

Initial Course Concept



From Effective Altruism to the Second Renaissance | Initial Course Concept (Jonah & Max)

This doc was initially created by Jonah and then Max (the one typing this) modified and added to it quite considerably; I possibly took it over from its original intent.

Hence, I have created this new doc above ^ to function as a space for the initial concept for an EA-2R Course.

Conference Blurb

From Effective Altruism to Second Renaissance

An exploratory project towards integrating EA and 2R thought

Second Renaissance



Draft **(Add Link)**

Channels

Node	Emails	Status	Results
EA Boston Group (Organiser)	julia.d.wise@gmail.com		
EA Boston Mailing List	—		
Harvard Undergraduate EA	harvardea@gmail.com		
Harvard EA	harvard@eahub.org		
Harvard Law School EA	give@mail.law.harvard.edu		
EA MIT	ea-exec@mit.edu		
Impact@MIT Discord	—	Dead	
MIT AI Alignment	maia-exec@mit.edu		
Northeastern EA	northeasternea@gmail.com		
Tufts EA	effectivealtruismtufts@gmail.com		
Boston College EA	effectivealtruismbc@gmail.com		
Brandeis EA	bea.brandeis@gmail.com		
Brown EA	effectivealtruism@brown.edu		
EA Anywhere Slack	—		
EA Groups Slack	—		
Integral Altruism Slack	—		
ComlexitEA Telegram	—		
Technological Metamodernism Telegram	—		



EA Forum Groups

<https://forum.effectivealtruism.org/groups>

Search 'Boston'

- [Boston Effective Altruism](#) (0 mi)
- [MIT AI Alignment](#) (0 mi)
- [Northeastern Effective Altruism](#) (2 mi)
- [Effective Altruism MIT](#) (2 mi)
- [Harvard Effective Altruism](#) (3 mi)
- [Harvard Graduate School of Art & Sciences Effective Altruism](#) (3 mi)
- [Harvard Law School Effective Altruism](#) (4 mi)
- [Tufts University Effective Altruism](#) (5 mi)
- [Boston College EA](#) (6 mi)
- [Brandeis Effective Altruism](#) (10 mi)
- [Brown Effective Altruism](#) (41 mi)



Subject-line

Human Alignment & the Metacrisis: A 2-Day Conference at Harvard on Collective Consciousness, Cascading Risks & Civilisational Change

* [Stanford Existential Risk Initiative Cascading Risk Study](#)

Poster copy [Lightly edited]

Headline: Human Transformation in a Time of Metacrisis

Tagline: Exploring the collective and systemic causes of existential risk

Key Themes:

- Existential Risk & AI Safety
- Ecological & Bio Catastrophes
- Education & Cultural Alignment
- Inner Development & Collective Agency
- Complex Systems Theory & Ontological Politics

Details: May 2–3, 2025, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA

Short Description: A two-day gathering for those committed to navigating the metacrisis—integrating deep systems change with inner transformation.

Hosted by Life Itself and School Founders of the World.

Note: downplayed the spiritual/cultural as I'm not sure how well this is received by EAs, possibly this is a demographic word choice between receptives and defenders.



Conference Online Materials

<https://www.sfwhgse.com/>

Earlier Talk: [Prof. Isabela Granic will present on “Human Transformation in a time of Metacrisis”](#)

Life Itself Newsletter Promo: [Education for Flourishing Conference](#)

School Founders of the World: [2025 Education for Flourishing Conference](#)

LinkedIn Promo: [Human Transformation & the Metacrisis Conference](#)

Harvard Calendar Details: [Education for Flourishing](#)

What is Emerging Promo: <https://www.whatisemerging.com/opinions/events-update>

Rufus Guidance

Here are some outlines. I think subject lines may need a little tweaking but longer texts are good.

- [Blurbs](#)
- [ChatGPT](#)

Key point is this event addresses AI, existential risk etc ... whilst offering a broader/unusual framing that could be interesting to EA folks e.g. in looking at root causes (metacrisis framing), emphasis on education and inner dimension ...

Main



From Effective Altruism to Second Renaissance

An exploratory ~~course~~ project towards integrating EA and 2R thought and practice



*A 'virtuous cycle' of 'cross-pollination' – of ideas and individuals –
across the EA and 2R ecosystems*

Initial Forum Discussion

Integral Altruism post on the *Second Renaissance Forum*

Adjacent Projects

- Integral Altruism (Euan)
- The Redteaming Effective Altruism Fellowship (Max)
- Metachrysalis: The Metacrisis Foundations Program (Max)

EA-2R Project Team

Confirmed: Rufus Pollock, Jona Wilberg, **Max Ramsahoye**

Confirm with: Ben Smith, Euan McLean, Finn (surname?)

Content

- Initial Course Outline (Jona)



From Effective Altruism to Second Renaissance: Course Outline (Jona)

Some initial thoughts on what the basic structure of such a course might look like:

1. Cultural evolution as a potential EA cause area

- Existing similar cause areas and directions within EA (e.g. moral circle expansion)
- Existing criticisms of EA from point of view of systemic change (e.g. [The Good it Promises, the Harm it Causes])
- General category of systemic change as cause area, with cultural change as subcategory
- Tractability, Neglectedness, Importance
- Issue of evidence (comparison with AI risk)
- EA priors about cultural evolution - context of analytic philosophy vs continental philosophy, little exposure to sociology etc.

2. Integral/2R ideas applied to personal decision-making from a broadly EA perspective

- What would equivalent of 80,000 hours advice be - importance of developing skills in EA, broader concept of relevant skills in integral
- Importance of community, motivation and avoiding burnout in EA and Integral/2R

3. Integral/2R ideas compared to the utilitarian ethics underlying EA

- Virtue ethics as alternative to utilitarianism
- Virtue ethics and spirituality
- Connections: cause neutrality, effectiveness as potential virtues



Project Scope & Outputs (Rufus)

1. Course: co-developing a course on *"Beyond Effective Altruism" / an "Introduction to the Second Renaissance for Effective Altruists"*
2. Sequence: co-authoring writings on *"evolving (from) EA"* or *"transcending and including EA"*

Core Materials

- [The Emergence Project/Model](#) by Daniel Schmachtenberger (archived by Max)

Forum Discussion

- [Connection, learnings, analogies and differences with Effective Altruism \(EA\) for Second Renaissance etc](#) posted by Rufus Pollock

Int/A Discussion

- [Sev on the differences between EA and the Metacrisis space](#) (archived by Max)

Metaphors

- The Bridge
- The Cycle

A project of the [Life Itself Second Renaissance Research Group](#) (?)



Life Itself

Research Group: *The Second Renaissance*

Network



From Effective Altruism to Second Renaissance

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Proposed External People to Consult (Max)

Sev	Integral Altruism group member
Leo Hyams	Co-founder of AI Safety Cape Town
Jasper Tahany	Creator of <i>The Regenescape</i> newsletter
Joshua Williams	Intro to the Metacrisis site & presentation on The Stoa
Teo Ajantaival	Researcher at the Centre for Reducing Suffering
Ben Smith	Arcadia Impact AI Governance Taskforce
Mishall	Cosmos Institute Team, Mentor is Center for Human Technology, Aza Raskin
Jared Lucas	Unfolding Lifecoach
Bjarke Almer Frederiksen	(Alternative) Computer Engineer
Kristian Marcus	Host of <i>Objective Function</i> Meetups (London)
Stephen Reid	Technological Metamodernism (course)
Joe & Laurent	Metacrisis Diplomats



From *Effective Altruism*

- Finn Moorhouse (Forethought, ran the Redteaming and Criticism Contest on the EA Forum)
- Catherine Brewer (Open Philanthropy, expressed interest in Redteaming Fellowship)

Writings



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Personal Writings/Projects Relevant to the EA-2R Nexus/Course

Max

Short Writings

- *Is There No Alternative: Singer's World-Systems Change Cruxes & The Capitalist Realism of Effective Altruism*
- *Who Speaks for Earth: Sagan & Ord on Existential Risk & The End of History?*
- *Introducing the Human Collective Intelligence Alignment Problem: Say Hi to HI*

Larger Research Projects

- *Seven Concepts for Critical Systems Existential Risk (Studies)*
- *Disputes of Progress: A New Critical Philosophy of Progress for the 21st Century*
- *The Capital-AI: Capitalism as an Unaligned Artificial Superintelligence*

Int/A



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Inta/A Chat on EA vs the Metacrisis/Metamodernist Movements

Benjamin: What a great map you point to here. I feel quite seen :)

https://secondrenaissance.net/map/ecosystem_map.html

Sev: Kinda makes me wonder whether we have a job board or some kind of meta-map where when and why to turn. You know, an integral 80k

Sev: EA's talent funnel felt too rigid and eternalist, the second renaissance ecosystem feels too floaty and volatile 🙄

Max: Could you elaborate on this? I have a similar impression, and want to know more what you mean?

Sev:

I'm not exactly sure either, just naming a general vibe I'm getting. I can talk about my experience some more if that helps:

In EA, there's a bazillion people eager to tell you how you can help, what you should do, etc. etc. etc. My problems there are:

- It's extremely easy to get lost in the meta trap because there's always another guy who knows a girl who knows a guy I should really talk to.
- I know exactly what I should do in order to build more career capital: Apply to startups for ops skills, learn coding to make money and help with AI safety, or become a minimum wageie



campaigner for some animal charity or other. But none of these paths suit me, so I slip between the cracks. Nobody wants to tell me I'm useless, but the message is clear that I'm essentially useless and the kind of community organizing I'm good at nothing anyone bothers investing into.

Overall, it feels a bit like there's this very big entrance door to a very beautiful majestic building that says "everybody's welcome" and inside there are a lot of signs telling you clearly which staircases to take to get where. But I'm in a wheelchair, nobody thought of building a lift, and everybody is kind of embarrassed while effortfully avoiding the topic because naming my disability would feel politically incorrect.

The Second Renaissance cluster feels more like a loose assembly of people in an oasis: There's people hanging out with their friends and holding monologues about their favourite pet theory at each other. Sometimes pretty invigorating, but often it just seems like they are trying really hard to show off how many loanwords they know without being so sure themselves what they want to say. And I look at it all and wonder why others even bother trying to decipher what they say.

It feels like the thing could be significantly more awesome and find more coherence, but nobody really feels responsible because everyone's tinkering on their own passion projects. Everyone's happy about others joining their thing if they are sufficiently sexy and can pay the entrance fee. Too much psychotech, too much theorizing, too little movement and practical competence going on. A loose assembly of individualists who like to pretend to themselves that they are collectivists. But basically, it's mostly used-car salespeople hanging out among themselves trying to sell each other cars. Too much meta among the metamodernists, too little doing.

One thing we got that's close to an integral movement or at least movers is the Burning Man community. But while what they build is beautiful and burners are often incredibly agenty people who accomplish amazing feats of decentralized organizing, in the end, all of it is just expensive hedonism that can't really blueprint a lasting utopia either and doesn't really try.

Another better bet for what second-renaissance-people-if-they-knew-how-to-build could look like is some anarchsits. But using that label as a filter is... complicated. "Anarchist" seems to be



an umbrella term for people and places that have their center of gravity either around Kegan stage 2 or 5. Two completely different things.

I made a lil blog post on that topic a couple months ago, should be 2-3 pages.

With little progress on the "figuring things out"-side, since then:
<https://amoretlicentia.substack.com/p/where-are-the-viable-life-paths>

It's a bit like the metamodernists are an influencer subculture without a roadmap who to influence and how and why. The ToC seems to be to just make everyone in the world a metamodern public intellectual. And then...?!

Paul:

Regarding EA, I can totally see where you are coming from. But I also think it makes sense to distinguish the EA idea (maybe sth like: try to be effective with your altruistic actions; also nudge yourself to be more altruistic) from one of its most common current implementations (channel young talent towards trying to avoid really bad outcomes of the current technological revolution). I think this implementation makes a lot of sense for students looking for purpose in their future career and excellent training in cutting edge tech. But the situation is different for highly trained professionals, because (a) personal fit (at least wrt your expertise) becomes much more important, and (b) neglectedness becomes much more important, i.e. maybe you know a sensitive intervention point with sizeable social impact only 3 other people in the world know or care about - none of which work for 80k. So for the older folks, it is more important to care about the idea of EA and find answers themselves or with peers, rather than following pre-prepared advice served to students. But yeah, which vibe of EA you get depends a lot on the composition of the local community and whether you are interacting more with the folks who donate or those who do direct work.

Parallel Projects

Parallel Projects

2R Eco-System Map: <https://secondrenaissance.net/ecosystem>

EA Eco-system Map: <https://slatestarcodex.com/2020/02/02/map-of-effective-altruism/>

Map of Maps:
<https://www.lesswrong.com/posts/z7pszuf53kpG74MWe/map-of-maps-of-interesting-fields>

- Add CI Alignment + Metacrisis + Life-Career Project-Sets
- Create (Structural Functionalist) Model/Map of EA Eco-System + Emulate This
- Identifying Existing Orgs that are already Parallels

EA + Rationalism + Progress + X-Risk	Alter-EA (READ, INT/A, 2R)	EA > Alter-EA Paradigm-Shift	Ultimate Goal	Role in Ecosystem	Integral
Effective Altruism	Pragmatic Utopianism (this) Integral Altruism, ComplexitEA, Redteaming Effective Altruism/Critical Altruism, Reflective Altruism				
EAG (EA Global)	IAG (IA Global)				

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (EAG Panel and/or Side/Parallel Conference in June) 				
Center for Effective Altruism	Network for Reflexive Systems (second-order cybernetics)				
Center for the Study of Existential Risk	Center for the Study of Systemic Risk				
Center for the Governance of AI Cooperative AI Foundation	Center for the Governance of HI Cooperative HI Foundation				
The Roots of Progress	Disputes of Progress (my blog project)				
BlueDot Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AI Safety Fundamentals (Technical Alignment, Policy Governance, Econ of TAI, the Future of AI) 	BrightStar Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metacrisis Fundamentals (Complex Systems Theory, Integral Theory, Metamodernism, the Future of HI/CI) 				
80, 000 Hours	800,000 Hours + 12,000 Years	Career-Solutionism & Ethical Individualism > Life-Holism & Ethical Individualism-Collectivism* (Self-Social Alignment)	Personal and Societal Guidance, Strategy & Actions/Praxis	Career, Life-Course & Civilisation Guidance	I, We
GiveWell	GiveWiser				
LessWrong <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harry Potter & the Methods of Rationality 	MoreWise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harry Potter & the Methods of Wisdom* 		Closing 'The Wisdom Gap'	Online Forum (Social Technology, Digital Infrastructure)	We, Its

AI Alignment Forum	CI Alignment Forum / Metacrisis Forum				
Our World in Data	Our World in Wisdom / Wiser Metrics Our World in Art				
Our World in Data	Our AI in Data / Our CI in Data				
Christians for Impact	Buddhists for Impact (Buddhists in EA Facebook Group, Singer Book, Buddah was an EA Forum Post etc)				

***Collectivism** = Relationship of the Individual to the Intergenerational Project of Civilisation

***Wisdom** = Relevance Realisation

Bridge / Pipeline / Three Simultaneous Strategic Positionings

Internal = **READ** = Part of EA Critiquing & Reforming EA from the Inside

Integrative = **INT/A** = Part of EA, Part of Meta, Creating a Hybrid EA-Meta Movement

Independent = **2R** = Not Part of EA, Creating a Separate Meta Movement on the Outside

Meetings

11th April 2025

Present: Rufus, Max

- ☒ ~~Create an SCQA/H (morning)~~ **Reached several versions each of which are 80% complete**
- ☒ ~~Max will take Rufus through his existing hypotheses and plans for action (see doc) also see parallel projects tab~~
- ☒ ~~Rufus likewise (though perhaps after finishing SCQA)~~
- ☒ ~~Rufus proposes we come back SCQA~~

Max End of Meeting Points of Interest

- Project Management for Collaborating (scheduled regular calls, shared task board etc)
 - **Next Meeting:** Thursday 17th April 12pm (UK) 1pm (France)
- Collaborating in Bergerac in May 👍
 - <https://survivalandflourishing.fund/2025/application>
 - <https://survivalandflourishing.fund/speculation-grants> \
 - <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd447GiP5BkyvHAKrybC-4jRcmIH2kHH2n86o4ruJb1TSfmKQ/viewform>

- <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1XKVZgjuPTHolKLKoWMLarLuolSKTmbcFrchzM1D7PY/edit?tab=t.0> -

actual proposal

- Share my (Confirmed & Tentative) Plans (Below)

May	EA-2R Collaborative Project	Bergerac
May	<p>2-3rd May: Human Transformation in a time of Metacrisis (Zak Stein, CRI)</p> <p>- EA Houses Boston</p> <p>9-11th May: EAGx Prague (Alignment of Complex Systems Research Group based in Prague, director Jan Kulveit, also my PIBBSS Mentor)</p> <p>26-28th May: International Conference on Large-Scale AI Risk (keynote speaker Iason Gabriel author of Effective Altruism, Global Poverty, and Systemic Change in)</p>	Prague Leuven (Belgium)
June - September (SET)	<p>6th-9th June: EAG London</p> <p>10th June: Principles of Intelligent Behaviour in Biological and Social Systems Fellowship (Berkeley)</p>	Berkeley
September - June (<p>Life Itself Stipend (role? researcher, organiser etc?)</p> <p><i>Instrumental Options</i></p> <p>EA Oxford Senior Committee Member 25/26</p> <p>Newspeak House Introduction to Political Technology Course 25/26</p>	Anywhere/TBD Oxford London
January - January	Foresight (Institute) Fellowship 2026/27	Anywhere/TBD

4th April 2025

- Sensemaking summer school
- Exploratory collaboration on producing papers / materials
- Various events etc

Max-Rufus Plan



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Max & Rufus – Five Point Plan

1. **April:** Call re 2. 3. 4. √√^
2. **Materials & Methodology:** Establishing a Shared Foundation
 - a. Read each other's existing independent materials
 - b. Plan future collaborative materials
 - c. Max: Study up on [SCGH & Issue Trees](https://issuetrees.com) – <https://issuetrees.com>
 - d. Rufus: Check out *The Society Library's* approach of [Debate Mapping](#) *
3. **May:** EA-2R (Pragmatic Utopianism) Residency (Max at Bergerac). To Do: ^
4. **June:** EAG Panel and/or Satellite Unconference Event. To Do: Design Agenda
 - a. Possible Locations: 1. [Kairos](#) 2. [Newspeak House](#) 3.
5. **July:** Sensemaking Summer School. To Do: Design Agenda & Curriculum (also for async Online)
- **Ongoing (Max):** 2R Research Collective Weekly Sessions
 - Give Presentation(s) on Research Project(s)
 - Development of Frankfurt School Style Paracademic Group with Paper Outputs



Other

- Promote [Human Transformation in a time of Metacrisis](#) to [EA Boston Group](#)
 - Hey Rufus, there is an EA Boston email list that anyone can join and send to: <https://groups.google.com/g/boston-effective-altruists>
 - What is the blurb to send ...? (See Tab <)
 - What is MIT and Harvard email ...
 - [Contact EA Oxford Jemima Jones University Groups Support Associate for Organiser Contact Details](#)
- Speak with re Newspeak House [Introduction to Political Technology](#) Course
- Speak with re [Critical Collapsology Part II: Limits to Risk](#) with Richard Hames New Centre for Research & Practice
 - [Part I: Critical Collapsology: Theory and the Ends of Worlds](#) (2024)
 - See [Substack Post & Youtube Lecture Recordings](#)
 - Discuss (assisting with) Rufus giving a seminar series through NCRP on 'Pragmatic Utopianism x Second Renaissance: Theory & Beginnings of Worlds'



2. Shared Materials

Rufus

- [Effective Altruism Risks Perpetuating a Harmful Worldview](#) by Theo Cox (& Rufus Pollock)
Redteaming & Criticism Contest *EA Forum* 2022
- [Pragmatic Utopianism](#) by Rufus Pollock & Theo Cox *Life Itself* 2020

[To Add]

Max

Short Writings

- [Is There No Alternative: Singer's World-Systems Change Cruxes & The Capitalist Realism of Effective Altruism](#)
- [Who Speaks for Earth: Sagan & Ord on Existential Risk & The End of History?](#)
- [Introducing the Human Collective Intelligence Alignment Problem: Say Hi to HI](#)

Larger Research Projects

- [Seven Concepts for Critical Systems Existential Risk \(Studies\)](#)
- [Disputes of Progress: A New Critical Philosophy of Progress for the 21st Century](#)
- [The Capital-AI: Capitalism as an Unaligned Artificial Superintelligence](#)

Courses Designed


- [The Redteaming Effective Altruism Fellowship](#)
- [Metachrysalis: The Metacrisis Foundations Program](#)
- [The 'Alethia' AI x Philosophy Fellowship](#)



* The Society Library Debate Maps on AI

- [AI Debate Maps](#)
- [Democratic Inputs to AI Governance](#) + [Open Source AI](#)
- [Potential Benefits & Risks of Aligning Human Beliefs & Behaviours Using AI](#)
- [User Alignment](#)


SCQA

- Read  From Polycrisis to Metacrisis - a short introduction - Life Itself ...
 - <https://forum.secondrenaissance.net/t/from-polycrisis-to-metacrisis-and-a-second-renaissance-scqh/242>
- Do an SCQ(A) on second renaissance purely - focused on how people get to 2R and how one builds a movement/community.
- <https://lifeitself.org/tao/scqh>
- Ben Smith [EA Forum \(Draft\) Post Systems Change 101](#)


V3

Situation

[For Civilisation]

- [Agree: All] Civilisational problems e.g. tech x-risk, eco breakdown are reaching critical points of intensity (harm), interaction (reinforcement) and irreversibility (lock-in). [bad and getting worse]
- [Agree: 2R. Metacrisis. EA??] They have root causes such as 'military-economic adaptationism', 'multi-polar traps' (collective action problems), human collective intelligence value misalignment
- [Agree: 2R. Metacrisis ? EA: 

collective action problems requires new ways of seeing each other and the world ...)

- [Agree: 2R, Metacrisis? EA ]Paradigmatic change is possible and is likely inner-led (cultural evolution) though it will include all of the 4 quadrants of being, culture, systems and technology.

[For EA] the EA eco-system is large, organized and influential. It broadly exhibits a reformist / incrementalist, non system/paradigm change approach with emphasis on technocratic/political engineering type solutions e.g AI alignment split into technical (AI safety) and policy (AI governance) – if we can design the technology and policy right, then we solve the problem, without much thought for the political/power itself – how will we actually get these policies enacted).

[For 2R]: 2R is a nascent ecosystem/movement built on the assumptions above and seeking to create a critical mass for paradigmatic change and groups actively exploring paths to that future. However, it is currently very small and the key ideas are not widely familiar (in fact they are alien e.g. idea of cultural evolution and cultural paradigms).

- **Decentralised Hacks (Techno-Capitalist Solutionism)**
 - Technical AI Alignment genius (AI alignment is talent-bottlenecked)
 - '[AI Governance Through Markets](#)' (AI Objectives Institute, the project of aligning capitalism)

Complication

[For EA]

EA's reformist / non-paradigmatic change approach is clearly unable to address the 'root causes' of civilisational problems at scale required. Moreover, blindspots in EA worldview mean it discards paradigmatic change "out of the gate" (e.g. markets/capitalism are just facts of nature) and largely ignores collective action problems in general. This makes it hard to change the minds of EA-ers on this, yet EA has large influence especially in x-risk and philanthropy that are important for action on metacrisis.

[For 2R]

A paradigm shift is going to need a movement and right now very few people know of 2R and certainly lacks the organizational and memetic infrastructure of e.g. EA (especially amongst students).

Question

- How do we show (more) EA-ers the need to look at collective action and thence at inner-led paradigmatic change and cultural evolution so that they switch their energies to those kind of areas and we do this in the next 3y with the result that at least 5 major universities the EA group either switches focus or there is a new alterego EA named IA/2R/PU?
- How do we have expand 2R especially at grassroots e.g. 2R group/meetups at 3 major UK universities in the next 2y?

- [Joint] How do we create pathways from EA to 2R/PU/IA such that in the next 3y hundreds of EA-ers join 2R and/or there is a 2R sub-ecosystem within EA ...?

v2 (together)

Situation

The Effective Altruism eco-system exerts a major intellectual and institutional influence on powerful agents (decision-makers, philanthropic funders, tech developers, elite university students etc) and the allocation of substantial resources. *In short, it is influential, well organized and actively recruiting many “good-oriented”, thoughtful students at elite institutions.*

Effective Altruism is about maximizing positive impact through rational, evidence-based approaches. As a result, there is a focus on tractable interventions (e.g., bed nets) and catastrophic risk mitigation (e.g., AI alignment), drawing primarily from utilitarian ethics and rationalist epistemologies.

Flowing from this (?), there is a tendency in EA to focus on issues that are addressable through technology / science (with perhaps a bit of governance especially more recently) without major collective action or paradigmatic change.

At the same time (or even because of this) EA have some major ideological/worldview assumptions, many of which they don't even realize they have (i.e. they are blindspots) e.g.

- Markets and capitalism are good. Take core institutional structures of modernity such as markets and unstoppable technological innovation (driven by market forces) as unchangeable – and steerable where necessary (e.g. even if capitalism/pursuit of unfettered tech progress has generated AI/climate/great power conflict risk it can also be solved within it ... i.e liberal, [democratic](#), [capitalist peace theory](#))
- We are post-ideological – we don't have an ideology, we are just looking at the facts. Other people have ideological.

What is **Effective Altruism**? [Excerpt from the EA Redteaming Fellowship]

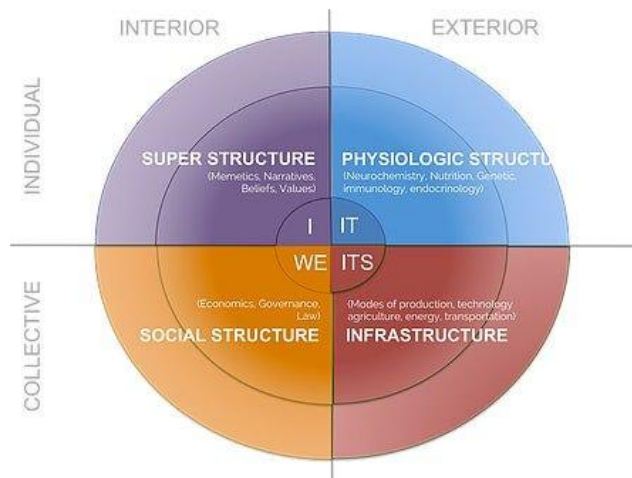
Effective Altruism (EA) is a **beneficentrist** philosophical and social movement that engages in **cause-prioritisation** (effective) for the purpose of **value-maximisation**, **world-optimisation** and **moral progress** (altruism): usually defined as the project of 'using reason and evidence' to figure out how to 'do the most good'. In principle, '**Effective Altruism is a Question (not an ideology)**' of 'How can I do the most good, with the resources available to me?'. In practice **Effective Altruism is an Ideology, not (just) a Question** insofar as 'it has particular (if somewhat vaguely defined) set of core principles and beliefs, and associated ways of viewing the world and interpreting evidence'. Whilst **demographically EA may be relatively homogenous**, in terms of cause areas and world views (moral, intellectual pluralism), the Effective Altruism movement is '**at least in theory a broad church**' (or a '**big tent**') of many small ea's rather than a completely **value-aligned, monolithic Big EA**.

Complication

The EA eco-system broadly exhibits a non-systemic/reformist/incrementalist approach that fails to address the 'root causes' of civilisational problems – 'military-economic adaptationism', 'multi-polar traps' (collective action problems), human collective intelligence value misalignment – that are reaching critical points of intensity (harm), interaction (reinforcement) and irreversibility (lock-in). [The (only/best) way to address these root causes at the scale required is via inner-led (cultural evolution) paradigmatic change].

[Premises] Rewrite in different order ...

- Civilisational problems e.g. tech x-risk, eco breakdown, are reaching critical points of intensity (harm), interaction (reinforcement) and irreversibility (lock-in).
- They have root causes such as 'military-economic adaptationism', 'multi-polar traps' (collective action problems), human collective intelligence value misalignment
 - It seems very likely that to address these at the scale required needs paradigmatic change including at the worldview/cultural paradigm level (crudely: to solve planetary scale collective action problems requires new ways of seeing each other and the world ...)
 - Paradigmatic change is possible and is usually inner-led (cultural evolution) though it will include all of being, culture, systems and technology (4 quadrants 😊) (beat me to it 🙌)



The Emergence Model

All factors that generate civilisational problems fit into these four quadrants. Each of the quadrants are fundamental and irreducible to the others, so these categories are both necessary and sufficient for inventorying all causes of problems.

- However, the EA eco-system broadly exhibits a non-systemic (non system/paradigm change) / reformist / incrementalist approach that is clearly unable to address the 'root causes' of civilisational problems at scale required.
- Moreover, blindspots in EA worldview mean it discards paradigmatic change "out of the gate" (e.g. markets/capitalism are just facts of nature) and largely ignores collective action problems in general.
- This makes it hard to change the minds of EA-ers on this, yet EA has large influence especially in x-risk and philanthropy that are important for action on metacrisis.

Extras

- Take AI x-risk, which is a core concern. It is increasingly clear that what is required is some global governance which in turn requires addressing a hard collective action problem [which emerges from the interaction of onto-logical/axiological/cultural beliefs across distributed agents]
- Rufus: Max's analysis stays at the structural level without asking how we will address those ... (game-theoretic, systemic problems) which is less fundamental than ontological holism (enacted, cultural, ideological, spiritual, axiological problems)

4E Problems & Solutions Framework/Assessment/Diagnostic: root problems as embodied, embedded, enacted and extended

(Modernisation/Realist Theory vs Integral Theory, Emergentism vs Reductionism, Holism vs Solutionism):

Question

- How do EA-ers change their mind?
- Can EA-ers change their mind?
- Which EA-ers would change their mind?

How do we catalyse a paradigm-shift within EA(s)* that reorients its approach to civilisational problem-solving – from techno-capitalist solutionism informed by ‘modernisation theory’ to pragmatic utopianism informed by critical ‘world-systems theory’ – and redirects its capabilities and resources from reformist/incrementalist to transitional/paradigmatic agents/projects/organisations (as soon as possible, within a 5 year timeframe by 2030)?

EA vs EAs

- *EA (movement) internal paradigm shift:* the EA ecosystem as a whole (the majority of members/orgs) becomes a 2R-aligned ecosystem
- *EAs (member) paradigm-shift:* EAs and EA orgs within the EA ecosystem migrate to an alternative 2R ecosystem.

Sub-Questions

- What are the ‘crucial considerations’ that EA(s) are missing?
- What are the ‘cruxes’ that mean EA(s) hold techno-capitalist solutionist / reformist beliefs, problem-solving approaches and theories of change?
- What are the ‘assumptions’ that EA(s) hold? (Sociotechnical & Socioeconomic Belief System: technological determinism vs social shaping of technology, capitalist realism vs post-capitalist realism)

- What are the sub-demographics (venn diagram) of EAs and which do we want to target?
 - Receptives (on a/the bridge,) EAs semi-aligned with EA orthodoxy and 2R heterodoxy ('a bridge' = independent of our initiatives. 'The bridge means because of our initiatives)
 - Defenders (on the other side): EAs highly-aligned with EA orthodoxy

Rufus

- What is the core evolution in views we want to see for EA'ers? (aka cruxes?)
- Is it plausible that can happen for a majority especially of the more influential?
- Should we focus on the (minority) of potential transmitters and provide paths for them to adjacent ... or attempt to switch whole subsections of EA community (or community as a whole) – o/c both ... and which is the focus for now ...?
 - Why this matters: if focused on the “median” (or influential) EA you need to engage there views significantly ...

- If marginal EA'ers (ie. those already open to ideas) you probably more focus on “hey here’s a path you could follow” (with less debate with existing EA views) (???)

Hypotheses

- A Manual for Creating Pragmatic Utopians (PU Intro Fellowship)
 - Critical/Street Epistemology (Socratic Method) of EA
 - Parallel to *A Manual for Creating Atheists / Street Epistemology (Theists Atheists)*
- Create Pragmatic Utopianism alter-EA (university) groups e.g like the school for) Moral Ambition.

v1 (Rufus)

Situation

Effective Altruism (EA) is a globally established and well resourced community/movement, especially in Western Europe and North America, oriented toward maximizing positive impact through rational, evidence-based approaches which has become highly influential. It focuses on tractable interventions (e.g., bed nets) and catastrophic risk mitigation (e.g., AI alignment), drawing primarily from utilitarian ethics and rationalist epistemologies.

Meanwhile, a loosely emerging “Second Renaissance” or *pragmatic utopianism* foregrounds deeper transformation—seeking cultural, psychological, and spiritual shifts necessary for resolving collective action problems and achieving human flourishing at scale. However, the Second Renaissance (and similar/adjacent groups) is nascent with very limited participation, resourcing and wider awareness.

- Meanwhile as a general context, the (meta)crises seem to be worsening: if anything, AI is accelerating whilst governance the alignment lag massively behind, the ecological crisis is worsening etc.
- Thus finding good approaches is an urgent matter and ...
 - [Complication] if EA is “barking up the wrong tree” to an extent (or even making things worse) this is a big problem because this is a large group of committed, smart people whose energies are being misdirected ...

Complication

While EA has achieved institutional traction and drawn many talented individuals, its frame may be inadequate for confronting the meta-crises of our time—particularly those requiring systemic transformation of human culture and consciousness. There exists no clear intellectual or social bridge between EA and Second Renaissance thinking, despite latent alignment. Many within EA may be sensing the limits of a narrowly rationalist paradigm, yet lack a coherent pathway

to explore or transition into post-rationalist, wisdom-oriented approaches. Without such a bridge, an opportunity is being missed to engage this community in a deeper, more transformative project.

Question

How can we facilitate a meaningful and compelling evolution—individually and institutionally—from the Effective Altruist paradigm toward Second Renaissance thinking? What practical interventions, framings, or relational architectures would enable this shift?

Prompt Hypotheses

1. **Philosophical Bridgework:** Articulate a “transcend and include” frame showing how wisdom-based approaches address limitations in EA while honoring its rigor and moral seriousness (cf. Vervaeke, 2022).
2. **Transformative Fellowship Model:** Design fellowships or residencies for EA-aligned individuals that combine rational inquiry with contemplative

practice and ontological inquiry, inspired by precedents like the Monastic Academy.

3. **Meta-Crisis Framing:** Recast EA's concern with existential risk within a meta-crisis narrative, showing that solving alignment (e.g., AI) is inseparable from collective psycho-social development.
4. **Narrative Strategy:** Develop and disseminate case studies or narratives of former EA members who've evolved into Second Renaissance spaces, to model and normalize this shift.
5. **Bridge Institutions:** Incubate or partner with organizations straddling both worlds—e.g., places that integrate systems thinking, ethics, and spiritual development—serving as liminal institutions for transition.

Max version

Situation: The Effective Altruism eco-system exerts a major intellectual and institutional influence on powerful agents (decision-makers, philanthropic funders, tech developers, elite university students etc) and the allocation of substantial resources.

- Influential
- Well organized
- And recruiting / capturing many “good-oriented”, thoughtful students at elite institutions

Complication: The EA eco-system broadly exhibits a non-systemic approach that fails to address the ‘root causes’ or ‘generator functions’ of civilisational problems – ‘military-economic adaptationism’, ‘multi-polar traps’ (collective action problems), human collective intelligence value misalignment – that are reaching critical points of intensity (harm), interaction (reinforcement) and irreversibility (lock-in).

Question: How do we catalyse a paradigm-shift within EA(s)* that reorients its approach to civilisational problem-solving – from techno-capitalist solutionism informed by ‘modernisation theory’ to pragmatic utopianism informed by critical ‘world-systems theory’ – and redirects its capabilities and resources from reformist/incrementalist to transitional/paradigmatic agents/projects/organisations (as soon as possible, within a 5 year timeframe by 2030)?

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Hypotheses:

- Bridge Materials: Materials at the Intersection of EA-2R
 - Meta-Crisis Framing: complex systems theory problem/solution framing
 - Narrative Strategy: case-studies/narratives of post-EAs

- Bridge Institutions: Incubate or partner with hybrid EA-2R organizations
 - Fellowships: Design fellowships or residencies for EA-aligned individuals
-

Notes

- EA can't really solve the big issues it faces because they require collective action and that requires "politics" and cultural evolution ...

Rufus re EA only

Situation

- Effective Altruism (EA) is a mature, well-known, and well-resourced global movement.

- It is rooted in rationalist, empirical, and materialist philosophy—prioritizing evidence-based strategies to maximize good.
- Focus areas include cost-effective interventions (e.g., malaria bed nets), animal welfare, and existential risk, especially from AI.
- EA uses reason to assess high-stakes risks even when empirical data is sparse (e.g., AI risk, asteroid impact).
- AI has received special attention due to EA's sociological and epistemic proximity to engineering and computer science.
- There is growing disillusionment with governance progress and concern over an AI arms race.
- The broader cultural sense of crisis (poly-crisis or meta-crisis) is beginning to permeate EA circles.
- The EA community is maturing; members are increasingly exposed to contemplative practice, systems theory, and post-rationalist paradigms.

Short: EA is a rationalist, impact-focused global movement now confronting both external systemic crises and internal maturation that expose it to deeper cultural and ontological questions.

Longer: Effective Altruism has matured into a globally influential movement grounded in rationalist methods and focused on maximally impactful interventions. As it grapples with complex issues like AI risk and governance, and as its members increasingly encounter broader paradigms—spiritual,

systemic, and cultural—there is a growing openness to perspectives beyond its original rational-empirical frame.

Complication

- EA's reliance on measurable impact leads to a "drunkard under the lamppost" problem: transformative but hard-to-measure interventions (e.g., systemic or cultural change) are neglected.
- Its materialist and utilitarian orientation sidelines political action, cultural evolution, and spiritual or contemplative dimensions.
- Many of the problems EA aims to address—especially existential risks—are fundamentally collective action problems.
- These problems often lack purely technological or governance-based solutions and instead require cultural, systemic, and psycho-social transformation.
- EA's paradigm unintentionally reinforces the techno-solutionist worldview of modernity, potentially exacerbating the very crises it aims to solve.

Consolidated Complication:

EA's rationalist and empiricist framing blinds it to the cultural, inner, and systemic shifts necessary for addressing collective action problems, limiting its ability to confront the crises it prioritizes.

Longer: Despite its ambitions to address humanity's gravest challenges, EA's epistemic commitments constrain its vision. It struggles to recognize the role of

culture, consciousness, and inner development in solving collective action problems, and in doing so, may reinforce the very paradigms that hinder real transformation.

Question

- How can EA-aligned individuals and the movement as a whole evolve to:
 - Recognize the centrality of the inner and cultural dimensions?
 - Appreciate and engage with less measurable but more transformative pathways?
 - Address existential risk through deeper, non-technocratic paradigms of change?

Alternative

- How can EA individuals and institutions evolve to acknowledge and integrate the significance of inner and cultural transformation?
- What framings, practices, or institutions could support a shift beyond narrow rationalism and into systemic wisdom approaches?

- How might EA continue to honor rigor and impact while embracing new paradigms for addressing existential and collective risks?

Consolidated Question:

How can Effective Altruism evolve to recognize and integrate cultural and inner transformation as essential to solving collective action problems and existential risk?

Longer: The central question is how Effective Altruism can transcend its current epistemic boundaries to engage with the deeper cultural and ontological dimensions of change. This evolution would require new framings, spaces of practice, and bridges to paradigms rooted in wisdom, complexity, and collective inner work.