

THE TRANSCULTURAL IDEA: GOOD AS HAPPINESS AND BAD AS PAIN

John McMurtry

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

Keywords: aesthetic value, art, axiology, Buddhism, catharsis, childbirth, courage, consequentialism, consumer theory, death and dying, duty and obligation, ethical theories, evil, God, good pain/suffering, happiness, idealism, life-ground, life value, moral philosophy, need, non-moral values, social justice, torture, utilitarianism, warrior principle, Zen.

Contents

- 2.1. Happiness without Pain: The Eternal Idea across Cultures
 - 2.2. Moral and Non-Moral Values
 - 2.3. Aesthetic Value versus Moral Value
 - 2.4. Neoclassical Consumer Theory: Man as Pleasure Machine
 - 2.5. Does the Value Maximize Happiness/Minimize Pain Have Unlimited Validity?
 - 2.6. The Unexplained Value: Good Pain
 - 2.7. The Wrongness of Extinguishing All Pain and Suffering
 - 2.8. The Elastic Pleasure Argument as Vacuous
 - 2.9. The Criterion of Good Pain and Suffering
 - 2.10. Overcoming Polar Confusions about Pain and Suffering
 - 2.11. Nietzsche's 'Life Principle' as Self-Contradictory
 - 2.12. Drawing the Line of Good across Pain and Suffering
 - 2.13. Evil Pain and Suffering and their Overcoming
 - 2.14. The Way between Extremes of Pro-and-Con Positions
 - 2.15. Beneath the First Premise of Buddhism and Utilitarianism
 - 2.16. The Missing Life-and-Death Value Distinction
 - 2.17. Communicative Pain: The Life-Value Signal of Life Gone Wrong
 - 2.18. Ignored Social Suffering: The Measure of Inhuman Social Order
 - 2.19. Freedom from Pain: The Missing Life-Ground of Eastern and Western Wisdom
 - 2.20. Transcendental Consciousness and the World: The Life-Coherent Connection
 - 2.21. Pain and Suffering as Obligation Routes: The Inner Logic of Social Justice
 - 2.22. Understanding Torture and Terror as System Evils
 - 2.23. Who is Responsible?
 - 2.24. Facing Disease and Death without a Cure: Bridging the Individual-Social Divide
- Glossary
Bibliography
Biographical Sketch

Summary

Although the possibility of any universal value is widely denied by contemporary philosophers, one meta-theory of value stands out as a perennial answer to the question of good and evil - happiness is good and pain is bad. This essay decodes the fatal errors of this enduring idea in world philosophy, and spells out the unrecognized principles of

good pain and suffering which have been differently overlooked by Buddhist, Utilitarian, Market and Nietzschean theories. These criteria of good and evil suffering are then shown to be the underlying core of moral reason and social justice.

2.1. Happiness without Pain: The Eternal Idea across Cultures

The most ancient and enduring idea of the Good across civilizations is being happy and free from pain. This principle seems to express the desire of all sentient being, and it is first given formal recognition and argument in the *Four Noble Truths* of Shakyamuni Buddha (c.563BCE -483BCE) over 2500 years ago. These Four Noble Truths - of suffering, the cause of suffering, the negation of this cause, and the path to achieve happiness by a Middle Way - constitute the inner logic of Hindu philosophy out of which Buddhism grows as a reform movement repudiating caste, sacrifice of animals, and belief in a supernatural God. Notwithstanding these differences, the shared ultimate goal is emancipation from the pain and suffering of embodied life.

More generally, the elimination of pain and suffering is axiologically presupposed as good *across* Eastern and Western philosophies. One great difference distinguishes them. The Eastern philosophies focus on an inner or spiritual path to happiness (with notable exceptions like the materialist *Carvaka*); while non-religious Western philosophies focus on an outer and secular path - in particular, market utility gain by perpetual technological improvements and increased consumer pleasures.

2.1.1. The Market Utility Calculus

In recent decades, the global market has been the dominant mode of achieving happiness without pain. However misled its goal and method, its “marginal utility calculus” is only the received economic version of a more thoughtful and general moral theory called “Utilitarianism”, whose modern form originates with Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806-73).

The most advanced philosophical statement of this theory is provided by Mill in his work, *On Utilitarianism*, where he famously asserts: “The Greatest Happiness Principle holds that *actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce pain.*” (p. 7). He derives the general idea his theory from Bentham who first originates the concept of the original “utilitarian calculus”. It presumes to count pleasures and debit pains, but founders as a coherent moral calculus because it has no common unit of measure across individual experiences and pain-pleasure types.

The market-capitalist marginal utility theory, however, becomes the ruling answer to this problem from the end of the nineteenth century on. The *money price people are willing to pay* provides the missing common unit of measure. The nature of “the money sequence of value” in which this metric is embedded has already been critiqued in the first Chapter of this Theme Essay, *The Global Crisis of Values*. Now we turn our attention to the much wider and unexamined first major premise of value across the ages - that pain is bad.

2.1.2. Elimination of Pain: A Common Ground of Spiritual and Materialist Value Systems

A striking and fundamental difference between Eastern and Western philosophy in general is that Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian and Taoist philosophies variously propose *negation of desire* to achieve happiness, while the dominant tendency of Western philosophy - ancient hedonism and modern utilitarianism in particular - propose the opposite path of *fulfillment of desire* to achieve happiness. Yet a deeper common ground and major premise of these otherwise opposing doctrines is not analyzed - to be rid of pain and suffering as such.

This great *via negativa* of human philosophy and common sense is so widely supposed as a natural common ground for all sentient beings that almost no school of thought ever challenges the ultimate assumption. Sometimes, as in the contemporary utilitarian philosophy of Peter Singer (1946 -), elimination of pain becomes the all-important focus in the human treatment of animals - a view whose onto-ethical paradox is defined in the *Bibliography*.

The consensual first principle across all versions of this general philosophy of life, however, is constant - that extinguishing pain is always desirable.

2.2. Moral and Non-Moral Values

At the most general level, the value objective to maximize happiness/minimize pain is simply taken for granted across moral and non-moral theories. What is the difference? While moral values imply an obligation to act or refrain from acting in certain ways, there are many values which do not tell us how to act at all, such as *aesthetic* values (for example, the sublime experience of a wilderness sunset, or Michelangelo's Sistine chapel ceiling in the Vatican). So we straightway confront a meta-issue in the pro-happiness/anti-pain idea as a *universal* theory of value.

2.2.1. The Defining Principles of Moral Doctrines

The same issue, however, applies as much to utilitarianism's main rivals - deontological or duty ethics, emotivism, contractarianism, self-realizationist and virtue ethics, and religious morality. Since morality is by its nature restricted to values which enjoin obligations, values which entail no obligation in themselves - like aesthetic value - fall outside the moral realm of value. Accordingly, a moral principle, even if true, cannot as such satisfy the quest for a universal theory of value with no limit of validity. One's duty as a utilitarian, for example, is to promote the general happiness (a consequentialist ethic); as a Kantian to will the maxim of one's action as a universal law (a deontological ethic); as a Marxist to promote the collective interests of the producing class (a self-realizationist ethic); and as a Mohammedan to submit to the established rules of Islam as the will of Allah (a religious ethic).

Yet however important these values are to their adherents, they cannot extend to values whose nature falls outside the reach of principles telling us how we ought to live. It is in this way that we come to understand how much more demanding a *general* theory of

value is. It must be more encompassing than even a universal morality - and even it is now widely thought to be unattainable.

2.3. Aesthetic Value versus Moral Value

Thinkers as polar opposite as Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), for example, consider the value of art as a freedom from the demands of any moral requirement. For Wilde and others, “art is for art’s sake”. For Kant, art expresses “a free play of the imagination”. For both, art is intrinsic value released from any function.

Although Kant and Wilde could hardly be more opposed in their philosophies, they agree as most theorists do that aesthetic value is wholly value in-itself. That is what makes it *art*, it is supposed, rather than craft, or advertisement, or ideology.

2.3.1. Distinguishing the Beautiful from the Moral

Consider in support of this position, for instance, the purely aesthetic value of hearing a movement of a Beethoven symphony, or seeing snow and ice on trees, or a Quetzal plumage in the forest. These values do not serve a function beyond themselves, and they do not tell one how to act. They are not good because they conform one’s will to one’s duty (deontological ethics) or produce happy consequences (utilitarianism or consequentialism). Their value as aesthetic experiences is to transport us to a realm beyond the obligatory or the functional - beauty and the sublime as an end in itself.

2.3.2. Towards a Synthesis of the Moral and the Aesthetic

Insofar as utilitarianism or Buddhism is a *moral* theory, then, it does what all moral theories do explicitly or implicitly: *it prescribes forms of intention/action, and punishment or guilt for failure to comply.*

That is why Mill writes in *On Utilitarianism*: “We do not call anything moral unless we mean to imply that a person ought to be punished in some or other way for doing it - - - by law, by opinion of his fellow creatures - - [or] by the reproaches of his own conscience” (p. 246). It seems odd to say one ought to have conscience pangs or be punished for bad taste, and that is why taste or aesthetic value is different from moral value. Mill’s criterion of the moral reveals the moral-aesthetic distinction well.

Therefore, the argument concludes, no maximize-happiness-and-reduce-pain moral theory, or any other moral theory, can be adequate as a general theory of the good. It is too narrow by all non-moral value it excludes. This is a feature of moral theories in the strict sense which has led many contemporaries to reject moral doctrines *per se* - as surrealist, relativist and postmodern movements have in fact done.

Conversely, aesthetic value does not cover moral value either. They are distinct realms of value, or so it is supposed. What has been long missing is a principle of *synthesis* of the moral *and* the beautiful by a deeper, unifying principle of value which covers them both and all other values as well. This is the universal axiom of all value whatever which is explained in depth in *The Primary Axiom and the Life-value Compass*.

2.4. Neoclassical Consumer Theory: Man as Pleasure Machine

It might be objected that the happiness concept of the good can itself be extended to non-moral values as a unifying principle without limit of validity. That is, it is arguable that aesthetic and other non-moral values can all be explained as species of the unifying value of happiness.

Consider, for example, market theory and practice which supposes pleasure maximization (consumerism) as the first principle of all value choice. In this globally dominant idea of the good, paying a price is *equated to* the happiness or utility received from it - the primary equation of “marginal utility theory”. Thus willingness-to-pay-the-price confers what value there is on anything and everything. This is the value doctrine of the global market.

2.4.1. Locking in Life-Blind Economics by Mathematical Formalism

Frances Edgeworth, a founder of neoclassical theory, explains in his pioneering work *Mathematical Psychics* (1881) the mechanics of this ruling paradigm in one concise sentence. “The conception of man as a pleasure machine”, he wrote, “may justify the employment of mechanical terms and mathematical reasoning in social science” (p.15). Edgeworth’s principle has since been the first major premise of method and value of modern economics

Although this mathematical mechanist version of the happiness-maximization principle is the theoretical core of neoclassical theory and contemporary economic policy, it is philosophically degenerate - a hyper-reductionist value theory which is ultimately life-blind. No other value but consumer pleasure as measured by price paid registers. Once locked into mathematical numbers and graphs without quality, such a value system can become socially disastrous as explained in other sections of this study.

2.5. Does the Value Maximize Happiness/Minimize Pain Have Unlimited Validity?

One need not be confined to the market-utility doctrine in considering the general value theory of maximization of happiness/minimization of pain. The scenic beauty of nature, for example, one could argue, is of aesthetic value *because* it produces happiness and reduces pain without any money price involved. One could say much the same of music. It is good as art so far as it releases its listeners into a state of spontaneous joy. One could also reason that love and friendship are of value insofar as they bring us happiness, and misery without them.

In this universal form, the maximize-happiness/minimize-pain principle seems to work across all regions of value. Can it be applied with unlimited validity to all value situations whatever? Certainly no other principle of value has been so enduring across East and West, ancient past and global present. From ancient Epicurean philosophy in Greek and Roman societies and the ageless Carvaka of the Indian subcontinent to the hedonist logic of neoclassical and neoliberal doctrine today, all posit pleasure as the ultimate good and pain as evil. Religions themselves, it could be argued, are all variations on the same theme - happiness/heaven conferred by God for our goodness, and pain/hell for our badness.

2.5.1. Sophisticated Utilitarianism versus Market Utilitarianism

There are differences to be sure even within the secular branches of this theory. Epicureanism and Millian utilitarianism, for example, are clear, as consumer hedonism is not, to count mental pleasure as of greater value than consumption pleasure on account of its capacity to increase pleasure through a lifetime. Under this explanation of happiness, thus, learning outperforms external entertainment for happiness gains. Perhaps no distinction is more important, but is lost within the dominant consumer ethic.

So why, given such explanatory power in its sophisticated versions, is more happiness/less pain not an ultimate and universal principle of value by which we can always live better?

2.6. The Unexplained Value: Good Pain

Consider great works of art whose composition is calculated to produce acute anguish in the viewer. One needs only to think of the grotesquely beautiful drawings of Goya, the terror-filled mural of *Guernica* by Picasso, the finalist pessimism of Thomas Hardy's novels, to recognize the thinness of any pleasure account of artistic value.

Pleasure may be a typical effect of good art, but other moods it moves us to are perfectly compatible with art's value. Indeed the value of the work may be inseparable from the fact that it makes us *feel pain* the more deeply we are impressed by it, as with all of the preceding examples.

2.6.1. Art as Liberation from Shallow Normalcy

Then too, theories of art like abstract expressionism and, of wholly different hue, the Hegelian Marxism of Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979), prize art because they claim by different arguments that it negates conventional or established lines of image and thought, liberating us into a more inclusive sensibility than experienced before.

Added pleasure quite misses the value of such horizon-expanding overthrows of what we are habituated to. Such negations of the given may in fact make us very uncomfortable or deeply unsettle us, but that does not take away from the value of the work. It may be its greatest value. Tolstoy's complexly tragic novels, Marx's excruciating imagery of denunciation, Orwell's pessimism (T.S. Eliot would not publish his *Animal Farm* when editor with Faber and Faber) - all of these works are of aesthetic value in large part because of their breaking apart our comfort zones.

2.6.2. First Glimpse of the Value of All Values

The life-value onto-axiology, in contrast, finds the value of all art alike to be, more precisely, in direct proportion to its *opening our senses or emotions to what has not been thought or felt before* - rooting the worth of art in the new range of vital experience - thought and feeling - it arises. As long as the life ranges are more inclusive than before, they are better - whether by release from standard forms of representation, repression of erotic energy, or other confining normalcy.

Here we find our first full glimpse of the life-value theory as a comprehensive onto-axiology. The artist who succeeds in opening new fields of life experience in others by the art is not merely a pleasure maker. S/he is a creator of a new world which may be fashioned by tongues of fire or explosive visual forms. The test of value is certainly not happiness production.

2.6.3. Poignant Beauty

Those who respond - “but I am filled with the art’s beauty again and again in beholding it, how can one return to the painful?” - help us to recognize that “the opening of the doors of perception”, in William Blake’s words, can timelessly recur - even if unbearably poignant.

According to this logic of aesthetic value, in other words, the value of art cannot be explained by the ruling hedonic calculus. Insofar as intensely painful art can be the most *moving*, its value contradicts the happiness principle. That is, the opposite of pleasure may occur without diminishing the value of the art, but, on the contrary, constituting its value advance.

Happiness, in short, is only one sort of experience the value of the work of art consists in among other opposed possibilities - including anguish, awe, horror. One cannot call emotional anguish a pleasure unless the meanings of concepts are disregarded.

-
-
-

TO ACCESS ALL THE 42 PAGES OF THIS CHAPTER,
Visit: <http://www.eolss.net/Eolss-sampleAllChapter.aspx>

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.]

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* (trans. Jonathan Barnes). 2465 pp. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [Includes the *Ethics*, a founding classic of value theory in which Aristotle’s anchoring conception of the good, implicit in Plato’s earlier philosophical cornerstone, *The Republic*, defines one of the major strains of philosophical thought thereafter: namely that the good is that which any entity thing aims to achieve in accord with its nature, with the good for human being as the realization of his or her human essence (reason), and the development of its faculties to the utmost: (*eudaimonia*, or

self-realization). Also includes Aristotle's *Poetics* which provides the argument for "catharsis" or purgation of the emotions of pity and fear - generally painful or negative emotions - by their artistic representation in poetic drama for which his work is the canonical analysis]

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 Subconscious All through Desire-Force to Mind (instrumental reason), Supermind (world consciousness), and Gnostic Consciousness (the all experiencing itself as all in all). Particularly relevant as a complex understanding of this-worldly development through stages of consciousness.]

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 value statements as true or false, they are meaningless. This leads to the "verifiability criterion" of meaning and truth.]

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.]

Broome, J. (1999), *Ethics Out of Economics*, 267 pp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Broome rightly criticizes "the shifted sense of utility" in neoclassical economics over the last century, arguing that the directive principle of utilitarianism has been from the outset an impartial principle of happiness production - a "tendency to produce" happiness or pleasure as such, not merely a benefit for the self alone as the self-maximization axiom of the ruling economic paradigm assumes as a first principle. Broome does not challenge the happiness/pain principle of utilitarianism proper.

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*, 892 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".]

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

Dworkin, R. (1993), *Life's Dominion*, 272pp. New York: Knopf [Analysis by leading contemporary legal and political philosopher of issues of "life and death" which is representative in focusing on agent-relative problems in abnormal situations (e.g., the favorite problem of abortion), and abstracting out the ruling value system as a structure of injustice.]

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", a distinctively embracing work in the value theory domain of social and political philosophy.]

Edgeworth, Frances (1881[1932]). *Mathematical Psychics*, London: London School of Economics. [First work to explain the mechanics of the neoclassical paradigm of value in one concise sentence. "The conception of man as a pleasure machine may justify the employment of mechanical terms and mathematical reasoning in social science". This conception has since become the first premise and method of the ruling paradigm of economics across the globe.]

Epstein, Samuel (2005). *Cancer-Gate*, New York: Baywood Press. [Expert explanation of the environmental causation of the many-levelled cancer epidemic, and repression of its meaning in cancer institutes, research and official campaigns centering on individual-host explanations like genes and life-style and expensive high-tech interventions: a paradigm illustration of the blinkering out of system-caused suffering by atomic methodology and market-profit solutions.]

Edwards, Paul (1967), *Philosopher's Index*, 8 volumes. London: Macmillan [The most comprehensive

encyclopedia of philosophy in existence, the standard reference work for professional philosophers.]

Foucault, M. (1984), *The Foucault Reader* (ed. P. Rabinow), 390 pp. New York: Pantheon. [Best available collection of Foucault's corpus with selections from his wide range of published writings leading the European and later Anglo-American postmodern turn against all universalist theory and categories (including in particular Marxian) into focus on the historical contingency and particularity of repressive institutions, penal, sexual and scientific.]

Fromm, Erich (1986), *For the Love of Life* (trans. H.G. Shultz) 152 pp. New York: Free Press. [A representative text of the prolific critical theorist, Erich Fromm, who coined the concept of "biophilia".]

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

Heidegger, M. (1977), *The Question of Technology and Other Essays* (trans. Lovitt W), 182 pp. New York: Garland. [Very 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.]

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 towards "power after power that ceaseth only in death", a *bellum omnium contra omnes* resolvable only by a "Leviathan" state which imposes civil peace by universal fear of its powers.]

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 judiciously lays bare its philosophical sophomorphism.]

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 bibliographies and philosophical maps.]

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 which 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 the view, hardly discussed, that advocacy of "the equality of property" is a "crime deserving of the severest punishment" because it would "destroy all subordination" and "weaken the authority of the magistracy".]

Kant, I. (1992), *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*, 15 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Includes all Kant's work in value theory in the inclusive sense, whatever is conceived of worth, or not, but *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (148pp), *Critique of Practical Reason* (250 pp.), and *Critique of Pure Reason* (458pp). The first is a central classic of moral philosophy, and explains Kant's signature concepts of the "categorical imperative" ("act only in such a way as make the maxim of your action a universal law").]

Kierkegaard, S. (1978), *Kierkegaard's Writings*, (eds. H.V. and E.V. Hong) 24 vols. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [The most comprehensive collection of Kierkegaard's work, much of it written under pseudonym, including *Either-Or*, *Fear and Trembling*, *Philosophical Fragments*, and *Sickness Unto Death* which explain his unprecedented exploration of the "infinite inwardness" of human emotional life which he relates to a transcendent and unknowable God.]

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 whose concepts are directly quoted in French and American revolutionary declarations, arguing for private property as the ultimate right of free men and the foundation of their happiness.]

Mackie, J.L. (1977), *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*, 249 pp. New York: Penguin. [This text is representative of the dominant view that ethics and moral principles are merely "preferences": arguing in what is called the "error theory" of values 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: to which Marcuse responds with the idea of revolution in accord with the "vital needs" of life for which he refuses to provide any principled criterion.]

Marcuse, H. (1978), *The Aesthetic Dimension: Towards a Theory of Marxist Aesthetics*, 71 pp. Boston: Beacon Press. [Marcuse's most sustained account of his aesthetics.]

Marcuse, H. (1956), *Eros and Civilization*, 209 pp. Boston: Beacon Press [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.]

Marx, Karl and Engels, F. (1975-), *Collected Works of Marx and Engels*, 44 vols. (Eds. R. Dixon *et al*). New York: International Publishers [Complete works of Marx in English, relevant where Marx 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. (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 which is argued to be an widely regulating form of fallacious thought and social being.]

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 [A concise philosophical overview demonstrating the locked choice-spaces of the military paradigm of war across cultures and times, and explaining the rational alternative of warring for rather than against life security.]

McMurtry J.(1992), Good Love and Bad Love: A Way of Evaluation, *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, **6**, 326-347 [Applies the primary axiom of value to romantic love spelling out the transformative implications for understanding, emotion and decision.]

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. (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 up-to-date commentary on Mill's classic statement of utilitarianism whose recognition of "higher pleasures" and consistency with a "socialist order" are blocked out of market-all subsequent utility theory: 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".]

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

Nietzsche, Friedrich (1964), *The Complete Works of Nietzsche* (ed. O. Levy). New York: Russell and Russell. [Includes Nietzsche unqualified and life-incoherent valorization of pain and suffering, in particular in *Beyond Good and Evil*, against the otherwise blanket philosophical rejection of them: “The discipline of suffering - - don’t you know that all the heightening of man’s powers has been created only by this discipline? - - To refrain from wounding, violating and exploiting one another - - [is] the will to negate life, the principle of dissolution and decay.”]

Noonan, J. (2006) *Democratic Societies and Human Needs*, 265 pp. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s Press. [An excellent critique of liberal theory and the emergence of a needs-based social morality as the foundation of life-coherent democracy.]

Nussbaum, M. and Sen, A. 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 direct life-value criteria, 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.]

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.

Pareto, Vilfredo, (1971 [1906]).*Manual of Political Economy*, New York: A.M. Kelley [Classic of rational choice theory and economic reason whose principle of “opthemality” - since called “Pareto optimality” or “Pareto efficiency”, or adjectival variations of these, identifies a logical state of affairs in which no-one can be made better off without making someone else worse, a standard ideal of rational choice theory, based on a pure-type dyadic exchange of assets with no relation to life value or conditions.]

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. [Includes Plato’s most philosophically comprehensive work, *The Republic*, which integrates metaphysics/ontology, epistemology, moral philosophy and social and political philosophy in one dialogue, whose stated aim is a theory of justice symmetrically applicable to the individual soul and the ideal society at once. Plato’s “Theory of Forms”, positing pure, transcendental and eternal ideas of which all material entities are but inferior, mutable copies is his/Socrates’ most distinctive theory, and the primary classical position of philosophical Idealism.]

Parfit, D. (1984), *Reasons and Persons*, 543pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. [The definitive work of this author and of contemporary discourse on “personal identity”. Exemplary in the very fine-grained argumentation on this topic, and on the a-priori assumption that “personal identity” means an identical sameness through time rather than what a person chooses to identify with.]

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

Rawls, J. (1967), *A Theory of Justice*. 542pp. Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press. [Recognized definitive work of the twentieth century political philosophy, complementing Moore’s *Principia Ethica* as the two leading classics of normative theory of the era. Its paradigmatic starting point of rational value-judgment is the principle of self-maximizing rationality, “including wanting a larger share for oneself”, the starting-point of “the contemporary social sciences” as well. Rawl’s “veil of ignorance” to

decouple agents from their conditions of life: following the regulating methodological a-priori of the era.]

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

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.]

Rorty, R. (1989), *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, 289 pp. New York: Cambridge University Press. [With his earlier *The Mirror of Nature* which deconstructs the philosophical-scientific correspondence theory of truth, 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 [Published in 1755 seven years prior to the Social Contract, a philosophical anthropology known best publicly for its vision of “the noble savage”, 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 rationally willing “the common interest” to together achieve 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 of ‘type theory’ of logically higher and lower order classes of properties (e.g., the color property of colored objects is a higher order property than the combination of all of the members of the class of colored objects). His works on denotation and description, the logical foundations of mathematics, sense data and logical atomism, neutral monism, and probability comprise a string of innovative technical solutions and theories to resolve paradoxes, with his theory of types being the most enduring contribution to logic and epistemology. An early leader of Anglo-American technical analytic philosophy, his most substantive contribution may be in his many irreverent popular essays and books which lucidly expose and rout well-entrenched beliefs and dogmatic assumptions on major social issues from sexual morality to nuclear-arms. He regretted 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 neoclassical economics in which the senior author welcomes its currency across continents and educational levels in terms which reveal the received scriptural authority of this school and its assumption of being all of “economics”: “Spread the gospel of economics anyway we can, I say”. Very clear system account.]

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*. It is a work which seeks to synthesize individual existential choice with Marxian dialectical reason and class analysis in *The Problem of Method* (published as an independent volume), which explains that a “hierarchical totalization of determinations” show the compatibility of opposed philosophical movements. As with Marcuse's work, ignored by mainstream philosophers once identification with Marxian thought became evident.]

Sartre, Jean-Paul (1973), *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*, 94 pp. London: Methuen [Originally published as *Esquisse d'émotions* in 1962, Sartre's direct analysis of emotional life in which they are analyzed as agitations.] -7

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: an atomic metaphysic of choice to which collective agency and responsibility at the level of ultimate principles of value and social regulators cannot compute in principle.]

Sen, Amartya (1998). "The Possibility of Social Choice", Nobel Lecture, December 8, 1998, published in *American Economic Review*, 89 (July 1999).

Singer, Irving (1966 -1987), *The Nature of Love*, 3 volumes. Chicago: Chicago University Press. [The most comprehensive study of theories of love from Plato to Sartre, which argues against any unifying principle of value in a richly learned tapestry of analysis which features the "grace" of love as "bestowal of value" on the love object, the implied source of love's happiness.]

Singer, Peter, *Animal Liberation: Man's Inhumanity to Animals* (1983). 302 pp. Wellingborough, Northamptonshire: Thorsons Press. [The definitive work by the best known advocate of animal rights, who deploys utilitarian ethics and the pain-reduction principle to argue against the standardized cruel abuse of domestic animals in factory food production; failing to see that this generalized ethic of suffering-free treatment of animals implies that pain-free domesticated animals have better lives within this condition, which further implies that they ought to substitute for animals experiencing much pain and suffering in the wilderness.]

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 materially influential work in history, the full text, which is often expurgated to select out such passages as the following which discloses the suffering linchpin of the "economic laws of supply and demand" upon which Smith builds modern economic theory: "[The] demand for men, like any other commodity, quickens when it goes on too slowly, and stops when advance too fast. It is this demand which regulates and determines the state of propagation in all the different countries of the world".]

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

Sumner, Jennifer (2005). *Sustainability and the Civil Commons: Rural Society in the Age of Globalization*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press. [A sound and well-informed negotiation of the general theories of Gramsci, Habermas and McMurtry towards understanding sustainability as the "structures and processes that build the civil commons".]

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.]

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, "the vehicle of the thunderbolt", here explained by a high-ranking Tibetan Buddhist.]

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.]

Weisbrot, M., Baker, D., and Rosnick, D. (2006). "The Scorecard on Development: 25 Years of Diminishing Progress", *International Journal of Health Services* 36,2: 201-234.

World Commission of the Environment and Development (1986). *Our Common Future*, New York: Oxford University Press. [Revealing by its endorsement of "five to ten times" more commodity system growth with no life standards identified, making "sustainable development" a household term without life-value bearings.]

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: an opposition he brings into his more famous philosophy of education which emphasizes imagination and feeling as well as reason through stages achieving their ordered balance of expression. He concludes this work with a typically arresting apothegm, “poetry allies itself to metre, philosophy to mathematic pattern”.

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”.]

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

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

Biographical Sketch

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