, Zen

### Contents

- 5.1. The De-Grounding of Philosophy
  - 5.2. Practice-based Ethics: From Marxism to Single-Issue Politics
  - 5.3. The Over-Stated Principle of Ruling-Class Determination of Society's Morality
  - 5.4. Value Theory Completeness: Towards Unlimited Validity
  - 5.5. A Grounded Post-Marxian Value Theory: Internal versus External Goods
  - 5.6. The Rise of the Story and the fall of Truth
  - 5.7. The Unseen Moral Imperative: A Value-Ground beneath Stories to Evaluate Them
  - 5.8. Defining Traditional Practices and Their Excellences as Value Ground
  - 5.9. Life and Light: Fields of Life Value beyond Excellence at Practices
  - 5.10. Resolving the Meta-Conflict between Activities to Excel and Opening to the Given
  - 5.11. System Block: The Goods, Standards and Moral Narrative of the Money Game
  - 5.12. The Problem: Lack of Life-Value Ground to Evaluate Humanity's Ruling Practice
  - 5.13. The Bonding Moral Narrative of the Money –Game Practice
  - 5.14. A Fault-Line of Human History: The Practice and Excellence of Armed Force
  - 5.15. The Imperative of a Higher Value Standard to Judge Practices and Traditions
  - 5.16. Why Justice as the Application of Equal Standards Fails
  - 5.17. How Moral Narratives Mask the Deepest Moral Problems
  - 5.18. Why Personal Virtues Are Not Themselves a Solution
  - 5.19. From the Relativism of Human Virtues and Powers to Life-Grounded Ethics
- Glossary  
Bibliography  
Biographical Sketch

### Summary

This chapter examines the grounding of value theory by the two leading schools of moral praxis - traditional Marxism, whose onto-axiological framework is explained as inadequate in principle, and MacIntyre's state-of-the-art Virtue Ethics, which is shown to lack the universal moral ground it seeks. Class morality, practices of excellence, character virtues, moral narratives, and human powers are one by one shown to entail evil outcomes if not accountable to life-value standards.

### **5.1. The De-Grounding of Philosophy**

As explained in the prior chapters, schools of moral theory since the turn of the twentieth century have been dominated by meta-ethics without moral substance. Fine-grained arguments about the nature of ought-claims and taxonomy of received theories have been central. In recent decades, anti-foundationalist and postmodern perspectives have been more fashionable, but whatever the mainstream currents, all have eschewed or denied any universal ground of value.

In short, a deep pattern of moral de-grounding has developed across schools - not only across the analytic-continental divide of Western philosophy, but as a zeitgeist of global cosmopolitan culture.

#### **5.1.1. Religious Fundamentalist Shift at the Same Time**

On the mass level, economic, ethnic and religious fundamentalisms have mushroomed to fill the moral vacuum with unexamined certitudes in place of sophisticated emptiness. “Culture wars” pitting these trends against one another have become endemic in our era - not only Judaic-Christian versus Islamic and religious versus secular, but global-market versus any alternative.

#### **5.1.2. Money Sequence Rule beneath Conscious Moral Bearings**

This actually ruling onto-axiology is not questioned in the media or graduate schools, but overrides as a totalizing system of private money-capital and commodity cycles expanding across borders as the vehicles of its universalization. Although these private financial and commodity circuits increasingly govern the globe with no purpose beyond their own growth, public policy and value theory assume the regulating money sequence as a necessary given.

In this situation, the question of how to live - the classical problem of philosophy since Socrates in the West and Confucius in the East - dissolves into the issue of ‘how to compete in the global market’.

### **5.2. Practice-based Ethics: From Marxism to Single-Issue Politics**

Practice-based ethics seeks to re-link with people’s moral concerns. At the most socially challenging, traditional Marxism seeks to transform the ruling social order from money-capitalist to communist-worker ownership relations. Yet since the end of the Soviet Union in 1991, the choral view has been that ‘Marxism is dead’. In axiological profile, the once-Marxian or socialist opposition has undergone a diaspora into anti-war fronts, feminist and gay movements in and out of the academy, green social politics, philosophical communitarianism, and so on.

In all, we can best understand this sea-change as a normative shift from class struggle and socialist choice to single-issue ethics and movements and ethics which do not challenge the ruling money-sequence system. As analysis explains in *The Global Crisis of Values*, it governs from behind as a regulating value syntax, not open to alternative.

Its meaning is straightforward but not questioned - to add ever more value to self and society by more money-sequencing via more commodities for sale to more members of the global consumer class. Thus whatever ecological or other meltdown results, the response is in terms of this value system itself, however absurd - for example, more transnational trade to solve the impoverishment of 40% of the world, or profitable new markets in carbon-pollution credits to reverse climate destabilization. Deeper value bearings in ecological and social life support systems themselves cannot be recognized from within this regulating logic of value meaning.

### **5.2.1. Marxism and Morality**

An implicit Marxian morality has been almost alone in confronting this ruling value system with an oppositional practice, but itself avoids the language of value or ethics. Moving beneath rampant ideological distortions of its meaning, the organizing principle(s) of this powerful doctrine at the level of human action may be defined in one sentence: Whatever scientifically promotes the interests of the proletarian class and its revolutionary mission to transform society to communism is good, and whatever retards it is bad. For this view, economic-class position normally determines which side one takes, but revolution, it is believed, is inevitable in any case.

Thus working class action in accordance with the requirements of productive force development is the principal concern in acting for better rather than worse. The inner moral meaning identified here is unique and unprecedented. Its defining features systematically distinguish it from agent-relative (individual) and meta-ethics - that is, mainstream analysis - on three levels: (1) its grounding of obligations in social structure and productive development, (2) its class agency of good action and (3) its purpose of revolutionizing rather than presupposing the world's capitalist value system.

### **5.2.2. Class-Bound Morality**

McMurtry (1978, 1981) develops Marx's implicit ethical principles using Marx's own immense corpus as a textual basis. He seeks to decode the implications of Marx's position for what his class-based analysis leaves out - the individual-agent morality in which received normative theory is alone interested.

Yet it is clear that Marx himself explicitly dismisses morality and moral theory as mere "ideology" behind which lurk "bourgeois interests" or, more generally, "ruling class interests". Morality and moral theory for this view are a kind of cover-story rationalization which philosophers perfect as a reigning system of illusion.

#### **5.2.2.1. Universalizability of Moral Principle as an Onto-Axiological Requirement**

What is not considered by his view, however, is that the class content of ruling moralities and the universalizability requirement of any authentically moral position - one that is applicable to everyone in all situations - are in contradiction. If the doctrine is class-biased, it cannot in principle be a universal or true ethic.

On the other hand, Marx thought the proletariat's class interests were ultimately the

interests of all, and so this is his implicit answer to this onto-axiological problem. Yet this is not an answer which takes into account the essence of any conscious ethic as distinguished from a sectarian program - intention and action in accordance with a principle of good which is universalizable across all individuals and groups. This is a concern that did not bother Marx. From his standpoint, class position determines or (in the workers' case) should determine what people decide.

“Methodological collectivism” is the subsequent term of art for this idea, although this too misses the point of the universalizability requirement of authentically ethical principles. Without it, we can never achieve an ethic that holds across different cultures and interests.

### **5.2.3. Methodological Individualism or Collectivism: A False Dilemma**

As to whether “methodological individualism” or “methodological collectivism”, self or class analysis is to be followed, this poses a false dilemma. Marx was unquestionably a methodological collectivist in analysis, essentially dismissing individual freedom as an issue within class-divided society; while mainstream ethics and moral philosophy repudiate this position in principle as a sinister error.

Both sides perform an either-or reduction, assuming one view or the other is true, but not both. This underlying logic of exclusive disjunction governs across schools of thought from the ancients on. In life-value onto-axiology, the resolving position is that both individual and collective forms of agency and analysis are essential to understanding: and for both, the universalizability of ethical principles is what distinguishes them from mere local mores or special-interest demands. It is just this universalizability condition of a true ethic which is most challenging to fulfill – to identify a regulating principle of life which is good for all across time, not just one group or a majority within a restricted space-time.

Marx's historicism ruled out such a possibility: although he does continually imply a meta-ethical principle, that it is always good for a society to develop its productive forces. Nonetheless he sees this development as inevitable not chosen - what necessitates revolutions once productive forces have outgrown ownership relations. In one way or another, then, Marx repudiates moral philosophy and ethics in method and substance. Moral positions, for Marx, are merely ideological, claimed universal only to validate them, and determined by the ruling class mode of production.

### **5.3. The Over-Stated Principle of Ruling-Class Determination of Society's Morality**

Marx seems right to claim that in fact historical moralities have expressed the collective interests of the ruling-class owners of society's means of production (whether in a slave, feudal, capitalist or Asiatic modes of production). More exactly, the dominant moral codes and theories of historical societies have been systematically partial to ruling-class interests insofar as their effective demands always conform to and never contradict the reigning structure of control of a society's means of life reproduction. This principle is not rigorously formulated by Marx and Marxists, but spells out the confirmable

meaning of the controversial doctrine of the ruling-class determination of a society's moral order and ideological forms.

Yet it does not follow from the sectarian ruling moralities of historical societies or even the class determination of their justifying theories that moral principles in themselves are false and distorted. This is a non-sequitur which blinkers out the possibility of a life-coherent ethic which is universalizable across individuals and classes.

### **5.3.1. Impartial Life-Value Morality: The Marxian Gap**

Redundant distortion of a society's moral order and ideas by ruling-class interests does not mean that a supra-class morality is impossible because such moral positions have long existed - like the moral doctrine of universal equality propounded since Mo Tzu (479-438 BCE).

When Marxism implies that any morality or ethic at all is a "mask for class interests", it overreaches its claims of class determination. As we have seen, life-value onto-axiology rules out any such partiality in principle by its defining requirement that only coherently inclusive life interests are valid. This is the universal ethic which is in part anticipated by the motto "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs", but Marx's reiteration of this principle (originally from Charles Fourier) moves beyond his own historical-materialist argument. He does not derive this principle from proletarian-class interests, nor from productive-force determination. Nor can he. No such moral principle can be deduced from them. This is the missing normative core of Marx's theory.

### **5.3.2. Recognizing Missing Choice Spaces and Avoiding Oversimplifications**

We need also here to distinguish between the truth of a theory and the interests of those who benefit from it. It could be a true theory (like the mechanical theory of steam power) and still benefit one class's interests much more than others by its implementation. It is, therefore, mistaken to think that even a theory in the interests of ruling owners is necessarily biased.

More deeply, ruling class interests however powerful may not determine a society's regulating moral principles in the long run. Society's deciding moral choice can go against these ruling interests - as with the abolition of slavery, limitless working days and child labor in Marx's nineteenth century itself - all life-value gains in society's moral order. This capacity of a society's value system to evolve beyond the dominant class interests of the day is of ultimate importance. That Marx's revolution-bound theory paid little heed to such onto-axiological evolution is a defining major limit of his position. No oversight could be more significant. This analysis explains why in *The Lost Social Subject: Evaluating The Rules By Which We Live*.

### **5.4. Value Theory Completeness: Towards Unlimited Validity**

This brings us to an ultimate challenge to any general theory of value, including Marx's. Analysis must distinguish between whether a theory of value covers only one or some

domains of value - true only up to a limit – and one which coherently covers all domains. A general theory of value to be true in the strong sense must have unlimited validity, and there is no question that Marxian theory does not have this explanatory power, or pretend to it e.g. why a sunset is beautiful, or how to comprehend personal mortality.

#### **5.4.1. Beyond Marxism: A Value Theory for All People and Domains**

Many theories have claimed a universal value position, but so far we have seen that none achieves it. Typically, value theories are partial both in their conformity to the ruling value system and in their coverage of only some value domains. In contrast, the Primary Axiom of Value, which is explained in depth in the next chapter, formally defines such a principle to apply across individuals, societies and domains with no limit of validity.

#### **5.4.2. The Limits of the Labor Theory of Value**

Marx does conceive of a value theory at the highest level of generality - “the labor theory of value”, a general theory of value he inherits from classical Political Economy and its first proponent, the moral philosopher Adam Smith.

Yet this theory of value is in principle incapable of subsuming very central domains of value. Ecological value and natural beauty, for example, are excluded a-priori, and the ultimate value fields of inner life investigated in the coming chapters do not exist for it.

#### **5.4.3. From Labor-Value to Life-Value Theory**

That life value reaches far beyond what human labor can produce is not comprehended by the Marxian value theory. One can certainly agree that labor-value is utterly essential, but know its profound limits. This is why life-value theory both includes what Marx one-sidedly excludes (natural and inner fields of life value), while also ruling out all any labor which does not produce or help to produce life means (labor to produce non-enabling objects). Marx’s labor theory of value blocks out both of these very fundamental value distinctions..

Whether one is pro-or-anti Marxian in politics, his value theory is radically inadequate. It is for this reason in part that social movements and systems in Marx’s name have been life-value insensitive and one-dimensionally economic in agenda.

### **5.5. A Grounded Post-Marxian Value Theory: Internal vs. External Goods**

Another onto-ethic which is anchored in practice and community, but in a traditional rather than revolutionary direction is Virtue Ethics. In Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue* (1981), this major school of normative philosophy is developed in the very directions that other contemporary ethics and normative theories fail to offer. It is morally substantive, practice-based and culture-critical. Reasoned at a high level of sophistication and wide grounding in how people live and believe they ought to live, MacIntyre’s ethical theory reaches back to Aristotle, and seeks to provide a ground to

moral and value judgment across historical time.

Confronting what almost all of his predecessors and peers have averted their eyes from, MacIntyre's argument is critically alert to a corruption of values in the contemporary epoch: namely, the pervasive structuring of people's motivation and action by extrinsic rewards in place of the "internal goods" of human practices and excellence at them. "Consumerism" is a well-known term for this syndrome, and MacIntyre seeks to penetrate its value-system core.

### **5.5.1. Anatomy of the Basic Value Theory**

In his distinction between "external" and "internal goods" lies the defined ground of MacIntyre's "unitary core concept" of value. The organizing argument and explanation of this positive concept of worth is found in a central section of his study (pp.175-240), which is organized by the following inner logic of value analysis.

#### **5.5.1.1. Internal and External Goods**

External goods" are goods such as "prestige, status, power and money" or, in a word, "worldly success", which are won or sought as rewards or payoffs of activities.

"Internal goods", in direct contrast, are goods internal to practices such as physics, art, medicine, athletic games, and philosophy which are enjoyed within these activities as goods in themselves.

For example, a child whose reason to play chess is to win candy seeks an external good. A child who finds goods specific to chess in trying to excel at it has discovered internal goods.

#### **5.5.2. The Global Market Order as Value System of Competing for External Goods**

External goods, MacIntyre argues, are the goods pursued by the modern individual in the liberal market. We may explicate the meaning here at the social-structural level which moral philosophy avoids. As with the indiscriminate child, external goods like money and commodities alone matter. Prices within market competition decide all values there are. In MacIntyre's terms, a competition for 'external goods', money and commodities, defines this value system.

#### **5.5.3. Virtue Ethics: Traditions, Practices and Excellences as Internal Goods**

Internal goods, in direct contrast to external goods, are intrinsic to complex, traditional practices, and are achieved by "the pursuit of excellence in these practices" in terms of which the virtues and character must be defined and explained. The moral tradition within which MacIntyre's value theory fits as its contemporary exemplar is called "virtue ethics"; or, in its concern with the relational fabric of social forms of life, communitarianism.

#### **5.5.4. The Unseen Limits of the Theory**

The first problem is that there are many internal goods which are not found in received practices and pursuits of excellence - like the enjoyment of a sunset. Moreover, what are conceived as the internal goods of practices may be not be goods at all, but life-destructive bads - as we see ahead. The value theory is thus too narrow and too broad at once. Most deeply, it validates institutionalized evils not seen, as explained in more depth from Section 5.9 on.

#### **5.6. The Rise of the Story and the fall of Truth**

The core concept of value in MacIntyre's vision is a "practice", that in terms of which "goods" and "virtues" are understood.

Yet who is the moral agency accountable for the practices s/he is a participant in? The answer is unclear. The practices are morally prior to those who practice them. What then is the moral subject who enters this and that practice? MacIntyre's answer is that the "narrative unity of a human life" is the subject unity across the practices s/he performs. This is the overarching framework of value meaning within which practices are pursued by persons, and provide the moral content of their lives - their 'life stories'.

##### **5.6.1. Is Life Really a Story?**

Let us pause for reflection on this abiding notion of life as a story in which the unity of life and character of a person - or of a society - lies in this narrative unfolding of meaning and value. The 'story' as the unifying framework of people's lives - and, by extension, nations themselves - is the organizing idea.

##### **5.6.2. Universalization of the Story Model**

Today, postmodern and anti-foundationalist philosophers go further than MacIntyre. They say that even theories of physics are "stories" - a conceptualization which has spread wide in the Anglo-American world since its prominence in Richard Rorty's *The Mirror of Nature* (1979) and *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* (1987).

##### **5.6.3. Rejection of Truth Follows**

When everything that is organized into a unified meaning is made into a 'story', the distinctions between truth and falsehood, fact and of fiction, have no evident hold. MacIntyre does not resolve this problem, or even raise it. He is not so radical as Rorty and others in totalization of the story model, but it follows from it that even what is predictively confirmed by experimental evidence, as in the laws of physics, is but another 'story' from another perspective. Within this framework of understanding, one story is as good as another. "Meta-narratives" which universalize one story are thus bad. The entailment is that truth is dropped as a concept or issue.

For postmodernism, individual preferences and interpretations of value disperse as an irreducible plurality of perspectives and meanings or 'stories' where only difference

remains - a philosophical school to which we will return.

#### **5.6.4. The Tidal Shift from Objective Foundations to Stories**

MacIntyre never examines these implications of the narrative model of unifying explanation and meaning. He offers this framework of unification to account for what binds the diverse events and practices of a person as one life. Yet the pervasion of the story model in other philosophies and ways of understanding calls out for careful examination of its implications.

There is a long trend involved - unraveling prior foundations to perspectives with no ultimate ground of accountability. Not only postmodernists have led here. The ‘anti-foundationalist’ movement in which scientific and positivist theories have been explanatorily transformed into “paradigms” and, more radically, “stories”, has sedimented into a near dominant outlook. It has been differently argued in a wide range of forms, and has also been very popular among graduate students and political science as well as literary theory.

Even within philosophy of science itself, Thomas Kuhn (1922 - ) and, more frontally, Paul Feyerabend (1924-94) - have argued in such works as *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Kuhn, 1962) and *Against Method* (Feyerabend, 1988) towards varieties of radically anti-foundationalism and relativity of knowledge claims to the scientific community in which they occur. Feyerabend has argued that the structures of science are like games which people play better and worse with no objective truth shown independent of the game.

#### **5.6.5. The Story Model Reflects a Growing Sea-Shift to Egoic Subjectivism**

The upshot of this many-sided movement, beginning with early break-outs like Ludwig Fleck’s insider classic *Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact* (1929), and carried most prominently by post-1970 literary postmodernism, has been a sea-change in philosophical fashion and roots. In the recent three decades, ‘the story’ has increasingly replaced the truth - philosophy’s objective since the ancients - as the fashion in determining meaning.

On the face of it, his position develops a traditionalist position of Aristotle-Aquinas pedigree for whom objective practices, standards and virtues are humanity’s proper value anchor. MacIntyre’s reworking of the structure of human life into the form of a “narrative unity” is, however, unintentionally revealing of the philosophical period he writes through. Since he is most of all concerned to restore traditional standards of virtue and excellence to moral discourse and understanding amidst the “criterionless drift” of contemporary thought, his movement to the narrative as that which binds together a moral life is very striking. Unlike the soul of the Catholic tradition with which he is affiliated, a story is a human artifact which may invent as its author pleases without accountability to fact. The problem in story-telling of what Freud referred to as “His Majesty the Ego” is simply blinkered out.

### **5.6.6. Relativist Zeitgeist**

MacIntyre's silent shift from the traditional Christian concept of an ultimate and eternal soul as the ultimate ground of the person to a "narrative of a life" tells much of our era. A zeitgeist of relativism has emerged by which he displaces even the soul by a story construction.

This is the undecoded meaning of "the death of God" - the death of foundational values themselves. We will return to the self-contradictory nature of this generic philosophical position ahead. In philosophical overview, the long-term disintegration of traditional value bases begins with Darwin's *Origin of the Species* (1859) and Marx's *Capital* (1867), and is made explicit by Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886). Darwin's work unmoors human conceptions from a divinely created natural order; Marx's work challenges assumptions of a naturally free and just capitalist market system; and Nietzsche's works mock the very idea of morality as absurd. The unraveling of value grounds is the inner meaning of our age.

### **5.7. The Unseen Moral Imperative: A Value-Ground beneath Stories to Evaluate Them**

In indication of the macro trend away from any underlying moral ground, the world's most distinguished standard bearer of virtue ethics adopts the story-line as the unifying framework of moral meaning. A recognizable example of where it can lead moral life useful here.

Suppose the bonding story is of a nation as a supreme power, a story which unifies the purposes and actions of its people to act out as their moral identity in war. The people find their value anchor within this story as the ultimate meaning of their lives, and are so bound until they are no more. This 'story of a people' is familiar across cultures and ages, perhaps never more than now. There seems to be a near-instinctive demand for a binding story for people to make sense of themselves and, MacIntyre is most of all clear, to motivate their excellence at practices. This is a meta-structure of human thought which goes back to the ancient epics and legends of warriors across cultures, and to original people's fire stories before that. MacIntyre's virtue ethics and traditionalist communitarian ground stand for a very deep-seated and common way of thinking about our values and moral anchor.

The unasked question of the bonding narrative of identity is, what story and practice?

#### **5.7.1. A Bonding Story Requires Life-Ground Accountability**

Much can go very wrong without people knowing it if their unifying story and practice are not tested by some deeper value than being heroic against others inside their stories. If the stories they tell themselves lack coherence with and accountability to wider objective life requirements, they are life-blind to this extent. Without a more ultimate value foundation, the unifying story and its identifying practice are cut loose from any limits on heroic self conceptions by destruction of adversaries inside the narrative. Ethnic and national stories have, in fact, been murderously megalomaniac in the main -

as individual narratives without the same eco-genocidal force.

With no deeper ground or boundaries of restraint to which a story and its practices are responsible, the “moral narrative” may be a narcissist dream at deadly cost to what is not valorized by it. With no anchor or compass of life value to steer by, the story people tell themselves can include God blessing its destruction of other peoples and lording it over those who remain – from Canaan to Iraq. More deeply still, a people or peoples can despoil the earth itself in their narrative of “power over Nature” and “global development”.

### **5.7.2. The Center of the Story as a Hero**

MacIntyre as others following the story paradigm never discern these deep-structural dangers. Yet reason needs to recognize the deep fault line not seen, especially when conceived as a moral narrative. At bottom, the story paradigm has no limiting distinction between truth and falsehood, or between good and bad beyond itself. If the empire or the self tells the story with itself as the central character or hero - the terms are equated - then opposition becomes the villain by the logic of plot structure. What resource in a narrative unity is there for self-correction if no deeper moral ground exists than this?

If reality intervenes to refute the ruling story with growing disasters, how is it related to as fact if it does not fit the story? In our own era still unfolding, for example, the story line of the people who are “the last best hope of mankind” does not change even as life support systems collapse under the practices and excellences its moral narrative declares as ‘our way of life’.

## **5.8. Defining Traditional Practices and Their Excellences as Value Ground**

This meta-problem is not considered by MacIntyre or the larger story-loving community. In the case of his argument, however, traditional practices provide the core of moral meaning. Can this grounding resolve the problem?

### **5.8.1. Objective, Criterial Bonding across Generations by Practices of Excellence**

In MacIntyre’s richly articulated conception, practices constitute the living body of any “moral tradition” through the progressive “excellence” at them which they cultivate, and by the “central bond” of the relationships, authority and law they embody. Any civilized community, he argues, is properly so bonded and so developed by its practices.

Thus in this virtue ethics, there are objective practices and excellences which provide the criterial substance lacking in other story models of meaning and value.

### **5.8.2. Evolving Practices as the Substantively Unifying Idea of Values**

Objective traditional practices and evolving excellences at them are the core of this ethical framework. It is in terms of their goods, it is argued, that the good life is found.

A practice is exactly defined by MacIntyre in the following central statement of his value theory:

By a practice I am going to mean any coherent and complex form of socially established co-operative activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended. (p. 175)

Thus “throwing a football with skill”, “bricklaying” and “planting turnips” are not practices, but “the game of football”, “architecture” and “farming” are, as well as “politics in the Aristotelian sense” (ie., excellence of governance in achieving the well-being of the body politic).

### **5.8.3. Testing the Value of Practices as a Moral Guide to Our Lives**

Two very important general claims here will not be challenged, but accepted as well demonstrated: that internal goods rather than external goods provide the values worth pursuing, and that external goods posed or sought as end-in-themselves corrupt these practices.

Yet is this a sufficient guide to the good life?

#### **5.8.3.1. The Universalizability Criterion of Value**

Moral philosophers often talk about the test of universalizability of any ultimate value claim, what was discussed above with Marx’s class ethic. This criterion, we may recall, formally derives from Kant’s categorical imperative: “to always will the maxim of your action as a universal law”.

Here we may pose another form of the universalizability test to MacIntyre’s core central value of human life by a simple question: Are there important goods or values which are not found in human practices? Do they, that is, have a universal reach which includes all values?

A still stronger question to ask of this or any general theory of value is: are there goods wholly outside or even opposite in nature to the goods of practices?

If the answer to either of these questions is yes, then practices cannot be a sufficient value guide and may badly mislead us. The same tests, of course, can be given to any value theory at all.

### **5.9. Life and Light: Fields of Life Value beyond Excellence at Practices**

Let us consider a description of value by the philosopher David Wiggins in a presentation to the British Academy 1976 entitled “Truth, invention and the meaning of life”.

“A man comes at dead of night to a hotel in a place where he has never been before. In the morning he stumbles out from his darkened room and, following the scent of coffee out of doors, he finds a sunlit terrace looking out across a valley onto a range of blue mountains in the half-distance. The sight of them - a veritable vale of Tempe - entrances him. In marveling at the valley and mountains he thinks only how overwhelmingly beautiful they are. The value of the state depends on the value attributed to the object.” (Wiggins' emphasis)

### **5.9.1. Nature's Beauty Independent of Human Excellence**

Wiggins' last italicized sentence is not proven, and has in any case been shown as false. There are objective values that are not dependent on anyone's attribution to them - including beauty, as we saw in Section 4.12. The nature of objective values in general has been explained in Section 3.13. The point here, however, is that there need be no practice involved in the profound experience of natural beauty, whether one takes a projectionist view of values (as Wiggins does) or not (as life-value onto-axiology).

### **5.9.2. Practices of Excellence Are Rehearsable**

A property of practices is that they must be practiced to be good at them. Practicing is rehearsal, and the more the practice the better the likelihood of excellence in it.

The good internal to the activity of beholding the beauty of nature or fields of light, in contrast, can be experienced as sublime independent of any rehearsal. The good is physically given, and the relationship to it does not demand projection of the beholder. Rather it requires a laying open to it. The subject enjoying the good only opens to what is there.

### **5.9.3. Another Realm of Good**

If we now consult the definitive account of practices, we may reiterate all its criteria and find all are entirely inapplicable to this experience of natural beauty. That is, the value of the entrancing mountain view requires no “socially established co-operative activity”. It involves no human endeavor to “achieve standards of excellence”. And it seeks no “systematic extension of human powers or conception”.

The sublime beauty of the light and mountains points to a realm of good not dependent on any human practice or even projection.

### **5.9.4. How Even Non-Interfering Human Practices and Nature's Beauty May Conflict**

It is not only a question of the intrinsic value falling beyond the reach and understanding of a rule-governed practice whose excellence is internal to it. The value of a human practice on the one hand, and deep experience of natural beauty, on the other hand, can easily conflict - not in the obvious sense of the practice, like logging, harming natural habitat and growth by cutting it down, but by a more subtle route.

Consider for example a student in the practice of philosophy, a paradigm of highly evolved traditional practice with over 25 centuries of exemplars extending excellence at it. The young philosopher is returning from the university library walking across an ancient old growth park. The mind is busy with contending arguments, possibly unseen technical oversights, directions of analysis and theoretical integration, textual grounds and exegetical problematics, new connections of principle - - - in short, with all the internalized critique and dialectic of the practice of philosophy. He is devoted to its ends and goals, trying to live up to its standards of excellence, and concerned above all to make some contribution which can in some way “extend the powers and conceptions of the field”.

Yet although a person may be immersed in a paradigmatic practice in the deepest sense of its meaning, even in humanity’s oldest art of knowledge and wisdom, another horizon of value remains unseen that connects him to a more immense value whole.

### **5.9.5. The Life-Ground Becoming Conscious of Itself**

The student of philosophy is suddenly overwhelmed by what he has been blind to - the boundless field of life and light opening infinitely beyond the practice, the life-ground conscious of itself through the person’s awareness of it. An earlier Section, 4.12 explains the inner logic of what is experienced as beauty. Here the laying open of consciousness to what is there is the moment to spell out - when the fields of life and light are directly revealed without mediation by anything else. With this undivided infinite, language can only point. What is opened to by the philosopher can only be suggested by what it includes - the richly blooming green of leaves and the rivuleted wood of trees reflecting the late day’s rays in a dazzling vision of pristine light and growth with the boundless whole implicate in each moment of it.

### **5.9.6. Value Choice: To Open or Close to the Life Ground and Its Range of Possibility**

This opening and closing of consciousness to what is fully there is not ineffable in value. Cognitive science may have no place for it, but it can be axiologically understood. Its degrees of possibility range from background awareness to the epiphany of a lived infinitude. We explore this range of life possibility in the next chapter, but note now that the same material reality is there whether blinkered out or experienced as sublime.

### **5.9.7. Awakening Within Practices**

The awakening to life value here is, revealingly, released from the demands of any practice or excellence - released to see the boundless light and life body in which there are no lines of self becoming better - what all may yearn for without understanding why. There is only the consciousness of. This is what the Madhyamika, Cha’an and Zen Buddhists may open towards, but miss its life-ground.

Practices of excellence may go on more richly than before in light of such life-ground consciousness, but a wider realm of value has been entered which includes practices

within its boundless field. So far as practices demand confinement within their standards of achievement, we may give ourselves to them at the risk of losing of losing our souls.

### **5.9.8. Satori, the Life-Ground and Practices**

Satori is a Zen word for the awaking to the life-and-light illumination, and life support systems are its material ground. Excellences as what we value above all block access to this illumination. They can explain the elements of its construction in knowledge form, and may save it for the future by their understanding - but they are as dancers to the dance they express whose ultimate ground is life's light.

### **5.9.9. All As One: Peak Moments of Practices**

When practices achieve their highest excellence, their "peak moments", they may become this experienced infinite in the moment. Beyond measure or word, they are streamed through by a transcendent inspiration, the all of the universe becoming the practice's moving edge.

This is the meaning of the Zen practice as described so patiently by Eugen Herrigel in his classic *Zen and the Art of Archery* (1959). It is also the inner meaning of the wider warrior arts whose spiritual meaning and limit are engaged through this study.

### **5.9.10. The Immanent Transcendent Day to Day**

When we understand that there are intrinsic values and realms of value beyond standard-guided practices and their developing excellences, we open to the infinite and ultimate value of life itself whose kingdom has no edge of time, place or possibility in its evolution, enjoyment or awareness. Zen philosophy, the American Transcendentalism of Waldo Emerson (1803-82) and Henry David Thoreau (1817-62), and Carlos Casteneda's contemporary anthropology of Mexican native wisdom in the *Don Juan* series are well-known cases across continents. They point in very different ways towards this ultimate realm of an immanent transcendence which can be experienced in the undivided opening of consciousness to the natural given.

### **5.10. Resolving the Meta-Conflict between Activities to Excel and Opening to the Given**

Yet when the kingdom of ultimate life value is experienced unmediated by any human purpose or striving to excel, do we find a conflict between these realms of value? Do not commitments to the exactly standardized excellence of traditional practices rule out awakening to life awareness free of all desires and demands?

Herein lies a profound question of values that may be the most fundamental to the human condition.

### **5.10.1. The Garden of Eden versus Human Projects to Make Better**

If we consider the natural fields of life and light to which we may open as infinite beauty, on the one hand, and the systematic extension of human practices of excelling, on the other, a deep value opposition emerges. The former retains its value only when “untouched” by the latter.

With undisturbed coral reefs, rainforests and the open sky, for example, we see that it is their freedom from any known human practice which enables the unbroken beauty they bear. Here the development of human standards and powers in practices seems irreconcilably opposed to it.

### **5.10.2. Condemned to Labor**

This conflict between pure awareness and human practices seems implicit in the tale of the Garden of Eden. Eating of the “tree of knowledge of good and evil” casts humanity in the persons of Adam and Eve out of God’s Paradise. They are condemned to “labor by the sweat of thy brow all the days of thy life” for their violation. By trying to make the gift of natural life better than it is by ‘the fruit of knowledge of good and evil’, they lose paradise.

### **5.10.3. Value Resolution to the Meta-Conflict**

Human practices to excel and natural fields of life and light need not conflict. Many practices do not negate or spoil natural value - not in objective fact nor subjectively, and may enhance both - for example, pathless bird-watching in forests and coral diving leaving no human trace - as opposed to chopping trees or mining land and sea for money-value gain, the dominant practices.

#### **5.10.3.1. True Development**

True development is best understood as coherently compossible advance of human and natural life ranges at once. This principle of development fundamentally opposes what is called ‘development’ now - essentially money sequencing to more commodities and money with natural life as consumed and polluted means. This complex topic is engaged in depth in the last chapters of this study.

### **5.10.4. Polar Extremes on Altering Nature**

Typically, opposing poles of the ‘Man-versus-Nature’ debate have not sought reconciliation. Modern civilization has been based on the meta-project of subjugating Nature as servant and wresting its treasure from it - from the foundations of scientific method set by Francis Bacon (1561-1626) who seeks to “put Nature on the rack to extract her secrets from her” to contemporary factory agriculture which still exhausts and poisons the earth.

On the one hand, the unintended consequences of life-system pollution, degradation and ecological destruction by this one-sided value system of ‘Man’s Conquest of Nature’

has been a basic moral retardation of the species. On the other hand, the polar-opposite moral position which denounces scientific technology's reordering of Nature and longs for a return to the Garden of Eden in oneness with fellow creatures and their habitat looks backwards in its standards. It provides no explanation of how to reconcile a pastoral vision with the evolved productive demands of a civilized life beyond unlighted hovels and cold.

#### **5.10.5. The Comprehending Common Ground of Good Practices**

The comprehending common ground is for all human practices to be governed so as to be consistent with human and biodiverse life requirements, as spelled out in *Reclaiming Rationality and Scientific Method: The Life-Coherence Principle as Global System Imperative*.

No known value theory yet provides such life-value standards. The life-value onto-ethic does so, but traditional practices and their moral narratives are typically blind to this common life ground. This is why dominant economic and political practices dichotomize the requirements of human and planetary life organization into the absurd opposition of “the environment versus the economy” - a clear manifestation of the life-ground decoupling built into ruling value syntax.

##### **5.10.5.1. The Environment versus the Economy**

While received practices of knowledge and development thereby split life-means provision into falsely conflicting imperatives, no economy or ecology can in fact be rationally coherent without including both environment and economy as inseparably complementary dimensions of human life reproduction – as the last three chapters of this study explain.

The ultimate value schizophrenia of world civilization has been that an opposite ruling value system to this has been increasingly built into economic practices and their perpetual excelling of past performances in quintessential realization of MacIntyre's criterion of practices as systematically extending human goods and powers.

##### **5.10.6. The Holistic Antidote**

The *Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems* is a contemporary antidote to civilization's long life-blindness on the level of knowledge practices themselves: a mapping of the life-ground with no ruling division of discipline, culture or external interest to blinker comprehension.

#### **5.11. System Block: The Goods, Standards and Moral Narrative of the Money Game**

Beneath onto-axiological notice, however, one practice and its standards of excellence have come to rule global society itself - the practice of money sequencing for private money investors across borders. MacIntyre, however, never considers this central practice as a practice. He seems to assume it as merely seeking “external goods” and

therefore not a genuine practice. Yet more careful examination reveals the money game as a supreme practice in MacIntyre's terms.

### **5.11.1. The Master Practice of Money Sequencing**

Once we recognize that money pay-offs are this practice's internal good which competitively inspire its practitioners and are systematically extended to higher forms, the moral problem of practices with no deeper value ground to judge them emerges to light.

Consider the how the financial practice satisfies MacIntyre's defining criterion. Its status as a practice explains why global media and business schools give awards for excellence in it; why it is common in the world today to think that the financial community draws "the best and brightest" to graduate study for entry into Wall Street and other private banks; and why "top financial advisers" are thought to properly run governments themselves. Its internal standards, moreover, demand ever more achievement, ratings of performance, competition among firms and individuals to have the best records; and its powers themselves are continually extended with ever developing literatures on the ends and goods involved.

### **5.11.2. Making Life Accountable to Money-Value Added**

MacIntyre and others have not discerned this bridging of internal goods and external goods by the art and science of money sequencing itself. Yet its goods and excellences have become the master goods and excellences of the world with little or no organized opposition. All other practices have, indeed, become accountable to it.

This is why even public universities and students are required to be governed by the financial practice's ruling standard of "value added" (e.g., in the money-earning power of degrees), and why medical practice itself is subordinated to money-value schedules for illnesses and treatments (e.g., in the United States health system). Even laws to protect the world's ecosystems are subordinated to the same value logic of "cost-benefit analysis" in which "future returns" must exceed "investments" of money value to count as worthwhile.

## **5.12. The Problem: Lack of Life-Value Ground to Evaluate Humanity's Ruling Practice**

The problem with the master practice of money sequencing is that the question is not asked whether it is a good practice - "the open question test". It is presupposed as necessary as and better than any alternative (e.g., public credit for life-value creation). Indeed the possibility of any better practice has become inconceivable. What resources are there within this practice or any related practice to pose the question? There are none.

A second-order value criterion is needed to evaluate practices, and it is needed the more socially organized, established and extended they become.

### **5.12.1. The Great Game without a Human Value Standard to Comprehend It**

Two allied practices are dominant in our current world condition: the standards, goods and excellences of the financial and armed-war practices. They rule in an unspoken system alliance, but neither is opened to question by value theory, or recognized in their integration within one ruling value system.

Insofar as the pecuniary practice perpetually extends internal standards to new levels of excellence (ie., international money-capital instruments, conversions, derivatives and accumulations at ever extended levels) and industrial-world military might backs these in defense of “self-regulating market freedoms” and “or interests abroad” (e.g., against opposing governments and activist insurgencies), a moral problem of historic depth arises which is not seen. The moral issue which appears is, instead, to overcome any obstacles and oppositions to their rule as “global civilization”. Here again we may observe the ruling value syntax regulating value judgment beneath critical awareness of it.

### **5.12.2. More Money Value = More Life Value**

The more expansive the financial practice is in restructuring of life and life support systems by its standards of excellence, the more successful it thus appears - for example, by its efficiency in reducing money-sequence costs and increasing profitable transactions. Here too only the internal standards and rules of the practices count. By the measure of the financial-economic practice, human welfare is necessarily optimized whenever more profitable deals and commodities are sold. By the measure of the armed-force practice, the fewer enemies remain to this system’s globalization, the greater success there is in keeping the peace in the world.

The ultimate moral issue cannot be perceived. If the “internal goods” of these and other practices are conceived as goods in principle, there is no second-order standard to question them. There is nothing left to discuss.

### **5.13. The Bonding Moral Narrative of the Money-Game Practice**

The master practice of money sequencing also has a grand narrative to bind people within borders and across them. Wherever it advances, more “freedom and democracy”, “creation of wealth”, and “peaceful trade not war” are perceived in a heroic story of “rising prosperity and free trade”.

Since only the internal goods and standards of practices count, increases in their terms are equated to more excellence of achievement, (e.g., increased money-value transactions = better lives for all). Why can people not see that their lives are better? If ecological and resource wealth are reduced, no internal standard recognizes it. If armed force pervasion of life increases, it is necessary to protect how we live. Much is understood by virtue-ethics analysis of this system.

### **5.13.1. The Arts as Propagandas of the Practice**

A dominant “unifying moral narrative” requires vehicles to propagate it. The more dominant the practices are, the more encompassing the binding unity of meaning must be.

Thus visual, spoken, print and dramatic forms of human expression and communication praise them, and are increasingly subordinated to serve them without anyone planning the totalization. When one dominant practice has become the meta-framework of value and valuation for all practices, it has become totalitarian.

Marketable worth is the current ruling measure, and value disputes thus occur within this ruling value standard. Exceptions are outside the law. One value metric is given.

Challenges of this unifying moral narrative are therefore conceived as threats to “our way of life”. Virtue and communitarian ethics reveal the nature of obligatory bonds beyond self.

### **5.13.2. Market Exemplars and Miracles**

Exemplifying the modern binding moral narrative becomes the vocation of individuals and peoples. All stories become the lives of exemplary individuals and societies leading the way for others to emulate and surpass. Today this means challenging those “falling behind” to catch up or “not survive in the global competition”. Stories of success and failure are proclaimed daily to heighten competitiveness at new international standards of excellence. Degradations of organic, social or ecological life fabrics are a barrier to competitive success.

### **5.13.3. The Vocation of Competitive Excellence**

It is only when we comprehend the nature of the money-sequence practice - its socially established and impersonally regulated activities, its unifying internal goods, its standards of achievement, and its systematic extension of these goods and ends - that we come to see the internally compelling attractions of the money-sequencing practice. All is made one in meaning by its standards, and continuous scoring records by the impersonal mechanism of the capitalist market confers dynamic meaning on every enterprise, transaction and life.

### **5.13.4. The Problem of Unaccountability**

Without any deeper life standard to judge practices and narratives by, the “ends and goods” of a practice can become destructive of other values, most dangerously life itself. Defining “excellences and their systematic extension” can make increasingly disastrous effects invisible or appear as inexorable advancement..

With no higher or second-order standards to which the practice is accountable, closure within it may continue as inspirational with no recognition of systemic ill effects from it which are all around.

### **5.13.5. The Unseen Paradox: Internal Goods Can Be Bads**

An ironic implication follows. In its most general form: The virtue ethic of excellence at practices can systemically subjugate and destroy anything by its internal goods and standards if there is no accountability to value principle beyond the practice itself.

Put another way, the internal goods of practices of excellence can be in fact bads or evils with no more ultimate criterion of value available to judge them.

### **5.14. A Fault-Line of Human History: The Practice and Excellence of Armed Force**

This is a problem which is more widespread and profound than we might think. It not only arises within the practices of the global financial market and its internal value system of money sequencing at whoever else's expense. It arises within the far more historically honored practice of armed war - all the epics as one to now.

#### **5.14.1. Primary Tradition of Virtue across Cultures**

Consider the source meaning of "virtue" itself. The concept derives from the Latin for "manly", and the presence or absence of "manliness" has one defining test - willingness to face others in armed combat. That it is normally to kill or be killed under the command of a superior is the ultimately regulating meaning of the practice.

Armed war is a quintessential practice according to MacIntyre's definitive criterion. It carries a tradition of over 2500 years of development whose internal goods and ends continuously develop new powers and standards of excellence - namely, to conquer a designated enemy by force of arms whose weaponry evolves to ever deadlier forms. The target of death both ways is always 'the enemy', but no objective criterion of 'enemy' exists. It suffices to be officially declared one.

Lest it be thought that market civilization has broken the long dominance of the armed war tradition, the historical facts demur. From the scientific missile-projectile tests for siege warfare by Galileo to the dominant public funding of scientific research by military-industrial complexes in this century, market-capitalist civilization has led all in systematically extending the mastery of annihilative armed force to unprecedented levels of mass-homicidal power and destruction of life support systems.

#### **5.14.2. Superior Armed Force as Basis of Legitimacy and Criterion of Civilization**

In modern practice, armed supremacy or 'monopoly of force' is the first diplomatic test of even the legitimacy of states within their borders - as Max Weber (1864-1920) has pointed out. At the same time, international leadership across borders is presupposed to reside in the state with the greatest military kill-power in air, on land and overseas. This is interesting to axiological analysis.

"The greatest military power in history" is a line none doubts. "Full spectrum dominance" is praiseworthy for "leadership of the free world". The moral right to attack declared enemies of freedom is correlated to overwhelming armed means across borders

- with the defining character of the enemy being non-compliance with “the values of a free society” (i.e., market-capitalist values). In sobering truth not much addressed by philosophers, excellence at armed force subjugation of other peoples has long determined whether peoples and cultures live or die. Armed-force genocide has been history’s ultimate value decider since the two-wheeled war chariots of the Aryan invaders of India and the first Patriarchs of Israel - as McMurtry’s *Understanding War* (1989) explains within a life-value framework of value analysis.

### **5.14.3. Armed Force as Quintessential Practice**

There can be little doubt that the military war institution qualifies as a paradigmatic “practice” and vehicle of “virtue” under MacIntyre’s criterion, the most authoritative criterion yet developed. That is, waging of war by force of arms exactly qualifies as “a coherent and complex form of socially established, co-operative human activity” whose “standards of excellence” are continuously tested and extended through generational time.

The ability to ‘make war’ - as to ‘make money’ - has “ever advancing skills” of manifold kinds integrated into one “coherent whole” of action, and its “internal goods” of “character” and “excellence” are understood as the virtues of discipline, loyalty, bravery, and solidarity in the face of fire. Together these goods and standards of the armed force practice appear to constitute the most extended institution of virtue across historical time - along with, since Rome, the financial practice as essential lender, allocator and ally in ruling goal. One could be pessimistic about the possibility of life-standard advance in the agonistic practices of society, but when we look more deeply into the rule-governed progression of the human condition, we discover a pattern of more life-coherent practices governing human society as an evolving socio-ethical core, as explained in Section 9.4.

Nonetheless the armed-force practice has been overriding insofar as it commands as no other institution has been permitted the perpetual sacrificial deaths and mutilations of a society’s fittest young - who themselves are not responsible for the war on either side, but are ordered by the practice’s internal standards to kill and maim others like them and, increasingly, unarmed civilians by the same hi-tech weapons - all under orders which cannot be disobeyed without risk of disgrace or execution. Revealingly, no virtue has been more gloriously praised over time than that of those willing to wield and direct deadly armed force.

### **5.14.4. No Life Standards by Which Goods of Practices are Judged**

In profound exposure of the problem of virtue ethics, there is no evident resource in any of its known forms to construe either autonomous money-sequencing or armed-force war as other than virtuous. Other forms of moral and value theory do little better.

#### **5.14.4.1. ‘Just War’ Standards Not Life-Protective**

What of the standards of “the just war” which have arisen out of the Christian tradition beginning with Augustine (354-430 CE)? Its evolved standards are just cause,

competent authority, right intention, last resort, proportionality of means, probability of success, and discrimination (i.e., distinction between combatants and non-combatants). All of these standards make sense. The problem is that the most life-protective standard of “discrimination” does not recognize or resolve the issue of combatants forced into the war (the typical situation); while the ‘discriminate’ notice of civilians has no binding criterion. In fact, the pretense of such a standard seems to legitimate its violation insofar as the proportion of civilian deaths in wars has multiplied to over 90% of casualties and fatalities in recent decades.

As for the remaining standards of ‘just war’, war propaganda occupies their vacuum of criteria. If ‘standards of just war’ merely function as masks of organized mass terror and homicide in the name of virtue, these evils of armed war escalate with technological powers. Intentional mass homicide and life-infrastructural destruction by maximally efficient means remains presupposed as “the nature of war” while an industrial arms race attains the performance capacity of being able to destroy all life in the world many times over. With the rapid obsolescence of weapons by use or advance and the public-treasure backing and funding of weapon sciences, armaments have become the most profitable manufacture of global trade - again pairing with the money-sequencing practice. With no life standards or criteria by which these established and jointly extending practices are governed, they can and do run free at the escalating cost of life systems.

### **5.15. The Imperative of a Higher Value Standard to Judge Practices and Traditions**

In short, we require decisive life standards by which established practices are ethically assessed and publicly regulated - in particular, global-financial and armed-war practices. Virtue theory offers no such resources. In the meantime, the currently leading practices form a financial-and-armed force axis of power as the ruling decider of global life reproduction and development. As this system of raising “standards of achievement” and “extending human powers” variously prevails across the world sustained by public taxes, there is little or no debate of their “ends and goods” within the established practices themselves or within councils of nations. Their internal “standards of excellence” are instead typically praised and aspired to by them as state of the art goods and necessities to enable societies’ “survival” and “place at the table”.

This is an underlying meta-circle of instituted threat to collective life security which is axiologically re-set to life coherence in *Reclaiming Rationality And Scientific Method: The Life-Coherence Principle As Global System Imperative*.

#### **5.15.1. The Linchpin of Unaccountable Practices and Goods**

“Narrative unities” binding peoples and souls together in pursuit of these supreme practices and their goals validate and universalize their moral meaning. They are told across generations as stories of supreme virtue and sacrifice (armed war) and world-class strategic brilliance and success (money-capital acquisition). With money-sequencing joined to public armed force and tax treasuries as the lines of force across borders, an overall evolutionary mechanism of life-and-death selection is formed by

these practices and their public patrons without notice.

When moral reflection connects the virtues of money-making and armed war to fitness-to-survive neo-Darwinism, and considers their respective internal goods and excellences which people compete to realize in the “struggle for survival”, we connect to the larger global value system which rules. Here we focus on the issue of dominant practices as virtuous without any principle of life-value to appraise what practices adopt as their goals. They may together become a preconscious global driver that is invisibly evil in nature, but with no limit to their joint extension nor higher-order value to hold them accountable. They may come to rule with no constraining limit to their “collateral damages” and “negative externalities”. Evolutionary ethics and public opinion may then validate their reproductive strategies as conferring a superior ‘fitness to survive’ in the universal competition to live.

### **5.15.2. Life-Blind Globalization of the Assumed Superior Practices**

It follows that unless there is an over-arching, second-order criterion of value or good by which to judge virtues, goods and practices and their joint value mechanism of competitive realization, an evil system can be instituted without knowing it. Their “standards and goods” can be “systematically extended” as in fact perceived powers of excellence, virtue and fitness.

Once such practices or virtues count as goods in themselves, and extension of their intrinsic powers to higher levels is judged as fit and virtuous with no ground or criterion of life value by which they are morally judged or governed, then even eco-genocidal traditions can be competitively pursued and glorified as the globalization of what is assumed as ever more superior in worth - “we only are God’s people or we are number one”.

### **5.15.3. The Resolving Moral Standard**

A more ultimate and universal standard of value by which practices, excellences and virtues can themselves be judged and held accountable is therefore imperative to long-term human survival and flourishing. Yet what bottom line of value principle can guide moral judgment?

Insofar as the measure of value or disvalue is the extent to which it inclusively enables/disables life’s ranges of life, we find a value anchor and compass that cannot mislead us - as the next chapters explain step by step. Most simply expressed, it can never be wrong to enable life without loss, or right to disable it without life more enabled by doing so. This is the life-value calculus in one sentence. The exact value metric follows.

### **5.15.4. The Life-Value Bottom Line**

Under this criterion of value, the armed-force practice cannot be coherently understood as morally good, but the opposite so far as it is systemically life-disabling on human and natural levels. When joined to the money-sequence value system in a ruling global value

axis which is life-blind in principle and cumulatively more destructive through time, humanity is confronted by what we have called “system evil”, the evil which is most invisible and disastrous.

These reigning practices are conceived, in contrast, as “patriotism/honor/self-sacrifice” in public armed war, and “superior wealth production/ efficiency/ free enterprise” in private money-sequencing. Their language assumes more life-value is won than destroyed. Yet without the axiological resources to test the assumed connections, they are superstitious in nature. Never in fact has either global practice been coherently validated by life-value standards.

#### **5.15.5. Can Compliance with the Measure of Life Value Make an Evil Practice Good?**

Yet some military wars could qualify as good to the extent that they fulfill the above principle of good or, more exactly, the sliding-scale measure of the Primary Axiom of Value defined in the next chapter. For example, the military institution and practice might be purely defensive against only the threat of armed invasion. It could introduce a new goal and standard of excellence - maximal life-value gain by minimization of casualties and sustainable economy of public resources.

#### **5.15.6. Life-Serving Models of War**

Here we may bring to view the suppressed standards of the “weaponless war” cultivated over millennia by Taoist and Zen monks as a paradigm practice of collective self-defense against armed marauders and warlords. Now sold as “the martial arts” for entertainment and individual practitioners, the social mode of self-defense has been more or less lost.

On the other hand, socially organized and militant non-cooperation - introduced in principle by Henry Thoreau (1817-62) at the level of non-violent individual protest and, more famously socialized by Gandhi (1869-1948) in the last century in India’s war for independence - is a model of war that also satisfies life-value standards: that is, insofar as maximum gain and minimum loss of life capacities regulate its practice.

#### **5.15.7. Life-Protective Standards of Excellence**

The life-serving practice of war also admits of ever higher levels of excellence - for example, beyond merely spontaneous oppositional movements to institutionalization of organized society-wide disobedience to any invader’s occupation. The goal and standards of excellence are life- protective-and-enabling collective defense against any usurper or invader. Powers of the practice would include pervasive systematic obstruction and public-symbol mockery of the enemy, and strategies of exactly selective strike. The possibilities of life coherent extensions of the practice are not lacking.

All of these non-homicidal and non-maiming practices have already been partly developed as successful warring practices through wars of decolonization over 150 years and the 1939-45 Resistance within Nazi-occupied nations. What makes these

practices better is that they save and protect lives by internal regulation rather than by pretense, and that they liberate heroic virtues - supreme bravery of individual and group fighters, masterful strategy and life-sensitive creativity in fighting back, minimized loss and maximum gain of life capacities, exact targeting of the life-destructive aggressors alone, and the highest possible forms of co-operation and invincible solidarity. Contemporary social movements like Greenpeace offer some micro illustration.

War is indeed hell in the inherited pathological model, but can become truly virtuous as it systematically realizes life-value goals and standards. The ‘best that war can bring out in people’ is then no longer a moral absurdity, while the worst is selected out by the internal moral logic of the practice.

### **5.15.8. The Logic of Life-Value Gain Decides**

In this way, life-value intelligence can transform long vicious practices by organized means and ends to enable rather than destroy social and ecological life fabrics - the cutting edge and substance of life-value ethics. No virtue ethic, in contrast, provides a second-order principle of evaluation by which established standards and practices can be so steered or bettered.

The only second-order value compass which in principle steers for such moral advance is life-ground onto-axiology. By its standards, even ‘global market’ money sequencing can be made life-value accountable as it already hesitantly is in financial-tax revenues for publicly enabling programs. The problem prior to pathologies of power has been want of a sound universal ground of value to navigate across problems and domains.

### **5.16. Why Justice as the Application of Equal Standards Fails**

What of “justice” as such a higher-order principle? Cannot it perform a second-order evaluative function?

#### **5.16.1. The Standard Meaning of Justice**

The agreed-upon meaning of “justice” which is subscribed to by liberal theory, contractarian and communicative proceduralism, and virtue ethics alike can be explained by one unifying principle:

Justice is a rational impartiality of process which does not discriminate among agents in conferring goods and obligations. It is thus constitutionally impersonal, consistent in construction and application, and capable of adjudicating conflicts.

Justice means, in MacIntyre’s similar first-person definition “that we treat others in respect of merit or desert according to uniform and impersonal standards” (p. 179).

#### **5.16.2. The Testing Question**

To any general principle of good or right, we always need to pose a generic question. Is it consistently life-capacity enabling in enactment of its principle?

The answer here is no. While procedurally uncontroversial and fair, the italicized formal criterion of justice is empty and misleading. For it is perfectly consistent with following it that impartial and impersonal standards of merit select for systematically destructive ways of life - as we have seen with the money-gain and armed-war practices.

### **5.16.3. Impartiality of Rule by Itself Is Life-Blind**

One of the great confusions of historical and contemporary thought is the equation of impartiality and consistency to fairness and justice. Thus it follows that if rules are impersonal and uniform - to, for example, reward superior self-maximization in market exchange with no limit on deprivation of others, or to dispossess all drawing certain numbers in a lottery - then it is clear that impersonal standards of desert and merit allow for unjust outcomes. A life-standard ethic resolves the problem by criteria which, besides being consistent, rule out life-harming outcomes in principle. In every case of a practice going wrong which has been identified in this chapter, we may note, not one is corrected by more uniform and impersonal standards.

The point is what the rules regulate for and against in their consistency of standards. If they do not regulate to enable life rather than disable it, then however rigorously people are equal before the same rules, the rules are blind to the ultimate value issue. Prosecution of witches might have been uniform in the standards of identifying diabolical possession, applied equal due process in all tests and regimes of confession, and burnt all those found guilty exactly alike - but it altogether misses the moral point to think they were thus given justice". Uniform and impersonal standards can make for worse injustice than without them - consider the Nazi judges and security officers who broke the laws in defending Jews and communists.

For more contemporary example, even an "end to all discrimination" in a capitalist market where only one open job exists for every 40 or more people eligible to fill it does not attenuate the injustice of impoverished joblessness amidst plenty. When as Anatole France long ago put it, "the law in all its majesty and equality forbids rich and poor alike to steal a loaf of bread, beg for alms or sleep under bridges", he exposes how non-discrimination and exact equality before the law do not ensure justice.

### **5.17. How Moral Narratives Mask the Deepest Moral Problems**

More grounded bearings of value are thought to reside in the unifying "narrative" of an individual's life and in the "moral tradition" within which this or that practice is carried out. Two general questions here show how profound the grip of 'moral narratives' is on humanity across cultures and time.

- (1) What culture of the prehistorical or historical past has not found a conscious reference body of collective meaning in tribal or national stories assumed to exemplify justice?
- (2) What person or society of the present does not adopt the moral-narrative form as a framework of evaluating right and wrong, justice and injustice in the world?

The point here is not to answer these questions one way or the other, but to situate us in

the real moral time of what people(s) actually do. Is a moral narrative an adequate value ground to guide us?

### **5.17.1. Moral Narratives versus Sound Principles of Value**

As we have already seen, the narrative form cannot in principle provide the value bearings from which bad value systems or practices can be objectively recognized: that is, independently of the story. That is the nature of a narrative construction. The story is the thing. Yet if moral narratives bind peoples as their unifying value and meaning through time, how can they not be morally deluded? To show the problem, consider a variously intrinsic feature of epic stories which are thought to be the through-line of a culture's identity.

For non-Western example, the narrative unity and moral tradition of the caste system is monumental and ever-extending across countless generations in India. The epic of the Mahabharata, for example, is over 15 times the length of the Judaic-Christian Bible, a rich tapestry of moral stories and exemplars wound through one unifying complex thread of narrative which is widely regarded as a sacred universal of Hindu culture into the present time. Yet this greatest of all stories of divine justice is an exemplar of national and group tales which are in their nature immoral by life-value standards - most generically by inviolable practices of luxuriously privileging some bloodlines and property-holders, and invalidating or dehumanizing others across generations.

Without any evident observation or commentary on the general pattern by the story's innumerable tellers and celebrants across time, an overarching moral tradition - in this case, an inherited caste order - is the presupposed unifying framework of all the practices, events and turning points in a peerlessly rich narrative validating caste organization throughout.

### **5.17.2. Variations on the Theme: The Case of American Epics and Values**

Where story positions are not set by high birth or property inheritance, as in American mythology which appears to be an egalitarian exception to the rule, closer examination reveals, on the contrary, deep-structural moral assumptions of valid and radical inequality by money possession.

Thus "the poor boy who makes good" never makes good without high position within a money-capitalist culture and, at the moral reflection level, never criticizes the order within which he 'makes good' (there are few heroic 'she's'). Thus too, the humble origins of the boy who becomes President are glorified in the rising above them. The poverty of the many from which he rises is morally ignored. A moral narrative like John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* is an exception, but it is consigned to the role of a Great Depression novel not retold insofar as it reveals unpleasant realities of the present. The same goes for Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. Even moral narratives of the oppressed do not refer to dehumanization of the current many.

### **5.17.3. Money-Property as Validator of Practices and Their Excellences of Performance**

On the other hand, private-property holding, in particular of money demand, is the given of well-being, acceptance and progression across characters but not excavated as a regulating validator. From both sides, the actually ruling moral order is kept out of sight as an object of critical moral reflection. One might say this is the function of moral narratives.

The ordering equation of individual and national value to money-demand worth thus holds as an unexamined moral constant. One may observe it today in the in the pervasive equation of heroic dimension to money value - whether by sport prowess, TV/movie stardom, or money speculation with little or nothing to start. “America is where anyone can get rich” is the moral of the story.

#### **5.17.3.1. Ruling Value Itself Unquestioned Within Public Moral Narratives**

Conversely, this is at the core of a value system which cannot acceptably be called into question.

For example, one will not find many moral narratives told of challenge against this money-value system.

Yet there are countless untold stories - of people standing up against this system for life-enabling cause with heroic courage - for example, worker-union leaders or socialist activists persecuted, dispossessed and judicially caged under this system in which money value always trumps life needs.

### **5.17.4. The Unspoken Meta-Narrative Across Traditions**

Much could be said in confirmation of an ultimately regulating but unexamined value pattern of epic stories, practices and standards of excellence across cultures. The stories that bind nations and traditions conform to a meta-narrative of value which - whatever it is - invariably validates the inherited ruling order as necessary and good.

With the hard caste system framing the traditional epic narratives of India, for example, the individual is identical with his assigned station which is believed to be determined not by the social order into which s/he is born, but by his or her karma of invisible past lives. Thus the individual’s social position cannot be unfair, nor can the lowly positions of whole castes, because the positions inherited are deserved by their past lives. The eternal order of dharma or virtue itself within which this karmic determination unfolds is constituted by a hierarchy of traditional practices in terms of which goods and excellence of performance are judged by socially established standards.

All revealingly accords with the logic of MacIntyre’s virtue ethics. Within the moral narrative, none of this traditionally ordered framework of virtue is open to value question. Rather as elsewhere, the unifying story glorifies the social framework as divinely judged and given.

### **5.17.5. Resetting Moral Frameworks to Be Life-Value Coherent**

We see here in paradigmatic form how the inner logic of the ethic of practices, internal goods and standards of excellence is ageless and cross-cultural as an inherited moral syntax whose regulating presuppositions cultural moral narratives express in exciting story form.

The principal failure of such inherited value systems is their meta-assumption of the reigning social order as necessary and ‘ours’ - not, as it is, a value problematic open to social choice of better. This social choice space is normally unseen, but is the distinguishing mark of human evolution. Within this choice space lies the moral-infrastructure building of our condition whose elective space is mapped by this study.

In the end, the internal standards of a “moral narrative” as such work no better than procedural “justice” in recognizing life-destructive institutions. As we have seen, both unifying moral narratives and impartial systems of justice can legitimate the increased dominance of the ruling order as ennobling for those who conform to its prescriptions, while the oppression of countless millions invisible within the story are elided from its moral meaning.

### **5.18. Why Personal Virtues Are Not Themselves a Solution**

It might be responded that personal virtues, not systems, provide the true ground of moral substance and choice to guide how to live across cultures and times. This too is a widespread view in the agent-relative or atomic normative thinking of our epoch. Social value systems are essentially unmentioned in even moral theory, while their unexamined assumptions are dominant in general. Something seems amiss. Yet reliance on the personal virtues becomes the default limit of those who are concerned - looking to the “eternal virtues” to provide some grip across the mors immortalis of the human condition.

“Truthfulness”, “constancy” and “courage” are such eternal virtues. Whether we consult Aristotle, the Mahabharata, or the Catholic MacIntyre, these are virtues of character which it is believed cannot lead us astray.

#### **5.18.1. Truthfulness, Constancy and Courage for What?**

The problem is that these virtues are still understood within accepted frameworks of social rule which invariably select against any critical question of the ruling normative order itself. The problem of these virtues being badly misdirected by or sacrificed to the ruling order does not arise - or if it does, it emerges only at a great social distance in stories of the past (as in classical dramas like Sophocles’ drama, Antigone, where the value conflict over social rules is defunct).

Consider instead the still symbolic man called Jesus who bore the virtues of truth, courage and constancy in abundance, but was crucified as a political criminal for them in a cause beyond the comprehension of the ruling norms of his society. Then consider also the more ancient social order from which Jesus came which might have badly

misdirected these virtues of character if they were to have adhered to the biblical command to the Jews from Yahweh against “any pact” with other peoples in the area of Palestine - prescribing that Israel “exterminate” all of them - “the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Cannanites, Hivites and Jebusites” (Exodus:23-24).

### **5.18.2. The Missing Distinction: Acceptable Virtue versus True Virtue**

Typically virtuous conduct conforms to the larger social order, or is ostracized. This distinction does not occur in virtue ethics. It has no theoretical resources to resolve the problem.

A paradox thus arises. Acceptable virtues can be the building blocks of systems of life oppression. The Nazi state, for example, included truthful, loyal, and courageous people within its roles. Here we see the necessity to connect virtue to the wider order of value it serves, but this is not done in virtue ethics or moral theory in general. Only when this connection is made can virtue or morality achieve the coherence of meaning now lacking.

The stereotype of the cowardly, lying and inconstant nature of evil doers does not comprehend the power of evil systems and what keeps them in place. They rely on the individual virtues being abstracted out of the social form they serve. In fact, systematic disregard of the lives of out-group others is typically demanded to demonstrate the virtues of “courage”, “truth” [to superiors], and “loyalty”[to race/class/nation]”. Until the bracketed issue of to what is answered, we cannot know whether the virtue is true or false. So long as virtues are not more deeply rooted in life value, they can hold the course of evil unaccountable to anything but what rules. As Baruch Spinoza (1632-1777) long ago observed, “men may as bravely fight for slavery as for freedom, and count it not shame but highest honor to risk their lives and shed their blood for the vainglory of a tyrant”.

### **5.19. From the Relativism of Human Virtues and Powers to Life-Grounded Ethics**

In the end, MacIntyre's virtue theory of ethics confronts the same kind of problem as it was written to address, but on a higher plane. The “criterionless” and “unsettlable” relativism its analysis deplores in modern liberal individualism re-emerges in his virtue ethics at the level of institutionalized standards and practices.

For just as MacIntyre argues the “pluralist culture” of liberal individualism cannot assert or discover any grounding principle or standard whereby to judge or assess particular conceptions of the good, so his own theory fails to provide any such grounding principle or standard whereby to judge the goods of particular practices, standards and excellences. The problem of no moral anchor thus recurs on the level of virtue ethics itself. In the place of the market or liberal individual amidst a plurality of external goods, perspectives and differences with no deeper principle to ground value judgment, we have a stepped-up version - virtues, practices, and standards with no more ultimate criterion of good to evaluate them.

That community virtues as well as individual preferences may lack a life coherent moral

ground is not an issue that has resolved in normative thought. Rather disputes between existing schools and theories of value still occupy center stage.

### **5.19.1. The Unseen Moral Necessity: Coherence with Life and Life Support Systems**

In the light of these limitations, we see that virtue ethics can be as systemically life-destructive in achieving excellence at the particular goods internal to their practices as liberalism can degrade values into mere atomic preferences with no regulators to protect shared life systems. Is there any deeper way?

### **5.19.2. Two Senses of Human Powers**

MacIntyre's idea of the “systematic extension of human powers to achieve excellence” seems to provide the possibility of a common value ground whereby to assess the value of practices and moral traditions as well as liberal conceptions of progress and development.

Under this conception, life-destructive moral practices like military war, or the caste system (or - we might add in view of MacIntyre's own affiliation, the Holy Inquisition) might be judged as evil practices insofar as they systemically violate human life powers. Yet closer scrutiny of the concept of “extension of human powers” shows that it does not imply enabling human life, but only developing socially organized practices with no life principle of value to evaluate the powers they extend.

### **5.19.3. The Core Confusion and Its Resolution**

There is core confusion on this issue. MacIntyre writes that “the pursuit of excellence in a way that extends human powers is at the heart of human life” (emphasis added, p. 185). Yet he conflates as other schools of thought do two senses of human powers: (1) the powers of human life capacities to become greater than before consistent with other life's; (2) the powers of human practices and means to become more powerful themselves. The former is the sense of power affirmed by life-value onto-ethics. The latter is the received sense of power within which MacIntyre and others remain.

With meaning (1), the “extension of human powers” is the ultimate human value, but excellences at practices are only the developed means to realize human capacities in life powers, not the other way round. The general shape of moral revision which follows from this ultimate value distinction is straightforward, but profound. All practices, virtues and excellences which enable human life are valued, and all that disable life are redirected to cohere with life requirements. We may observe here that even within the same valuable practices, good and bad directions may be at work - as in industrial productivity and industrial destruction. Yet life-enabling upgrade is always possible within practices that are not inherently evil - in industrial practices, for example, by increasingly closed energy-and-material circuits that demand ever greater excellence in efficiency to realize life-coherent standards.

Such analysis systematically explains how exclusive value disjunctions like

“industrialization is good or bad” are false, and admit of life-value resolution at a deeper level of comprehension.

#### **5.19.4. The Essential Value Problem of Advancing Human Powers**

Under received conceptions of human powers, the life-value principle is systemically violated without recognition. Both capitalism and communism, for example, affirm more productive powers as better, and fewer as worse. In consequence, small-scale agriculture and autonomous craft are slated to gradual or rapid extinction by both values systems because they are less productive in commodity outputs. Thus too, rural society, indigenous cultures, uncaught fish, untapped water flows, and so on disappear in accord with the selectors of this generic value premise. Both warring parties assert goods of efficiency and progress, and both moral narratives valorize ever extending human powers in versions of sense (2) above.

One of the most profound failures of contemporary value theories and their debates has been that the life of humanity and other species outside of this version of ever greater human powers has been invalidated, ignored or reduced to instrumentality. The historical advance of humanity to terrestrial supremacy has long tragically remained within this restricted sense of human powers.

#### **5.19.5. The Wider Biosphere and Commonwealth of Life**

The concept of extending human powers reaches life coherence when it includes the compossible flourishing of the planetary ecosystem and fellow species - as subsequent chapters explain. In fact, however, no received virtue or duty ethics, or utilitarianism or proceduralism or any other known value theory forwards a criterion that judges projects and actions as wrong in virtue of their diminishing or destroying life capacities. This is their fatal limit. Even “respect for life” movements which claim life value as their standard do not distinguish in moral principle between the life of a potential fish, a mole or a baboon and a self-directed human being - an issue we return to in depth ahead. First, however, we need a developed onto-axiology of life value to explain the vast domains of life which these movements miss.

#### **5.19.6. Summary: The Crisis of Values Deepens**

Our crisis of values continues to deepen in theory and the world. Never has the common ground of life value been so imperative to recognize, and never have its principles of meaning been more overlooked in learned and public discourses. Even when the most developed theories valorize human powers in transgenerational development and action above the money or other extrinsic value of them, they remain blind to life’s universal requirements and inner universe by which people ultimately live and enjoy living.

We now turn to the Primary Axiom of Value to spell out this long-missing ground of value meaning.

## Glossary

- Agent-relative:** A standard philosophical term signifying individual choice as in “agent-relative ethics” which assumes that value agency is confined to individuals.
- Analytic philosophy:** An umbrella term covering any school or method of philosophy for which logical rigor and distinctions are prioritized and referents restricted to linguistic entities.
- Anti-foundationalism:** A generic term for the dominant trend of philosophy over the recent century whose unifying characteristic is denial of any universal truths or values.
- A-priori:** Derived independently of sense experience e.g.,  $2+2=4$ . Truth by definition and tautological deduction is the mathematical model, but presuppositions are often falsely assumed a-priori.
- A-posteriori:** “After the fact”, dependent on sense experience.
- Axiology:** From the Greek, axioma, “what is thought to be worthy”, the ultimate, 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.
- 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 truths or values.
- Capital:** Wealth that can be used to produce more wealth without loss by consumption or waste.
- 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 governor of thought and action. (Strictly speaking, the adjective money before capitalism is required to ensure distinction from other forms of capital).
- Civil commons:** A unifying concept to designate social constructs which enable universal access to life goods. Life support systems are civil commons so far as society protects and enables their reproduction and provision for all members.
- Coherence theory of truth:** That a belief is true so far as it is consistent with a whole system of beliefs. See **Life coherence principle**.
- Correspondence theory of truth:** In general, the ancient idea that claims must correspond to facts to be true. This idea has given rise to questions about what are the criteria of “facts” and “correspondence”, to which the reigning answer is scientific confirmation. See **Validity**.
- Collective agency:** A concept which is little understood in philosophy and the social

sciences which dominantly focus on, respectively, agent-relative methods of analysis or aggregates of individual choices. It is best understood by the rule systems people (s) make or follow.

**Common life interest:**

A concept which disambiguates the categories of “the common interest” and, “the public interest” to specify what these concepts normally omit, shared life support systems.

**Continental philosophy:**

A standard way of distinguishing contemporary European philosophy and method from Analytic philosophy. See also Existentialism, Marxism, Phenomenology, and Postmodernism.

**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).

**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 of happiness

**Desire theory of value:**

A concept to designate any theory of value which conceives all values in terms of individual desire objects.

**Determinism:**

A problematic term typically, but falsely, counterposed to freedom of choice. The meaning adopted by life-ground ontology is to delimit (de-terminer) a known range of material possibility within which individual or collective choices can occur otherwise put, individual and social freedom of choice within material limits.

**Development:**

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

**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 degrees of each in mutual inclusion.

**Epistemology:**

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

**Ethics:**

That which is concerned with what is good and bad in human

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

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

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

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

**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:** The basic distinction between what is a good in itself and what is good as an external possession.

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

**Life coherence principle:** Equivalent to ‘the full coherence principle’ whereby rationality or validity must be consistent with (1) factual premises and (2) valid inferences, so as (3) to enable rather than disable life and life-systems to qualify as rational or valid.

**Life-Ground:** Most simply expressed, all the conditions required to take your next breath. Axiologically understood, all the life support systems required for human life to reproduce or develop. The life-ground is to be distinguished from the concept of “the life-world” which refers to background beliefs.

**Life sequence of** The process whereby any body of life becomes more life by

- value:** means of life a process which admits of regressive, reproductive and progressive modes and degrees, each measurable by the criteria of more/less fields of life enabled or enjoyed through time.
- Life standards:** Those principles and laws which protect and enable human and ecological life systems.
- Life-value metric:** More/less life range in any domain or degrees of life function or expression.
- Life-value onto-axiology:** General term for a value-system which regards life and means of life to more coherently comprehensive ranges of life as the sole real good, including the life support systems required to enable this process.
- 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). By confining philosophical problems and discourse to issues of language or sign systems, the l.t. implicitly disconnects philosophy and reflective inquiry from the material problems of the world.
- Mechanical reduction:** The dominant model of life-systems as mechanical systems which rules out non-mechanical life properties (e.g., the irreversibility of life processes and non-substitutability of its constituents and conditions).
- Meta-Ethics:** The study of the nature of moral judgment conventionally preoccupied with the logical status of ought and taxonomies of competing theories in exclusion of substantive moral issues.
- Metaphysics:** The ultimately regulating principles of existence (ontology) and knowledge (epistemology) which typically lack grounding in universal life support systems of causation, choice and identity
- Money sequence of value:** Using anything whatever as means (including money derivatives) to turn private money sums into greater quantities in reiterated choice paths of money-value adding. The money sequence of value ultimately regulates and is expressed in myriad forms of so-called “globalization”, but is unrecognized as a defeasible axiology.
- Moral Philosophy:** Moral philosophy is often equated to Ethics, but is in principle more restricted in reference to ought-to statements which entail prescriptions or prohibitions whose violation is thought to deserve guilt or punishment (e.g., the prescription/prohibition not to harm life). See also **Ethics**.

- Onto-axiology:** A concept which supersedes the standard reductionist split between ontology (the philosophy of being) and ethics/axiology (general theory of good and bad). Objective Values - Values which are independent of individuals' affirming them (e.g., the values of universal life support systems).
- Pareto Optimum (or Pareto efficiency):** A standard ideal of philosophical and economic rational choice theory in which no-one can be made better off without making someone else worse, based on dyadic exchanges of assets with contents arbitrary and external conditions ruled out.
- 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.
- Relativism:** A generic term for the view that there are no objective or universal values because all values are by their nature relative to the contingent cultures, preferences, individuals, practices and world-views in which they are embedded.
- Ruling Value-System:** See **Social value system**.
- Second-order Shift:** A move from first-order value-system (e.g., to maximize pecuniary possessions or equivalents) to a second-order level of value understanding and choice within which the first-order value-system is only one regulating possibility. This is a logic of distinction which is straightforward in non-normative matters (e.g., the first-order of red and blue, and the second order of color), but not at the normative level wherever a ruling value program is assumed as without alternative.
- Social justice:** The baseline and measure of social justice is defined by the constant principle of its opposite suffering from need by the life-capacity loss entailed by the deprivation of life means. Social justice is the overcoming of the various forms of this iniquity.
- Social Value System:** A society's value-system which is normally presupposed by those governed by it and which ultimately regulates the decision norms and goals of a society's dominant social institutions, the individual roles within them, and the thought structures of those internalizing its regulating assumptions and conclusions. Also referred to as "ruling v.s."
- Transcendental** Logical analysis in which the necessary presuppositions of the

- deduction:** intelligibility of a claim or position are deduced as self-evident (e.g., the necessary presupposition that all humanity is European in the statement “Columbus discovered America”). Universal life goods - All goods without which human life capacities are reduced or destroyed (eg., breathable air, potable water, means of expression for free speech).
- Validity:** In life-value sense, requires not only consistency of statements with each other and empirical evidence, but with the reproduction of life support systems
- Value compossibility:** The compatibility of formerly competing or traded-off goods yielding more coherently inclusive value provision (e.g., housing development by preservation of natural environments).
- Value neutrality:** A standard which is claimed when a value-system is so deeply taken for granted that its outcomes appear as non-normative although achieved by the regulation of strict criteria of value and value judgment (e.g., the canons of scientific method).
- Value syntax:** Organizing principles of pro-and-con meaning, prescription, position and transformation which regulate a value system, but may be invisible to those who presuppose it. In the ruling value syntax of contemporary global society, the subject is money capital whose verb is seeking to become more without upper limit and whose modifiers are money-demand and its equivalents (“the money sequence of value”)
- With competing money capital subjects and the human and natural resources they purchase and exchange always used to become more money capital. Rationality in this onto-axiological grammar is regulatively presupposed as (i) self-maximizing strategies in (ii) conditions of scarcity or conflict over (iii) desired payoffs at (iv) minimum costs for the self to (v) win/gain more.

## Bibliography

Arendt, Hannah (1964), *Origins of Totalitarianism*. 520 pp. New York: Meridian. [Classic study of the nature of totalitarian regimes in Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union under Stalin whose striking insights into such phenomena as “the negative solidarity of alienated masses” are not generalized into explanatory principles applying beyond these alien regimes.]

Aristotle(1995), *The Complete Works of Aristotle* (ed. J. Barnes), Princeton: Princeton University Press [Includes Aristotle’s most famous work in ethics, the *Nicomachean Ethics*, as well as his other works in normative philosophy and value theory, *Eudemian Ethics*, *Economics*, *Politics*, and *Virtues and Vices*. The theory for which Aristotle is best most known, with a still contemporary school of ethics by this name, is “virtue ethics”. Aristotle’s general conception of the good, implicit in Plato’s earlier philosophical cornerstone, *The Republic*, also defines one of the major strains of philosophical thought thereafter: namely that the good is that which an entity thing aims to achieve in accord with its nature, whatever it is, with the good for the human being the realization of his or her human essence (reason), and the development of its faculties to the utmost: (eudaimonia, or self-realization). This is a primary pattern of ethical thought which also frames the value theories of Thomas Aquinas, Karl Marx, and Alastair MacIntyre, with the essential theories of the latter two examined in depth in the *Philosophy and World*

Problems Theme Essay.]

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

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

Bacon, Francis (1620/1963), *Novum Organum*, 135pp. New York: Washington Square Press.[The origin of modern scientific method is standardly attributed to Bacon’s 1620 essay which adopts the machine as its model, the beginning of centuries of scientific and philosophical mechanism which remains dominant into the present day, from scientific economics to models of the mind.]

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

Carman J. and Juergensmeyer M. eds. (1991), *A Bibliographical Guide to the Comparative Study of Ethics*, 811pp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [The most culturally all-round bibliographical source available of major religious ethical traditions.]

Chan, W. (1963), *Sourcebook of Chinese Philosophy*, 856 pp. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press [This is the definitive and comprehensive collection of classical Chinese Philosophy from Confucius to K’angYu-Wei, providing texts across millennia on “the Great Norm”, jen or “human-heartedness”, and “the Tao”. Includes the whole Tao-te Ching by Lao tzu, and canonical Ch’an Buddhist writings.]

Darwin, C. (1936), *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. 549 pp. New York: Modern Library [This is Darwin’s classical statement of what is and is not “fit” to live.]

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

Dewey, J. (1963), *Liberalism and Social Action*, 93 pp. New York: Capricorn [This work by the best known twentieth-century advocate of “liberal values” is revealing for its striking conclusion that the cause of liberalism and individual liberty requires society to “socialize the forces of production”.]

Edgeworth, Frances (1881[1932]). *Mathematical Psychics*, London: London School of Economics [Leader of modern of conception of man as “a pleasure machine” justifying “the employment of mechanical terms and mathematical reasoning in social science”.]

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

Freire, Paulo (1967), *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 243 pp. Boston: Beacon Press. [A classic in the philosophy of education as well as revolutionary onto-ethics which combines a robust depth of understanding of existential European philosophy, Marxian class consciousness, and emancipatory pedagogical praxis at a social level.]

Hartmann, Nicolai (1950), *Ethics*, 821 pp. London: Allen and Unwin. [Originally published in Germany as *Ethik* in 1926, follows an ancient philosophical tendency since Plato to conceive moral values as akin to pure mathematical forms whose objective certitude is eternal and independent of perception of them. “Values do not change - - [it is] only our insight into them that changes”.]

Herrigel, Eugen (1953/1971), *Zen and the Art of Archery*, 90pp. New York: Vintage Books. [A classic study of Zen practice by a philosopher who reports his training immersion in its discipline over six years to achieve enlightenment, “one shot, one life”.]

Hodgson, Bernard (2001), *Economics as Moral Science*, Heidelberg: Springer Press. [An inside and scholarly critique of formal consumer choice theory in neo-classical economics which lays bare its dehumanizing reductionism.]

Hume, David (1960/1888), *A Treatise of Human Nature*, 709pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press [Hume's classic study in which he marks a turning point in philosophy towards what is now called "instrumental reason", characterizing the relation of reason to the passions as the opposite to the classical conception of reason as ruler from Plato to Spinoza: "reason is the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them" (2.3.3.4).]

Kant, I. (1992) *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*, 15 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [This collection includes all Kant's work in value theory in the inclusive sense, whatever is conceived of worth, or not.]

Locke, John (1690/1950), *The Second Treatise on Government*, 139 pp. New York: Liberal Arts Press. [One of the founding classics of liberal value theory arguing for private property by labor right as the ultimate right of free men, but negating the labor and other provisos for property right by the introduction of money.]

MacIntyre, A.(1981), *After Virtue*. 271 pp. London: Duckworth. [This is the definitive contemporary work of "virtue ethics", arguably the most philosophically developed since Aristotle: including the distinction between "internal and external goods", and the criterion of the "practices" and the "excellences" they aim at.]

Mackie, J.L. (1977), *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*, 249 pp. New York: Penguin.[This text is representative of the dominant subjectivist view of Ethics that values and moral principles are merely "preferences": with Mackie specifically arguing that any and all moral or ethical judgments of right and wrong, good or bad, are "false".]

Marcuse, H (1964), *One-Dimensional Man*, 260pp.Boston: Beacon Press [Marcuse's most famous work which was a central text of the 1968 student uprisings in Europe and America, a penetrating critique of capitalist technological culture and its reduction of life to a totalizing consumer-management culture.]

Marx, Karl and Engels, F. (1975- ), *Collected Works of Marx and Engels*, 44 vols. (ed. R. Dixon et al). New York: International Publishers [Marx's complete works are richly ambivalent on ethics and ethical theory insofar he either presupposes or denies value orientation in an underlying conflictedness between moral and onto-ethical concerns of the profoundest kind, on the one hand, and a rigorously conscious scientific method denying issues of value as objectively significant or merely ideological, on the other.]

McMurtry, J. (1978), *The Structure of Marx's World-View*. 278 pp. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [this work defines an ultimately regulating inner logic of Marx's philosophy and science across domains and periods, in particular drawing out his undergirding concept of human nature and its realization upon which the whole implicitly rests.]

McMurtry, J. (1981) "Is There a Marxian Personal Morality?", *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, Supplement VII, 171-9. [This analysis is useful as the only work seeking to deduce a substantive individual ethic from the work of Karl Marx in the light of the methodological barriers against such a project.]

McMurtry, J. (1989), *Understanding War*, 90 pp. Toronto: Science for Peace [This is a concise overview demonstrating the locked choice-spaces of the military paradigm of war, and explaining the rational alternative of warring for rather than against life security.]

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

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

Mill, J.S. (1860/1996) *Utilitarianism*, 260pp. New York: Oxford University Press [This volume contains

the primary modern statement of value as defined by “the Greatest Happiness Principle” wherein “all actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce pain”.]

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 [A well-informed study which tracks the machine model in contemporary market economic theory into the “automaton theater” of economic, military and decision-theory research.

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

Nadler, Z. (1975), *Values and Valuations*, 191 pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. [Useful scholarly account of what value systems are which, as others in the formalist tradition, avoids discussion of any substantive value.]

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 6.25 Theme Essay, such as *The Genealogy of Morals* and, in particular, *Beyond Good and Evil*, a later work which explains 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 resentment against the rule of “nature’s aristocracy”, to whose “free expression”, Nietzsche argues, inferior human beings “must be reduced to slaves, to tools”.

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

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

Perry, R.B. (1969), *Realms of Value: A Critique of Human Civilization*, 487 pp. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. [Perry provides the most comprehensive argument for a general value theory yet published: briefly, the good = what is desired. At a second-order level, an axiology to justify the value-system of the market order, and, more generally, the contemporary belief that the good for people in all things is what people themselves want.

Plato (1961), *The Collected Dialogues of Plato* (ed. E. Hamilton and H. Cairns), Pantheon Books: New York. [The complete works of philosophy’s most famous author - “all philosophy is but footnotes on Plato”, to quote Whitehead - whose entire corpus may be understood as modes of value theory in the inclusive sense of whatever is, and is not, of worth.]

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 and the *Bhagavad-Gita*, and substantial selections from early and late Buddhism and Sri Aurobindo.]

Rawls, J. (1967), *A Theory of Justice*. 542pp. Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press. [This is the recognized definitive work of the twentieth century in political philosophy, using a contractarian model to discover principles of justice, complementing Moore’s *Principia Ethica* as the two leading classics of normative theory of the era. Its paradigmatic starting point of rational value-judgment is the principle of

self-maximizing rationality “including wanting a larger share for oneself”: with a “veil of ignorance” over one’s own faculties and conditions of life a guarantor of impartiality, but also decoupling agents from their conditions of life a-priori.]

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 all substantive issues of value.]

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

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 works on denotation and description, the logical foundations of mathematics, sense data and logical atomism, neutral monism, and probability. He regretted twentieth-century philosophy’s wide abandonment of “understanding the world itself, that grave and important task which philosophy throughout has hitherto pursued”].

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

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.]

Smith, Adam (1776/1966), *An Inquiry into Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. 2 vols. New York: A.M. Kelley. [Possibly the most influential work in history, the founding work of “the moral science” in which Smith describes a linchpin of the ruling value system: “Every species of animals naturally multiplies in proportion to the means of their subsistence, and no species can ever multiply beyond it. But in civilized society it is only among the inferior ranks of people that the scantiness of subsistence can set limits to the further multiplication of the human species; and it can do so in no other way than by destroying a great part of the children”].

Suzuki, D.T. (1956). *Zen Buddhism: Selected Writings of D.T. Suzuki* (ed. W. Barrett). 294 pp. Garden City N.Y.: Doubleday [A useful selection of writings of the most widely recognized scholar of Zen, but as elsewhere without a principle of value to rule against life-incapacitating Zen expressions such as beatings of novices and, more seriously, lethal warrior arts in practice.]

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 and tax policies by non-violent civil disobedience.]

Vico, G. (1724/1984), *The New Science*, 445 pp. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press. [The first modern classic of the philosophy of history in which Vico argues that humanity can only know for certain that which it has created, because it is a human construction - an epistemological claim that seems disproved in the case of the most important human constructions, the ruling value systems of societies, that which is least of all examined.]

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”, disconnecting philosophical problems from the life-ground in preoccupation with linguistic and logical muddles with no reference beyond their “language games”].

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 25 years and University Professor Emeritus since 2005. He is an elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, and his many articles, chapters, books and interviews have been internationally published and translated.