

GOOD AND EVIL WITHIN: OPENING THE TERRA INCOGNITA OF THE FELT SIDE OF BEING

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Summary

This chapter explains the long-repressed value field of the felt side of being. Peeling back epochal layers of theoretical devalorization, normative suppression and scientific elimination by frameworks of reason-emotion dualism, reduction to natural drives, and externalist mechanism, life-value onto-axiology explains how philosophies and theories across domains have divided and blocked against the innermost value realm of feeling life. Mapping its good and evil directions across sentience, appetite, emotions, moods and will, explanation reunites and reconnects "the felt bonds of being" to life values, vital needs and

life support systems.

7.1. The Dualism of Reason and Feeling

Philosophical traditions and civilized cultures have long cordoned off rationality from the emotional side of life, which has been typically conceived as inferior and animal-like in nature. In Plato's classic, *The Republic*, Socrates (470–399 BCE) opposes reason to the irrational realm of emotions and appetites at individual and social levels. Immanuel Kant (1724- 1804), philosophy's next most exalted thinker, reiterates the paradigm for modernity.

Indo-European cultures of civilization before and since have constructed ontological and moral dualisms similar in division. The mind divided from body and rationality from feeling dualize humanity as a ruling ultimate dichotomy of onto-ethical and everyday presupposition.

7.1.1. Levels of the Value Dualism: An Individual, Gender, Social and International Schism

Reason and emotions-appetites have been thought of as warring elements not only within the individual, but within society (the ruling rational class and the irrational majority), and among societies (rational peoples ruling over non-rational ones).

Racism since the pre-historical conquests of first peoples has been one of the expressions of this onto-ethical dualism, which also includes the subjugation of females as emotional life without rationality. Yet this underlying master pattern of ruling thought systems is not penetrated to its metaphysical source and decider.

7.1.2. Even William James and Jean-Paul Sartre Invalidate Feeling Life

Consider here the cases of William James (1842-1910) and Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-80), two of the most experientially open philosophers of the epoch. Sartre strikingly asserts that emotions as such are a "behavior of defeat", a substitute for problem-solving behavior, as in "feeling upset" or "put down" (*Esquisse d'une theorie des emotions*, 1939). Emotions are not only inferior, it is implied, but express the individual's own feeling of inferiority, "upset" and "put down" in the face of reason. He does not say, but may be obliquely referring to women.

William James also conceives with everyday understanding a similar character of emotion in his *Principles of Psychology* (1890). Emotion is a disturbance of the human organism, as the primary emotions of fear and sexual attraction - "quickened heartbeats", "shallow breathing", "trembling lips", "weakened limbs", and "visceral stirrings".

Emotion, in short, is conventionally conceived as a state of *life incapacity* of the rational being. James later speaks resonantly of "a mother sea of consciousness" as a dynamic "finite God", almost capturing the nature of the collective life unconscious of life-value onto-axiology tracked ahead. Yet here as well the felt side of being remains mystified even

when validated.

7.1.2.1. Sartre's and James' precise descriptions of specific emotional states may be acutely perceptive, but the radical reduction of the emotions to quasi-pathological states misses the ultimate life-value field which the felt side of being bears and chooses to open or close. Such reductionist stereotyping is standard in received rational understanding.

Feminist theory partially recovers the felt side of being in valorizing caring relations of concrete community against rational reductions and system brutalities. Yet none of this evolving literature from feminist epistemology to eco-feminism grounds in or identifies the underlying elective value field of feeling life itself and its vast choice space of good and evil direction behind gender divisions and external relations. The felt side of being as a more primary onto-axiological field remains unrecognized.

7.1.3. From Invalidated Feeling Life to Pharmaceuticals

Overall in the modern era, a ruling model of mechanism has systematically pre-empted the feeling side of life from understanding. The research of cognitive science, for example, eliminates it in spatial functional accounts of the brain as a closed physical system - for example, Daniel Dennett's standard externalist account in *Consciousness* (1995).

In everyday life in parallel, contemporary pharmaceutical commodities are proclaimed to "adjust chemical imbalances" to a physical equilibrium of the body's neural and limbic mechanisms. The felt side of human being is reduced to an external function like a temperature thermostat. By thus reducing the felt side of being and its life-defining choice spaces to an objective mechanism, "where we live within" is erased. If not, it is warned against. "Do not let the emotions in".

7.2. The Choice Space of Inner Life's Meaning

The first step from Plato on was to subordinate emotions to the strict rule of Reason. Most philosophers since have implied that we would be better off if liberated from them as disturbances of rational equilibrium. Disembodied meaning shorn of feeling has been an implicit ideal of science and rationality since. In religious and philosophical thought, an ancient theme is hoped-for release from the bodily passions by death itself.

The underlying ideal across schools of thought, in short, has been to ground in eternal principles in which the felt side of being is purified out for a serene rational perfection. What is invariably assumed is that cognitive thought and feeling life are *divided onto-epistemic realms*, and that the feeling realm is *inferior* and to be controlled or erased. That both levels of this metaphysical syntax are onto-axiologically false and reductionist is not traditionally suspected.

7.2.1. Theory's Invisible Prison of Sentience and Emotion

In contemporary "analytic epistemology", excision of feeling life goes with the prevalent mechanical models. Thus a recent industry of philosophical specialty has concerned itself

with “*qualia*”, those properties of felt being which *are* recognized, but only as emotion-neutral and value-empty in nature. Analysis is then left with trivial “phenomenal” distinctions such as between “pains and itches”, with disputes arising around one central question: the location of quality in the agent’s representation *or* in the sense data themselves.

The technique of robotic reduction is standard. Reduce the fields of life to a relation-and-value-free model indistinguishable from the moving parts of a machine, and focus on the control exchanges. In this way, what was once the medieval *demonization* of the this-worldly feeling side of being becomes its *erasure* by the mechanical model of modernity.

7.2.2. Perception Itself as a Horizonless Elective Field

Compare the understanding of William Blake (1757-1827). He finds an outer ruling order imprisoning sensation and feeling as the “narrow chinks of the cavern”. To the “mind-forged manacles” he opposes what human felt consciousness can open to - “seeing all as it is, infinite”.

Blake’s poetic license does not solve the problem. Yet it can be decoded by life-ground analysis as posing an ultimate value choice within sentience itself. One can live open to experiencing the limitless modalities of the feeling life, or find only a sense-data input into the body mechanism; or both - the latter only in doing science. It is this inclusive comprehension of the felt side of being as an elective value field which is missing.

7.2.3. ‘Seeing’ as Opening to the Experiencing Field Normally Blocked Out

The long cycle of novels by the contemporary anthropologist of the Toltec people of Mexico, Carlos Castaneda, features the shaman, Don Juan, who makes fun of the “crazy rationality” of his academic reporter. He concludes with a summative principle of “higher seeing” which is that “the whole energy of the warrior is in the act of perception”. The “warrior” is s/he who breaks past the bars of received experiencing.

We need not accept the peyote-affected consciousness of the native seer Don Juan to comprehend the deeper point made by Blake and Aldous Huxley before him, but ignored by philosophy - that the feeling realm admits of vast differences of experiential field open to value choice, and that the more coherently inclusive is the best.

7.3. From the Beast within to the Master Desire Mechanism

The dominant classical model of the feelings and sensations is that they are unruly - an anarchic energy of animal impulsions which must be reigned in and ordered by the rational soul. This generic idea, as we have seen, is variously found from Plato to Kant (1724-1804).

This view also underlies the more ancient and canonical *Upanishads* and *Bhagavad-Gita* of India which conceive the senses and emotions as wild horses of feeling which must be reined in and subdued by the immaterial eternal soul being borne through the embodied

world. Atman replaces Reason as ultimate pilot in this classical Indian tradition, with mind or *manas* as conceptual servant. Yet in all these diverse works of received human thought, East and West, the feeling side of being is thought to mislead or usurp reason by its nature.

7.3.1. Clearing the Decks: The Mechanical and Linguistic Turns Pre-empt Feeling Life

Modern mechanical paradigms instead rule emotions out a-priori – essentially purging the felt side of being of anything but what computers can do. This method is thought to explain human consciousness itself, and so feeling life is pre-empted. In non-mechanical linguistic paradigms, only language behavior is seen, and so the felt side of being is eliminated by other route – not by mechanical-model erasure, but by language behaviorism in which even pains disappear into the linguistic expression of them. An annihilation of the value field of feeling life is structured in.

Social sciences do better than philosophy here, it may be thought. Economics is supposed to explain the real world of production to meet life needs through time, and these are internally felt as value deprivations. Yet in the reigning “neoclassical” model, only external and observable operations of money exchange by atomic entities and aggregates exist for value attention. The felt side of being, even the need to breathe, is blinkered out.

7.3.1.1. From Classical Views of the Emotions to the Hedonic Calculus of the Price Market

We need not explain the great differences among theoretical models to understand the unstated result on which they coincide - the vast elective field of the felt side of human life is erased. In the prior classical view, reason subjugates the feelings. In the dominant scientific view, input-output mechanisms exclude inner life by definition. In linguistic behaviorism, nothing but language exists. All roads lead to the disappearance of feeling life itself.

Even where political and market stimuli of unconscious desires are deployed to sell market and political commodities, happiness quantities are projected onto external purchases. In fact, the experience of even consumer pleasure does not exist in the market’s hedonic calculus. Only propensity to pay does. Neuro-science is thus enlisted into the ruling metaphysic of economics to prove what is lacking – the quality of felt being whose ultimate field of life within has been eliminated by the externalist model. But neuro-science itself follows the externalist model of replicatable observations at another level.

7.3.1.2. Erasing the Felt Side of Being as a Field of Value

The many-sided erasure of humanity’s felt side of being has in general proceeded without principled explanation. In the classical traditions East and West, appetites and emotion were thought best subjugated by Reason or Dharma. In most contemporary theory, the felt side of being is simply eliminated. In the shadows, the feeling life that has been driven into the unconscious is ubiquitously mined for power and profit – the inner power switch of mass control.

Freudian theory seems to open up the world of feeling life, but does so only to consciously manage the alleged instinctual compulsions which the feeling life has been reduced to. In this model of the felt side of being, primeval drivers are the core of feeling life and they must be made to conform to the “reality principle” of society’s survival demands (Freud); or, more covertly, used to control the masses at economic-political levels by mass-produced desire-objects (the ‘public relations’ field founded by Freud’s nephew, Edward Bernays (1895-1991)).

7.3.2. The Silent Modern Shift from Desire as Slave to Master of Reason

The dominant culture of today derives from this overall onto-ethical sea-shift which has obliterated the value field of feeling life beneath discussion. Only one master desire remains as a given propulsion of the human body – the drive for more. Management of it is now conceived in an opposite way than in the classical tradition - not as what requires impartial rule by reason, but what rationality properly satisfies in a self-maximizing way. In the words of David Hume (1711-77) in Book 3 of the *Treatise of Human Nature*, “reason is the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them”.

Rationality as self-maximizing choice was explained in the prior chapter. Now we consider the assumed *motive power* of this rationality - the individuals’ desire to have more without limit as the ruling motive-feeling, a given of the human mechanism. As we have seen, this is the unquestioned first premise of economic science and, derivatively, contractarian moral theory and politics. Classical reason’s imperative of control over appetite as bestial is thus silently replaced by appetite as sovereign with reason as its instrument for maximum satisfaction.

7.3.3. The Feeling World Reduced to Propelling Mechanism for More for Self

Although classical and contemporary models ascribe opposite place-holdings to reason and desire, both shut out the elective field of felt being by metaphysical reductions.

Let us reflect on the pattern across millennia. Most simply put, humanity’s feeling side is thought to be animal-like cupidity and passions (the classical paradigm), *or* is reduced to one supreme propulsion for ever more for self which “rational self-maximization” satisfies as best it can (the contemporary ruling paradigm). For neither does the great field of intrinsic value of the felt side of life exist, nor its internal possibilities of good and evil direction.

7.3.4. Locking in the Felt World

Ancient wisdom’s most adamant formula for human well-being at the core of Taoism and Stoicism is opposite in meaning - to change towards wanting less not more. The ruling value is *to reduce desires to increase well-being*. This human wisdom has been effectively lost to understanding when it is most of all materially needed.

The very idea of rejecting non-need consumer desires to fulfill life needs cannot compute to

the ruling value syntax. Needs and desires are conflated, and the common life-ground is blinkered out. The first premise of the ruling onto-ethic is polar-opposite - to produce more commodities to serve more desires of those who pay. In theory and practice, the felt life within is thus constructed as a “*desiring machine*”.

The deciding inner choice space is therefore blocked out. Even as it becomes the core issue of human survival by its demands exceeding ecological carrying capacities, no deeper ground of the felt bonds of being can be found. Driven into hiding, their longing for connectedness becomes a pit of angst, despair or disgust at the mechanical isolation. Existentialism captures the moods of the lost condition, but not the ruling value mechanism determining it.

7.4. The Onto-Ethical Meaning of the Soul

Life-ground onto-axiology responds by opening the door to our feeling life as the ultimate choice space and core of who we are. For its analysis, “the soul” is not a mystery. It is a concept whose meaning is defined as the feeling core of the human individual - the felt bonds of being opening beyond self. It may open to include only “soul mates”, adopt the bioregion or nation as “my soul”, comprehend all that exists as “world soul”, be the infinite presence or “God within”, or find ultimate concern in other way.

We say a person “has soul” when there is evidence of these opening felt bonds of being – with the possibility of “selling” or “losing one’s soul” not only possible, but perhaps conventionalized. The “soul” varies widely in life compass from self involution and loss to identification with a few other persons to the planetary ecosystem, but it is a perpetually innermost process of finding or losing its horizonless field of feeling life. Its inner choice space of the felt bonds of being are inherent in humanity – but may open to feeling resonance with no bound, or close into self-knots. The soul, as with the feeling life field it cores, is the ultimate elective depth of human being.

7.4.1. Re-Entering the Lost Inner Field of Value

The Russian painter, Vasili Kandinsky (1866-1944), has cipherically said that “all great art comes from a vibration in the soul. The emotions are what connects the soul to the body”.

Such locutions can make no sense to the categories of philosophy and social sciences, and are absurd to models of bio-mechanism. Yet Kandinsky’s view is explained by the life-ground onto-ethic whose primary axiom begins from these inner fields of phenomena.

7.4.2. Decoding Kandinsky on Art, Emotion and the Soul

Life-value explanation is concise. “Vibrations in the soul” are deep arousal of the inner fields of felt being. “Emotions” are their specific form. “Great art” is the action which occurs to creatively connect these emotions “to the body”, that is, the art’s embodiment.

The “greatness” of the art is understood in light of the life fields involved - connecting to the boundless fields of identifying inner life (the soul) through its e-motions to animate

action (the creative embodiment) - a coherently inclusive revelation which is “great art” by its reach. This is the onto-ethical vocation of all art.

7.4.3. Understanding the Passionate and Infinite Inwardness of Kierkegaard

The Danish philosopher, Søren Kierkegaard (1813-55) affirms the soul as an infinite within, but confines its meaning to the individual’s awed and trembling relationship to the transcendent power of God.

Philosophers as radically different as Wittgenstein (1889-1951) and Marcuse (1898-1979) have exalted Kierkegaard’s work, and not because of its religion. His repudiation of “bourgeois” institutions and disgust at the “mawkishness, torpor and sloth of the establishment” is acute. Yet Kierkegaard’s total projection of the infinite life-field within to an unknowable and supernatural God decouples the field of felt being from any life ground.

It is true that for Kierkegaard, this God above relates back to the world through his only Son whose self-sacrificing love is “the eternal truth in time”. Yet this task is poignantly impossible for “finite humans” to realize, and so human life is lost in its embodiment.

7.4.3.1. Leap of Faith versus Life-Grounded Choice

While Kierkegaard grounds decision in a “leap of faith” to an absolutely transcendent God, life-ground onto-ethics does the opposite - adopting life requirements and the capacities they enable as the foundational concern, with or without a supernatural Creator.

In direct opposition, Kierkegaard’s philosophy - even more than the idealist metaphysics he objects to - disconnects from direct living. The whole of the human condition is a “miserable finitude of man” with no life-value ground. Kierkegaard’s defining example of the leap of faith he counsels is Abraham’s choosing to sacrifice the life of his son Isaac to God.

Although the story of human life sacrifice to God’s revealed will comes from a tribal culture in which patriarchal authority includes the right of life and death over all other members of the family, children as well as wives and slaves, and duty to slay all other tribes in “the promised land”, contemporary philosophy indicates no critical concern. Kierkegaard’s philosophy is, instead, highly regarded in philosophical circles for its challenge of rational, universal norms on behalf of individual choice - a founding father of what is later called “existentialism”.

7.4.3.2. Losing the Thread within the *Terra Incognita* of the Felt Bonds of Being

Philosophers screen out the right to child homicide – children have little place in any philosophy - and preserve the awful anxiety of individual choice. Kierkegaard opens up the vast geography of the felt side of life in its awesome choice space, but is lost in its undertow towards murder in service to an examined god within. The all-too-common displacement of life-value concern by worship of a tribal god goes unnoticed.

The deepest waters here are that the very philosophy most known for exploring humanity's inner-life infinitude goes against reason for life sacrifice to an almighty power, and his work is made a standard bearer of existentialist freedom. The individual's inner life and elective felt bonds of being are finally reclaimed in philosophy - only to alienate them to a sanctified father right to kill demanded by the inner voice of a tribal God.

7.5. The Feeling of Universality: Decoding the Opposite Directions of Felt Being

Reflection teaches though philosophy that the connective force of feeling to the world can adopt opposite directions of "feeling universal" - a desire to expand self or group with no limit but death, or a feeling one with no limit of felt bonds of being beyond the material self.

Which direction "feeling universal" goes is inner life's ultimate choice path. Within ruling value systems, subjugation of the other is glorified the further it extends across past borders - whether as conqueror by force of arms or money rule or both. Such dominion is affirmed to the extent of the world kept subordinate to it - an inner logic of value which may become the inverted soul of the ruling self or self-group. Life-value onto-ethics, in direct opposition, recognizes system disorder so far as life and life means are destroyed by subjugation of other lives and societies. Such judgment is implied in critical literatures (as in Tolstoy's *War and Peace* and Marx's *Capital*). Yet the principle of evil is not defined, least of all at the feeling level.

7.5.1. Felt Side of Being for Social Justice

Social injustice was defined in *Natural Good and Evil: Beyond the Fitness to Survive* as "systematic human suffering from reduced life capacities entailed by deprivation of life means". Social justice is thus the process of overcoming this condition, the more it enables understanding and provision of the life means deprived, the more it succeeds. Motivation for it is soul driven.

The passion for social justice therefore follows a "feeling universal" that is the opposite of more power /demand for the self or self-group. Yet a dominant posture of strict "value neutrality" has been assiduously cultivated against any such recognition. In line with the ruling model of externalist mechanism, there is no onto-ethical room for it. As Charles Taylor writes in *The Malaise of Modernity* (1991), however, this neutrality affects the comportment of a "disembodied ghost of disengaged reason inhabiting an objectified machine" (p. 106).

Yet even with a virtue ethics like Taylor's, no principle of social justice or injustice is defined to anchor moral feeling: so the value stand he commends continues to lack life-grounded bearings.

7.5.2. Feeling Universal and the Opposing Directions of Feeling Life: A Unifying Frame

As explained above, life can go in opposite directions with "feeling universal" - towards

ever more power to magnify self and subordinate others, or towards ever more inclusive identification with others' life requirements as range of value concern.

The choice space for these opposite directions is mapped by a unifying onto-ethical framework which underlies advanced religious philosophies as their secular core and is applicable to all conditions:

- (i) The feeling of life is ultimately an opening or closing of the felt bonds of being.
- (ii) Reason's role is inseparable from feeling finding life-coherent form.
- (iii) This form is at best inclusive in the felt bonds of being.
- (iv) It is worst bound to self or self-group passions in indifference to others' suffering.

7.5.3. The Values and Disvalues of Religion and Atheism

Many relate social justice to religion and God, but again in opposite ways. Religions typically posit a transcending eternal deity as the ultimate ground of human life and value. But the direction of this God's commands can be in good or evil direction. How to judge Gods themselves is the ultimate question not posed.

Believers trust to faith not reason; while non-believers reject God, period. This is the meta-distinction between them. Life-value onto-axiology rejects the dichotomy. God and religion are neither good, nor bad. They are one or other just so far as they are inclusionary or exclusionary in the bonds of felt life they cultivate. Here again life-value standard is the measure of validity. Religion is good or evil to the extent that it enables or disables life and life conditions by its devotion and practice.

7.5.4. The Values of Morality and Art

The feeling life aroused by art may be evaluated by the same ultimate principle of evaluation. The nature of art is to stir new felt life in others by its creation: and the deeper and wider the fields of life it ignites the better the art is. If it does neither, it fails; while to the extent that it does both, it aesthetically succeeds. As the felt side of being forms into a creative vision experienced by others, the life value of the art multiplies across the persons moved by it.

Observe the modal "*can* be experienced by others". Art can be great that is not recognized, but cannot multiply its life value so long as it is not.

7.5.5. Evaluating Emotions

So far as any emotion extends felt being and thought wider and deeper for the agent and recipients, it creates life-value. Any disequilibrium it involves is good to this extent, but bad if it reduces or numbs feeling by its grossness and repetition – as with pornography and media ads. Collective felt being itself can be good, as in care for those in need. Or it can be evil, as in war fever. While all this may be intuitively recognized, it cannot be impartially identified without a principled ground of onto-axiological recognition.

In fact, group-divided passions enacted in arenas of furious organized attacks on other life

have been immensely popular across the ages including or own – “festive human cruelty” as Nietzsche approved them. But they are recognized immediately as pathological by life-value onto-ethics - with each’s bad in proportion to reductive distortion and destruction of life and life fields, however self-exalting the emotions.

7.5.6. Rage and Anger: A Paradigm Case for Evaluative Measure

Mass passions do not receive attention as pathological because the psychological sciences are standardly confined to individual subjects. Personal anger on the other hand is usually stereotyped as wrong. Yet the life-destructive “warp-frenzy” of group wars (as in the Irish epic, the *Tain*) is oppositely glorified. There is profound moral confusion.

The grounding moral distinction is whether the anger is life enabling or disabling. Rage can be good – for example, against social injustice - and life-ground ethics explains exactly why, or why not.

7.5.6.1. Terrorism

Even what is called “terrorism” may be good by life-value measure - for example, violent resistance to invading armies, even if such resistance is called “terrorist” by the occupiers. Albert Camus (1913-60) argued that lethal violence could only be justified if the agent of it was willing to forfeit his own life. This is highly improbable, it may seem. Yet suicide bombers of a resistance movement fulfill Camus’ condition.

When such enactment of moral rage by the militarily helpless is proclaimed evil by the powers-that-be, even when civilian deaths by the occupiers exceed 100 to 1, we confront the impasse of one-sided oppression purporting to occupy a moral high-ground.

7.5.7. The Principled Grounds of Life-Value Judgment of All Inner Life

The primary axiom of value provides the missing moral constant across conflict. In any case of moral anger, we tell whether it is good or bad by its opening or closing of life's range of being. By this measure, the art of Goya, Picasso’s *Guernica*, and Orwell’s writing are all good. All express rage against injustice by opening our hearts and eyes to what may have been unfelt or unseen. Similarly with what may be called “terror” by oppressors.

The same value yardstick also applies to another emotion which is also generally disapproved - jealousy. It is assumed as “an *a-priori* bad” by Franz Brentano, whose work is analyzed in *Moral Philosophy in Question*. Yet jealousy is typically based on a more primary generic feeling, love for another aroused by someone else’s relationship to the loved one. It may express itself as jealousy because of ingrained conventional expectations. Or it may be life-grounded and expressed as more consciously encompassing love – an issue discussed in McMurtry’s “Sex, Love and Friendship” (2000).

7.5.7.1. Emotions Can Open or Close

Felt being is ultimately an elective process, however powerful it is. Jealousy is like

resentment and other *non-growth emotions*. It is life narrowing, but can open to wider bearings. No human emotion is a fixed state, but a process admitting of value direction. Yet the opposite is presupposed by reification of a conventional categorization - emotional stereotyping and mechanism labels, for example, which may merely disapprove strong emotions as such.

Life-ground onto-ethics recognizes what inert categories of instincts, emotions, moods, and passions do not - that the felt side of being is dynamic and may always move towards better or worse. Inner human life is always elective, but the wider life field of value is standardly lost.

7.5.6. Choosing Feeling Life from Within: Blake, Epictetus and Rumi

Even sensations can be transformed in their felt nature and value - “seeing heaven in a wild flower”, as Blake famously puts it, and “the world in a grain of sand”.

Physical pain itself - discussed in *The Transcultural Idea: Good as Happiness and Bad as Pain* - can be transformed to awareness of the objective healing or ‘making whole again’ of which it is the felt side. The Stoic Roman philosopher, Epictetus (55-135) held that *any* experience, including being beaten in slavery, as he himself was, can be transfigured to serenity “in relation the cosmic whole”. “We cannot choose our external circumstances,” he says, “but we can always choose how we understand them”. Epictetus like Diogenes before him (404-323 BCE) implies an underlying sequence of equations: *Reality = Experience = Internal Choice = Freedom*.

The Sufi poet-philosopher Rumi (1207-1273) dazzlingly expresses this principle in regard to *moods*. His short poem, *The Guest House*, is worth citing in full as prose. It explains both the elective nature of felt being and its horizonless possibilities:

“This being human is a guest house. Every morning a new arrival. A joy, a depression, a meanness, some momentary awareness comes as an unexpected visitor. Welcome and entertain them all! Even if they're a crowd of sorrows, who violently sweep your house empty of its furniture, still, treat each guest honorably. He **may** be clearing you out for some new delight. The dark thought, the shame, the malice, meet them at the door laughing, and invite them in. Be grateful for whoever comes, because each has been sent as a guide from beyond.”

These thinkers all open to what is not recognized in generic principle: that the chosen nature of felt being admits of polar-opposite possibilities of good and evil direction. Human feeling is not a physical type which can be assigned a taxonomical place, but a process of internal agency. It may relate ever wider, or be paralyzed within a stereotype. There is no predetermination. The field of feeling life may be conceived as the lost core of human freedom.

7.5.7. Re-Setting the Frame of Understanding Felt Being

Yet life within as well as without still remains subject to human needs - that without which

life capacity is reduced however much its feeling side may be transformed (as explained in Section 7.10.2.). Both the elective field of felt being *and* its organic need requirements are erased by stock frameworks of the senses, emotions, moods and will – leaving only paralyzed categories delinked from the life-ground.

Psychoanalytic thinkers like Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and Karl Jung (1875-1961) have properly warned that the feeling life driven into the subconscious may rise up in deformed passions, but as we see ahead in Section 7.14. Yet the field of feeling being has been radically reduced by Freud and Jung too. As with others in the psychological sciences, the most dangerous mass emotions of megalomania and ethnic hatreds are not addressed by ego-based frameworks; the felt demands of universal life needs are overlooked; and the elective nature of feeling life itself is not recognized.

7.6. Erasing the Inner Life: The Ruling Error of the Epoch

In our epoch, the inner life has been widely collapsed into monistic mechanism. Hans Jonas in his *The Phenomenon of Life: Towards a Philosophical Biology* (1966) puts the matter in clear general terms. He says that with the triumph of externalist science, “exterior reality has detached itself entirely from the interior reality” to constitute “a self-contained field for the universal application of mathematical and mechanical analysis - - [It thus] alienates man from himself and denies genuineness to the self-experience of life” (pp. 35-7).

This scientific world is causally closed, and so preempts internal life agency altogether. Much philosophy of mind and knowledge follows this model with only externalist mechanisms left – genetic machines, linguistic behaviors, and brain computers being the dominant monistic frameworks of explanation. Inner life is thus eliminated from understanding humanity.

7.6.1. The Externalist Fallacy

A monolithic but unmarked logical error is at work here. The confusion may be defined as follows: *What is observable as external phenomena rules out as valid what is internally experienced.*

The error of this ruling metaphysic proceeds in three steps: (1) what is *not* externally observable and (2) *not* measurable by a physical metric, is therefore (3) invalid or superfluous.

7.6.2. The Metaphysics of Invalidation

Everyday understanding follows the eliminative reduction – for example, by regarding what is not quantifiable in money terms as valueless. Many of the fetishes of our era find their metaphysical source in the externalist fallacy.

More exactly, if any region of life cannot be observed, nor measured externally by physical-referent quantifiers nor made equivalent to exchange-value, it is conventionally concluded to be illusory or of no worth.

7.6.2.1. The Lost Primary Reality: Feeling Life versus Observing It

Anyone can directly experience the felt side of being as the most undeniable reality there is – including its ups and downs, opening exhilarations and closing disconnects. The felt side of life is indeed all one can be directly certain of. It is also what makes life worth living - being feeling life as opposed to a zombie or computer.

That no-one *else* can observe it does not make it illusory. The distinction could not be more fundamental. Yet it has been blinkered out by externalist convention - the dominant meta-assumption that only externally observable things exist. Here only what one speaks, behaves or presents evidence to others is real, and only what is externally repeatable is valid.

7.6.3. Erasing What We Are and Live Without Knowing It

The immense external success of science at control and prediction of external entities explains the hold of its externalist method - so successful that virtually every convenience of life we now enjoy has been constructed by it.

The problem is that the ultimate life space of humanity is abolished by its metaphysic - what Jonas refers to as “the greatest usurpation in the history of human thought”, *the erasure of inward experience itself*. What Jonas does not recognize, however, is that even phenomenology itself has lost feeling life as a field of intrinsic value and elective direction – as explained ahead.

7.7. The Dissolution of Feeling Life into the Machine Model

Scientific method is externalist in principle because it prescribes that only observable and reproducible sequences are valid. Otherwise claims are “merely subjective” or “not replicatable”. While this metaphysic is essential in knowing redundant facts, it is blind to what makes life of intrinsic value.

Simply put, *feeling life is what the robot or the computer cannot do*. It cannot, for example, feel joy at being turned on and dread at being turned off; nor can it bond with other life, or turn bad moods to good. Yet these ultimate ontological and value distinctions are blocked out by externalist science and philosophy at every turn.

Consider here the ornithologist who says with approval on an international nature program: “I feel the birds I am studying sing and fly in the way they do out of joy at being alive, but I could never say this because science can’t prove it”. Observe that the inner life of both man and bird is erased a-priori. The scientist’s and the bird’s feeling life are made unspeakable. What the scientist acknowledges as his primary experience of life-value is what he cannot say.

7.7.1. The Making of Robot Consciousness

The founder of scientific method, Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626) first proposed the

machine model as necessary to understand all reality when he prescribed in his Preface to the *Novum Organum* the sole “true principles” of inquiry (emphases added):

There remains but one course for the recovery of a sound and healthy condition - namely that *the entire work of the understanding* be commenced afresh, and *the mind itself* be from the very outset not left to take its own course, but *guided at every step: and the business be done as if by machinery* (p.2).

This is the logic of “universal mechanics”, as Sir Isaac Newton called it in his renowned *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (1687) some 51 years after Bacon’s death. It became the set-point of terrestrial knowledge thereafter. The model of the machine has been the central paradigm of human understanding since.

Consider, for example, the ruling neoclassical model of economics, “the moral science”. It follows the equations of nineteenth-century mechanics without a life coordinate. The second law of thermodynamics itself does not apply to the perpetual motion mechanism, as Georgescu-Roegen long ago showed, with no effect on doctrine, in *The Entropy Law and the Economics Process* (1971) .

7.7.2. The “Privileged Access” Standpoint Does Not Resolve the Error

It is not only a question here of “privileged access”, as analytic philosophers often classify the inner world of life independent of behavioral expression. This conception too overlooks the more general distinction between *being* life and *observing* it from without to relocate the issue as one of private domain - “privileged access”. The “problem of other minds” thus arises as a standard issue in twentieth-century philosophy - that we cannot know other minds exist, the externalist fallacy in another form.

7.7.3. The Error Compounded: Consciousness is a Computer

Decades down the line, cognitive science and philosophy of the mind became stuck on whether consciousness can be distinguished from a computational machine, and the debate still rages.

Yet none recognize that there can only be a debate because the most basic reality of our lives, the felt side of being alive, has been screened out. Linguistic behaviorism and science have ruled it out from their models. In the pharmaceutical-psychiatric world, chemical balances and imbalances of the brain displace inner life reality and conscious direction. The most basic realities of human experience are blocked out by the variations on the externalist fallacy: that no computer however advanced can feel depressed or elated; that feeling life is typically not linguistically expressed; and that limbic chemical balances or imbalances are externally observable quantities that cannot explain why feeling universal can go saintly or demonic.

7.7.4. The Happiness of Market Doctrine: The Externalist Fallacy Universalized

“Happiness” has long been the ideal state of humanity – its paradox being that that one

does not achieve it by seeking it. Yet neoclassical economic theory assumes it has solved the problem of happiness by market self-maximization and exchange. As we have seen, however, only exchanges for priced commodities are counted in this value calculus. Moreover, the standard equation of GDP growth = society's gain in happiness has been shown to be false by empirical research (as in Robert Lane's *The Loss of Happiness in Market Societies* (2000)). Nonetheless public policy across borders has long been made on this incoherent premise.

7.7.5. The Onto-Axiological Set-Point behind Ecological Collapse

With more/less external monetary exchanges for commodities counting as more/less internal human happiness, an absurd measure leads the world to ever more money-exchange growth as the ultimate formula of human well-being. Since ecological life systems are a-priori ignored by this growth, they are cumulatively despoiled by its ever-rising material, energy and sink demands beneath recognition.

Here we may observe the ruling value syntax determine the supreme motive of world humanity as ecocidal, the unseen onto-axiological set-point of increasing external disaster.

7.7.6. Felt Bonds of Life in the Market: Selling to Partisan Passions

At the same time, what sells fastest to people's feeling lives are instant distractions disconnected from life support systems - images of sex, bizarre extremes, and powers to destroy. Shared forms and grounds for feeling life are pre-empted. Feelings of being alone and alienated in the world follow - what existentialist philosophy first recognized, but without causal explanation.

Marketing of mass passions responds to the aloneness. Group-conflict spectacles multiply as marketing sites in which emotional ties are primevally partisan. Within a ruling value system of atomic individuals competing to survive, the captured felt bonds of being are both divided against one another and disconnected from common life support systems.

Much is understood when we recognize the inner logic of these phenomena - commercial-logo teams as the ultimate concern of the masses, politics as competing images, and creative arts as sales contests. Felt social cohesion and wider life unity are left with no ground.

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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”: with Mackie arguing that all ethical judgments of right and wrong, good or bad, are “false”.]

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

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

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

Neill, A. and Ridley, A. (1995), *The Philosophy of Art*, 569 pp. New York: McGraw-Hill. [This is a reasonably comprehensive collection of definitive explanations of theories of art by their original authors, including Plato, Kant, Tolstoy, Dewey, T.S. Eliot, Dewey, and Beardsley.]

Nietzsche, Friedrich (1964), *The Complete Works of Nietzsche* (ed. O. Levy). New York: Russell and Russell. [Includes the works in value theory referred to and critiqued throughout the 6.25 Theme Essay, such as *The Genealogy of Morals* and, in particular, *Beyond Good and Evil*, a later work which explains Nietzsche’s master idea that “values are constructs of domination”, and that moral will is ultimately a “will to power”.]

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* based on affective response, but is limited to the foreground of external relations with no underlying onto-ethical ground of feeling life itself.]

Noonan, J. (2003), *Critical Humanism and the Politics of Difference*, 189 pp. Kingston-Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press.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 a value essence for human life to self-determine differences, focusing on Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard and Iris Young.]

M.C. Nussbaum and Amartya Sen eds. (1993) *The Quality of Life*. Clarendon: Oxford University Press. This major collection features leaders in the field including the editors in which the value-field of feeling life is typically elided.]

Nussbaum, M. (1999) *Sex and Social Justice*, 476pp. New York: Oxford University Press. [This work by an outstanding Aristotelian liberal and feminist is revealing in its standard attention to "separateness", "the separate individual" as the "fundamental fact of ethics".]

G. Outka and J.P. Reeder eds. (1993), *Prospectus for a Common Morality*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. This collection of original articles includes 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"). As elsewhere, no common life interests are spelled out as universal life-ground.

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 and the conventional given assumption that "personal identity" means sameness through time rather than what the person identifies with.]

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.]

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

Radhakrishnan, S. and Moore, C. eds. (1957), *Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy*, 683pp. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [This comprehensive collection of Indian philosophy includes Rg Veda, full texts of the principal Upanishads, the Bhagavad-gita, and substantial selections from Hinayana and Mahayana Buddhism, and Aurobindo Ghose.]

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.]

Rescher, N. (1969), *Introduction to Value Theory*, 205 pp. Engelwood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. [This monograph exemplifies formalist method purged of substantive issues of value.]

Robert, J.S. (2008), *Embryology, Epigenesis, Evolution*, 290pp. New York: Cambridge University Press [Critiques the one-way "genomania" in contemporary evolutionary biology.]

Rorty, R. (1989), *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, 289 pp. New York: Cambridge University Press. [This is the most prominent text of the anti-foundationalist movement in philosophy which denies any common standard of truth or value].

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques (1984), *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, 182 pp. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books [This classical philosophical 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*, 100 pp. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books [Rousseau's best known work features 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 explanations of sense data and logical atomism and neutral monism.]

Ryle, G. (1976) *The concept of mind*, 334pp. London: Hutchinson. [This influential reductionist argument by Oxford analytic philosopher argues against conceiving the mind as a “ghost in the machine” when behavioral dispositions are all that is at work.]

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

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

Scheler, Max (1973), *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values; a New Attempt Toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism*, 620pp. Evanston: Northwestern University Press [This definitive work distinctively opposes Platonic and Kantian ethics by arguing that values are unchanging objects of emotions and feelings rather than reason.]

Schopenhauer, Arthur (1818/1957), *The World as Will and Representation*, 3 vols. London: Routledge . [Schopenhauer depicts cosmic life as a round of blind desire, competitive struggle and suffering which leads reason to “denial of the will to live” for the quietude of pure detachment (the permanent release) or aesthetic experience (the temporary respite, as in music).]

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

Searle, J..R. (1997), *The Rediscovery of the Mind*, 512pp Boston: MIT Press. [Searle argues against the dominant functionalist-computer model of the mind in favour of the irreducibly qualitative and subjective experience of consciousness.]

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.]

Singer, Irving (1966 -1987), *The Nature of Love*, 3 volumes. Chicago: Chicago University Press. [This is the most comprehensive study of theories of love from Plato to Sartre which argues against any unifying principle of value for the idea of “bestowal of value” on the love object.]

Singer, Peter, *Animal Liberation: Man’s Inhumanity to Animals* (1983). 302 pp. Wellingborough, Northamptonshire: Thorsons Press. [This work deploys utilitarian ethics and the pain-reduction principle to argue against the cruel abuse of domestic animals in factory food systems.]

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

Soble, Alan ed. (1997), *Sex, Love and Friendship*, 646 pp. Amsterdam: Rodopi. [This comprehensive collection from the American Philosophical Association’s Society for the Philosophy of Sex and Love includes all most topics in philosophical research including traditionalist, feminist, gay, genetic, sado-masochistic, open-marriage and classical positions.]

Spinoza, Baruch (1985), *The Collected Works of Spinoza* (ed. E. Curley), vols. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [This collection Spinoza’s includes Spinoza’s observation that despotism is led by “fear which keeps the people down dressed in the specious garb of religion”.]

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 Taylor’s magnum opus which argues for value grounding in historically developed social relations and moral character in opposition to abstract liberal selves maximizing benefits in “a value-neutral moral void”.]

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 .]

Trungpa, C. (1988). *Shambala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*. 202 pp. Boston: Shambala Press [This is a leading example of the conception of a religious “warrior path” of happiness.]

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 [These lectures on “process philosophy” conceive Nature as “alive”, “feeling”, “purposing” and ever “creative” in the energy flows described by physics as opposed to “dead” and “inert” in the Newtonian tradition.]

Wilson E.O. (1984) *Biophilia* (157 pp.) Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press. [The 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. [This work leads a twentieth-century “linguistic turn” of philosophy in which life foundations, the value field of feeling life and the felt bonds of being dissolve into language behaviors.]

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*. 490 pp. Prentice Hall: London. [This collection of leading critical perspectives includes definitive statements of the land ethic, bio-regionalism, animal rights, deep ecology, ecofeminism, and ecological socialism.]

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.