

THE LOST SOCIAL SUBJECT: EVALUATING THE RULES BY WHICH WE LIVE

John McMurtry

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

Keywords: capitalism, civil commons, common life interest, competition, development, freedom, history, human nature, language, life-ground, life-value, life standards, life support systems, measure, mechanism, money sequence of value, needs, Nietzschean fallacy, obligation, onto-axiology, predator model, rights, rules, social subject, supply and demand, universal goods, validity, war.

Contents

- 9.1. The Egocentric Circle: How the World Disappears in Philosophy and Economics
- 9.2. The Common Life Interest beneath Rule By Private Rights
- 9.3. The Life-Blind Logic of the Ruling Economic Mechanism and its Money-Right Holders
- 9.4. The Onto-Axiology of Competition: From Predatory to Common Life-Value Gains
- 9.5. Principles and Rules: The Underlying Social Subject Deciding How to Live
- 9.6. What is Good in History: Finding the Onto-Ethical Baseline
- 9.7. Social Rules and Their Validity: From Language to Universal Morality
- 9.8. The False Opposition of Individual Freedom and Collective Regulation
- 9.9. Principles and Rules Decide Evil: From the Military Institution to Will to Power
- 9.10. Above Public and Market Rules: The Money-Sequence System Disorder
- 9.11. System Regulators Determine What the Interests Are, Not the Other Way Round
- 9.12. The Ultimate System Choice
- 9.13. Inner Logic of System Blindness across Domains
- 9.14. Beyond Proxies of Well-Being: The Universal Principle of Life Needs and their Measure
- Glossary
- Bibliography
- Biographical Sketch

Summary

Showing that neither the ethics of individual decision nor immutable laws can comprehend the social subject and its choice spaces, this chapter explains the deciding plane of the human condition as the rules by which we live and defines the ultimate principles of their evaluation and advance.

9.1. The Egocentric Circle: How the World Disappears in Philosophy and Economics

The “egocentric predicament” is an age-old philosophical problem – namely, that nothing can be proved beyond one’s own conscious states. Solipicism and scepticism are philosophical positions which deny that there is any certain way beyond this circle, and philosophy has been haunted by the problem since the ancients. Even the

philosopher entering heaven asks, “How do I know this is not a snare and a delusion?”

Meta-tactics have developed to avoid the ultimate conundrum. Suspension of judgment becomes an unwritten standard of philosophical comportment, and philosophy tends to stay within meanings and relationships among words. In contemporary theory, abstract rational selves in a vacuum decide what is just, good or valid, while in practice, selves choose what they want in markets of commodities and politicians.

In all, a world-view develops in which *nothing is seen to decide but individual preferences*, and *there is no value but what they choose*. Other ways of understanding are alien - “collectivist”, “Marxist”, “deciders for others”, “ghost entities”, and so on.

9.1.1. A General Tuning Out of the World

In contemporary moral philosophies and theories of justice, self-referential debates abstract out the world and build *ex nihilo* on themselves. That is, professional philosophers begin with interpretations of what the dominant theories have claimed, with what philosophers in central institutions say about them as reference body including what has been argued for or against them that is in fashion, and especially what has been said in response to them in secondary debates, *ad infinitum*. No life-ground ever emerges to view to constrain obligation to its requirements. That the internal mechanics of the arguments position themselves within the received debates is all that normally counts. It follows that when actual universal interests of humanity come to be directly threatened, there are no shared grounds to recognize the crises of the actual world or to steer out by life coordinates of understanding.

Outside of philosophy, a parallel autism rules. For example, professional economic understanding adopts technical and mathematical symbols in equations and graphs which become autonomous circuits of meaning that substitute for the material world. What does not appear within them does not exist to theory, for example, people’s actual life needs. Necessity is thus what follows from the given axioms, not what people require to live through generational time.

9.2. The Common Life Interest beneath Rule By Private Rights

Despite this systemic disconnection from the life-ground by contemporary theory and doctrine, humanity’s underlying longer-term pattern of civilization has, in fact, been *life-protective norms developed across cultures* - for example, against depredation of common resources, letting the young or old die, attacking others at will, appropriating others’ homes, or sexual molestation or rape.

Yet all of these actions are freely permitted in Nature’s competition for survival which evolutionary and economic theories adopt as their model of reproductive success. It is as if the very basis of humanity’s civilization and difference from the brutes was being blocked out by the ruling value syntax of thought.

9.2.1. Market-Era Amnesia of the Civil Commons

Transcultural laws and customs defending human life are elements of the long-developing but generally unseen civil commons discussed in the prior chapter - that is, *all social constructs which enable universal access to life goods*, from language and life-protective laws to public life spaces, libraries and parks, and supportive care when helpless. Civil commons, however, are not widely recognized in philosophy or the sciences, including Marxian varieties. Although its structures differentiate humanity from the natural struggle for survival in every case, these evolved community support systems and their historical actualization of the common life interest are screened out of even theory which focuses on “the commons”.

For example, Elinor Ostrom’s *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* (1990), for which she received the 2009 Nobel Prize in Economics, examines only small-scale commons organized and governed by individuals in the private sector, without government funding, or legal enforcement, or life-value criterion. Civil commons at the system-wide level remain without a known name even as battles are fought in the street for their particular forms (e.g., government protection of ecological commons, labor rights, application of international law against war crimes, public programs for life security of all kinds, enforced rules against bio-piracy and seed contamination, and so on).

The evolution of civil commons underlies humanity’s civilization itself, as this analysis explains, but their formations have been increasingly invaded, defunded and enclosed in bits – most poignantly in fee-privatization of public infrastructures of primary education and healthcare in Africa so as to pay compound interest to foreign banks.

9.2.2. Against the Grain: Recognizing the Social Subject and Civil Commons

What is not recognized is not defended or extended. The substance of humanity’s onto-ethical development - what John Stuart Mill called “the permanent interests of mankind as a progressive being” – may be acknowledged in resonant phrases, but not criterially defined. The closest Mill comes, as we know, is the utilitarian principle - maximization of happiness and minimization of pain. Yet these interests are subjective, impermanent, and not necessarily progressive as we have seen in *The Transcultural Idea: The Good as Happiness and the Bad as Pain*.

The methodological problem is that what transient *selves* want or decide as individuals or aggregates cannot recognize what has been left out – *what societies in fact choose by the rules its members live by*. The social subject is not recognized. The system-deciding rules we live by dissolve into the given. Society’s rule-governed self creation is not examined as a moral system. Civil commons are not even named.

Failure to conceive humanity’s *shared* life and life foundations is endemic to ruling doctrines through history. Even universal water and sewer systems so basic to common life today had to be struggled for underneath policy and theory by London women over a century ago in the face of industrial squalor and cholera epidemics, and are now themselves under money-privatization pressures across the world. Instead of further

advance on the strength of what societies have won by universalizing life goods and standards, there is a reverse tendency whose philosophical frame is the self-maximizing market individual. Indeed lead advocates of this global market revolution, F.A. Hayek and Margaret Thatcher, have claimed “there is no such thing as society”.

-
-
-

TO ACCESS ALL THE 50 PAGES OF THIS CHAPTER,
Visit: <http://www.eolss.net/Eolss-sampleAllChapter.aspx>

Bibliography

Adorno, Max (1966/1973), *Negative Dialectics* 178pp. New York: Continuum. [This is an onto-epistemological work of the Frankfurt Critical Theory school which in general seeks to spell out the dehumanization of humanity by industrial capitalist ideology, but here in particular argues for dialectical thinking to dissolve conceptual forms before they harden into distorting lenses of experience by the inherent one-sidedness of words which exclude all to which they do not refer.]

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.]

R. Audi ed. (1995), *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. 882 pp. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press. [An excellent short encyclopedia of received philosophical authors, concepts and schools cited in this essay.]

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).]

Armstrong, J. Sharing One Skin (1996), *The Case Against the Global Economy* (ed. Goldsmith E. And Mander J.) San Francisco: Sierra Books, 460-471. [Perhaps the most philosophically powerful statement of a first nation’s idea of life-grounded identity in opposition to the ruling value syntax.]

Aurobindo Ghose (1989), *The Life Divine*.1112pp. Pondicherry, India: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.[The author’s greatest work which is distinguished by its dynamic, evolutionary conception of God in which the material world is not considered illusory as in Shankara’s and Buddha’s “illusionism”, but is in perpetual transformation from the Subconscient All through Desire-Force to Mind (instrumental reason), Supermind (world consciousness), and Gnostic Consciousness (the all experiencing itself as all in all).]

Ayer, A.J. *Language, Truth and Logic* (1936), 160 pp. New York: Dover. [This classical statement of the once dominant school of “logical positivism” holds that since there are not observations that prove value statements as true or false, they are meaningless.]

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 dominant to 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 addressed in the Theme essay.]

Bernays, Edward W. (1933), *Propaganda*, 159 pp. New York: Liveright [This is a revealing book by a nephew of Freud and a primary pioneer of modern mass-market conditioning and appeal to and control unconscious desires not needs to sell commodities and engineer consent.]

Bernecker, S. and Dretske, F. (2000), *Knowledge*, 595 pp. Oxford: Oxford University Press. [This is a state-of-the-art sourcebook of contemporary Anglo-American epistemology featuring definitive chapters by Austin, Ayer, Bonjour, Chisolm, Davidson, Goodman, Kripke, Lewis, Putnam, Quine, Russell, Sellars, Strawson and others featuring the standard criterion of knowledge as true, justified belief, with methodological elision of life-coherence requirements.]

Bok, Sissela (1995), *Common Values*, 130 pp. Columbia MO: Missouri University Press [One of the few philosophical works which analyzes social moral systems and seeks a common core of values across cultures: but without any criterion of needs or relationship of the "minimalist norms" to the basic "biological survival needs" .]

Braybrooke, D. *et al* (1995), *Logic on the Track of Social Change* 273 pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. [This work is a first in joining formal logic to social analysis and focuses on selected historical conflicts of rule-prohibitions generating social change.]

Brentano, F. (1969), *The Origin Of Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong*. New York: Humanities Press. [An eminent modern representation of ethical idealism wherein values are not life-grounded, but conceived as akin to a-priori mathematical truths of which there are "correct" and "incorrect" understandings.]

Broome, J. (1999), *Ethics Out of Economics*, 267 pp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [This analysis criticizes "the shifted sense of utility" in neoclassical economics over the last century, arguing that the directive principle of utilitarianism is an impartial principle of happiness production not economic self-maximization.]

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.]

Chang, Wnag-Tsit (1963), *Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*, 856 pp. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press. [This is the definitive and comprehensive collection of classical Chinese Philosophy from Lao tzu and Confucius to K'angYu-Wei, providing texts across millennia on "human-heartedness", "natural harmony" and "the the Great Norm" or Tao".]

Daniel, S.H., (2005), *Contemporary Continental Thought*, 490pp. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall [A distinctively comprehensive selection and primary explanation of the leaders of critical theory and postmodern philosophy from the first half of the twentieth century to the present].

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

Davidson, D. (1980), *Essays on Actions and Events* (2001), 324pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press.[A leading work of analytic philosophy in action theory, it is representative in confining action to intended individual events, and weighting primary distinction of action versus physical events. Unlike W.O. Quine, another leader in the field, D. does not agree with reduction of individual actions to physical behavior, but against A. Goldman thinks bodily movements are necessarily part of an action.]

Dawkins, R. (1976), *The Selfish Gene*, 224 pp. Oxford: Oxford University Press.[Widely influential text of contemporary evolutionary biology featuring explanation by "the selfish replicators of genes and

memes” by whose “universal ruthless selfishness” action is explained.]

Derrida, Jacques 1981. *Positions*, 114 pp. Chicago: University of Chicago Press [This is one of many books by the contemporary leader of postmodernism who argues the principle of undecidability with its entailment that any universal claim or truth collapses into unseen differences of perspective, positions and interpretations.]

Descartes, R. (1637- 41/1996), trans. Weissman, D. And Bluhm W.T., *Discourse on method and Meditations on first philosophy*. 383 pp. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press. [Often conceived as the father of modern philosophy, Descartes’ work has been most famous in its dualistic conception of human being - the mind or *res cogitans* as the immaterial and indivisible substance, and the body or *res extensa* as the material substance or body involving nothing but “divisions, shapes and motion” .]

Dewey, John (1925), *Experience and Nature*, 443pp. Chicago: Open Court.[This is Dewey’s most substantial work explaining his philosophy of experience whose experimentalist logic of knowing rejects all dualisms, highlights felt immediacy against merely abstract cognition, and integrates democracy and education into the process of intelligent life growth.]

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

Doyle, Ian and Gough, Len (1991), *A Theory of Human Need*, 365 pp. New York: Guilford Press. [This work makes the important distinction between needs and need satisfiers, but without any underlying principle of need across cultural differences.]

Dworkin, R. (1978), *Taking Rights Seriously*, 371pp.. Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press.[This well-known work “places the individual at the center” arguing that individual rights “always trump” other evaluative considerations, with norms, morality and justice only properly understood within a system of competing individual rights as fundamental.]

Edgeworth, Frances (1881[1932]). *Mathematical Psychics*, London: London School of Economics. [This is a formative work of onto-axiological economic mechanism in which it is assumed that “the conception of man as a pleasure machine may justify the employment of mechanical terms and mathematical reasoning in social science”.]

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

Epstein, Samuel (2005). *Cancer-Gate*, New York: Baywood Press. [Expert explanation of the environmental causation of the many-levelled cancer epidemic.]

Falk, R. (2001), *Religion and Humane Social Governance*. 208 pp. London: Palgrave MacMillan.[An eminent legal scholar argues that only classical religious values can ground humane governance assuming empirical science as the sole alternative.]

Feuerbach, L. (1986), *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*. 80pp. Indianapolis U.S.: Hackett Publishing. [This work applies the author’s “transformative method” of translating God’s attributes into human attributes to the human condition and the abstract possibility of the “community and unity of man with man”.]

Freire,Paul.(1967),*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 243 pp. Boston: Beacon Press. [This classic in the philosophy of education, social justice and liberation emphasizes the importance of literacy in “desubmerging consciousness” to understand and confront structures of oppression.]

Freud, S. (1962-74), eds. Strachey J. et al, *Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Freud*, 24 vols. London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis. [This edition contains all the works alluded to in this essay, including *Totem and Taboo*, *Group Psychology*, *The Ego and the Id*, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, and *Civilisation and its Discontents*.]

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

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

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

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

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

Hanfling, Oswald ed. (1987), *Life and Meaning*, 254pp. Oxford: Blackwell. [An excellent reader in onto-ethics featuring keynote selections from eminent ancient, modern and contemporary authors on the meaning of life from a wide spectrum of positions, including Mill on Nature.]

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”.]

Heidegger, M. (1977), *The Question of Technology and Other Essays* (trans. Lovitt W), 182 pp. New York: Garland. [This is an influential work in which Heidegger explores the lamentation that “everywhere we remain unfree and chained to technology” (p. 5), an obfuscatory treatment in which technology’s economic value selector and regulator is blocked out.]

Heidegger, M. (1996), *Being and Time*, 487 pp. Albany N.Y: State. [This is Heidegger’s magnum opus crystallizing his study of philosophy from the pre-Socratics and pioneering contemporary existential phenomenology, featuring the elusive idea of Being (*Sein*) as the forgotten ground of philosophy, the struggle of individual being against the “they-self” (*das Man*), and the “being towards death” that sets the defining issue for the individual (*Dasein*).

Hobbes, Thomas (1651/1958), *The Leviathan. Parts One and Two*, 299 pp. New York: Liberal Arts Press. [The first classic of the liberal canon, arguing on a mechanistic basis that men are matter in motion moved by appetites and aversion, above all towards “power after power that ceaseth only in death” whose generation of interminable conflicts and war breeds an existence which is “nasty, brutish and short” until all yield up their powers unconditionally to an absolute sovereign, “the Leviathan” state, which “bears their persons” and imposes the peace by which all can live in fear only of it.]

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.]

Holmstrom-Hintikka, G. and Tuomela, Raimo eds (1997), *Contemporary Action Theory*, 2 vols. 266/267pp pp. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic. [The volumes provide an overview of action theory, volume 1 on individual action (what philosophy focuses on, usually in relationship to mind) and volume 2 on social action.]

Honderich, T. (1995), *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, 1009 pp. Oxford: Oxford University Press. [A comprehensive dictionary of philosophy by experts in the field with useful entry on action theory.]

Hume, David, (electronic), *The Complete Works and Correspondence of David Hume* [The complete written corpus of the widely conceived leading philosopher of the English-speaking world includes his *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, where he presents the famous argument that no “ought” can be deduced from an “is”, as well as his view that advocacy of “the equality of property” is a “crime deserving of the severest punishment”.]

Jonas, Hans (1966), *The Phenomenon of Life: Towards a Philosophical Biology*. 303pp. New York: Harper and Row. [A rich phenomenological study which is insightful on the modern alienation between the natural organic world as lifeless mechanism (*res extensa*) and human mind and inwardness as a realm apart (*res cogitans*).]

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

Kant, I. (1992) *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*, 15 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Kant's signature concepts of the "categorical imperative" ("act only in such a way as make the maxim of your action a universal law") and "the kingdom of ends" (never treat another as simply a means, but always *also* at the same time as an end").]

Kropotkin, P. (1955), *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* , 362 pp. Boston: Extending Horizons Books. [This is a classical argument for cooperation as a factor of evolution as distinguished from Darwinian competitive struggle alone, providing a wealth of data including of pre-capitalist cooperative social formations but not defining principles.]

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

Laing, R.D. (1972), *The Politics of the Family*, 92 pp. Toronto: Anansi under auspices of Massey Lectures. [Explains how validating and invalidating attributions within a "family drama" can control and distort the development of human personality by the "mapping" of family roles across generations.]

Lane, R.E. (2000), *The loss of happiness in market democracies*, 465 pp. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.[This is a major empirical study showing that rising income and growth negatively correlate with reported happiness after \$7500+Cola per year, thereby demonstrating that the primary assumption by market economics of a positive correlation or equation is false.]

Lieber, J. (1975) *Noam Chomsky: A Philosophic Overview*, 192 pp. New York: St. Martin's Press. [This work explains Chomsky's linguistic theory connects it to his analysis of public affairs via the unifying idea of an autonomously rational human nature.]

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

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

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 as merely "preferences";, arguing that all ethical judgments of right and wrong, good or bad are "false".]

Manno, J.P. (2000), *Privileged Goods: Commoditization and Its Impact on Environment and Society*, 252 pp. London: Lewis Publishers. [This is a definitive documentation by expert witness of the devastating effects of the commodity measure of efficiency on ecological systems.]

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

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 as a critique of capitalist technology and its reduction of life to a totalizing consumer-management culture.],

Marcuse, H. (1978), *The Aesthetic Dimension: Towards a Theory of Marxist Aesthetics*, 71 pp. Boston:

Beacon Press. [This is distinctive account of art as creative negation of the status quo.]

Marcuse, H., Habermas, J. *et al* (1978-79), *Theory and Politics*, *Telos* **38**,125-153. [This rich debate-discussion reveals the differences and limits of the two leading progressive philosophers of the twentieth century and what they have left behind: featuring a germinal statement of the dismissal of Heidegger's "bad metaphysics", the organizing ideas of Habermas's "communication theory", and Marcuse's Hegelian-Freudian-Marxian ontology ally revealing the absence of a principled life-ground of value in philosophy's theorists of "the life-world" (Habermas) and "the life instinct" (Marcuse)].

Marx, Karl and Engels, F. (1975-), *Collected Works of Marx and Engels*, 44 vols. (ed. R. Dixon et al). New York: International Publishers [Complete works of Marx in English, relevant where Marx either presupposes or denies value orientation in an underlying conflictedness between moral and onto-ethical concerns he incandescently expresses, on the one hand, and a rigorously conscious scientific method denying issues of value as objectively significant or merely ideological, on the other hand. His Prefaces to *Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy* (1859) and *Capital* (1867) provide the most precise statement of the latter position, and his early *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* the richest reaches of the former.]

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., (1979) "How to tell the Left from the Right", *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* **IX** (3), 387-411. [This study moves underneath the phenomena of 'left' and 'right' as primary naming categories of ethico-political opposition to the unexamined principles governing their value-stand meanings since the ancients, and how they provide an explanatory moral compass today.]

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. (1984), "Fascism and Neo-Conservatism: Is There a Difference?", *Praxis International* **4** (1), 86-102. [A systematic comparison of regulating principles of doctrine.]

McMurtry J. (1986) "The Argumentum Ad Adversarium", *Informal Logic*, VIII.1, 27-36. [Explains the underlying logical disorder of fallacies by diversion (*ignoratio elenchi*) as forms of switching the issue to an accepted enemy or adversary of the community addressed (e.g., "communist", "liberal", "unbeliever"), a track-switch of thought argued to be a universal but defeasible form of fallacious thought and social life.]

McMurtry, J. (1988) "The Unspeakable: Understanding the System of Fallacy of the Media", *Informal Logic*, 41:3,133-50. [This analysis sets out the general regulating framework of the "ruling value syntax" as a system of rules selecting against whatever invalidates the presupposed ruling order of control over society's means of existence, and for whatever validates it - in correspondence to the > < degrees of each.]

McMurtry, J. (1989), *Understanding War*, 90 pp. Toronto: Science for Peace [This monograph demonstrates the locked choice-spaces of the military paradigm of war across cultures and times, and explains the onto-ethical alternative of warring for life value and life support systems.]

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 ethical and political theory as well as policy of the "liberal market order" as a ruling value system.]

McMurtry, J. (1999/2002), *The Cancer Stage of Capitalism*, 312 pp. London and Tokyo: Pluto and Springer Press. [This work explains how ruling value systems since the ancients may be life-blind and yet presupposed by the leading critical philosophers of the period, spelling out this pattern in the money-value sequences of late capitalism which are argued to be systematically carcinogenic at the social level of life organization.]

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.]

McMurtry, John (2007), "The Postmodern Voice of Empire: The Metalogic of Unaccountability", *The Postcolonial and the Global*, (eds. Krishnaswamy K. and Hawley J.), 328 pp. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.[This is a systematic life-value critique of postmodern thought system within a representative text of postmodern/postcolonial positions.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

Monbiot, G. (2000), *Captive State: The Corporate Takeover of Britain*, 430 pp. London: Macmillan.[This analysis excels as a documented paradigm case of how rule-system formation and application by contemporary states have been captured by private corporate power.]

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

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

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

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

implicit in “the principle of difference” itself, and in submerged humanity’s continuous uprisings against ruling systems of oppression.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Singer, Irving (1966 -1987), *The Nature of Love*, 3 volumes. Chicago: Chicago University Press. [The

most comprehensive study of theories of love from Plato to Sartre, it argues for love as “bestowal of value” on the love object without life-value considerations.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.