

## *NAWAPA from the Standpoint of Biospheric Development*

*By Sky Shields, Oyang Teng, Michelle Lerner, Cody Jones, and Ben Deniston*

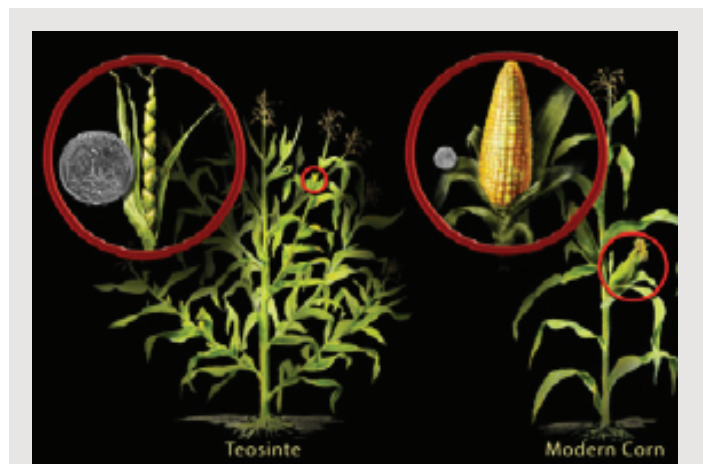
The current crisis is not a financial one, or even a physical one in the simplest sense. We are not facing a lack of finances, or a lack of resources. We are facing a crisis of human culture, of which the current president and his predecessor are merely exemplary. It is time that we analyzed more deeply the roots of the erroneous thinking which has led us so deeply into this current disaster, in order that we might avert it in the only way possible: by turning our sights once again towards humanity's future, and returning to the cultural philosophical roots of a true science of physical economy.

When man "builds infrastructure" he is not simply placing some object called infrastructure into an empty box. He is actually reorganizing the physical spacetime of the biosphere, as a system, by transforming and redirecting the biogenic flows through the biosphere, allowing it to attain to higher and higher levels of energy flux density. The simplest example of this is the introduction of farming and animal husbandry: the apples, corn, and livestock of today are far different, and far more efficient in terms of energy density, than their wild counterparts which reflect the state in which man first encountered them.

Photosynthesis, which converts the diffuse energy of incident sunlight into the concentrated form of chemical bonds, creates both the difficult-to-digest cellulose of plant stems as well as the easily accessible energy stores of carbohydrates and other organic molecules. This process is a part of what Russian-Ukrainian biogeochemist V. I. Vernadsky called the biogenic migration of atoms--the continuous flow of matter through the biosphere as the result of living processes, creating higher and higher levels of organization in the secreted fossil materials. Man's action on apples, corn, and livestock, for example, increases the ratio of usable carbohydrates, lipids and proteins to the expensive (in the terms of energy) but relatively useless (for consumption) cellulose of the plant's structural components. Ultimately, the survival of the human species

will depend on Man's ability to not only organize these flows and increase their efficiency, but also to create, from scratch, the environment of biogenic flows which he requires in order to live outside of Earth's atmosphere, and to colonize our Solar System and beyond.

The North American Water and Power Alliance (NAWAPA) program will be among the first of man's projects to willfully redirect those larger processes determining the further evolution of the biosphere, as a whole, serving as the reference point for such challenges as establishing permanent settlements on other planets, such as Mars. Again, this will be achieved through further understanding and redirecting these biogenic flows, but now on a much grander and more fundamental scale. This biogenic migration of atoms is more than a mere flow of material "within" the biosphere. It constitutes the very structure of the bio-



Teosinte represents the state of "corn" at the time man first encountered it in the wild. Only a very small portion of the bushy plant contained the nutrients and digestible material that make corn the staple it is today. The highly nutritious, and energy-efficient food that we now call corn is entirely a creation of early man's projects at biological engineering and, like the similarly human-engineered modern cow, will not survive outside of human care.

Credit: Nicolle Rager Fuller, National Science Foundation

sphere, and governs the nature of Earth's interaction with phenomena outside of the Earth's atmosphere, such as solar and cosmic radiation. To take a useful example, the creation of Earth's oxygen atmosphere by life not only caused a massive change in species on the face of the planet -- rendering the vast majority of existing life forms extinct, while paving the way for more complex, oxygen breathing life forms -- it also changed the biosphere's interaction with the Sun's electromagnetic radiations (specifically in the "ultraviolet wave range"), creating a higher degree of structure within the biosphere -- the ozone layer -- which, in turn, further moderates which frequencies of electromagnetic radiation would be allowed to enter Earth's developing biosphere to affect planetary evolution.

This biogenic migration of atoms also caused the development of the ionosphere, the highly energetic zone which, by its interaction with the solar wind and Earth's magnetic field, is responsible for the creation of the aurorae and which can at times act as a massive particle accelerator, determining what types of

cosmic radiation will be fed down into Earth's surface. Some of this radiation would be involved in producing the cloud cover which moderates the Earth's temperature and produces precipitation.<sup>1</sup>

Certain aspects of this process of biogenic migration of atoms are popularly broken down, for ease of understanding, into several oversimplified cycles: the "water cycle," "nitrogen cycle," "carbon cycle," etc. At low resolution, these do in fact appear as simple cycles, but when viewed more closely, they form an interconnected network, a system, whose causal interrelations are impossible to represent linearly. Changes in the nitrogen concentration of soils, caused by perturbations in the nitrogen cycle, change the rate of carbon fixation in plant life, perturbing the carbon cycle, which in turn changes the rate of photosynthesis, perturbing the oxygen and water cycles, which in turn perturb the nitrogen cycle, and other biogenic flows of atoms, etc., etc.

Even within a single one of these so-called cycles, the amount of complexity quickly reaches a point

## *Earth's Atmosphere*

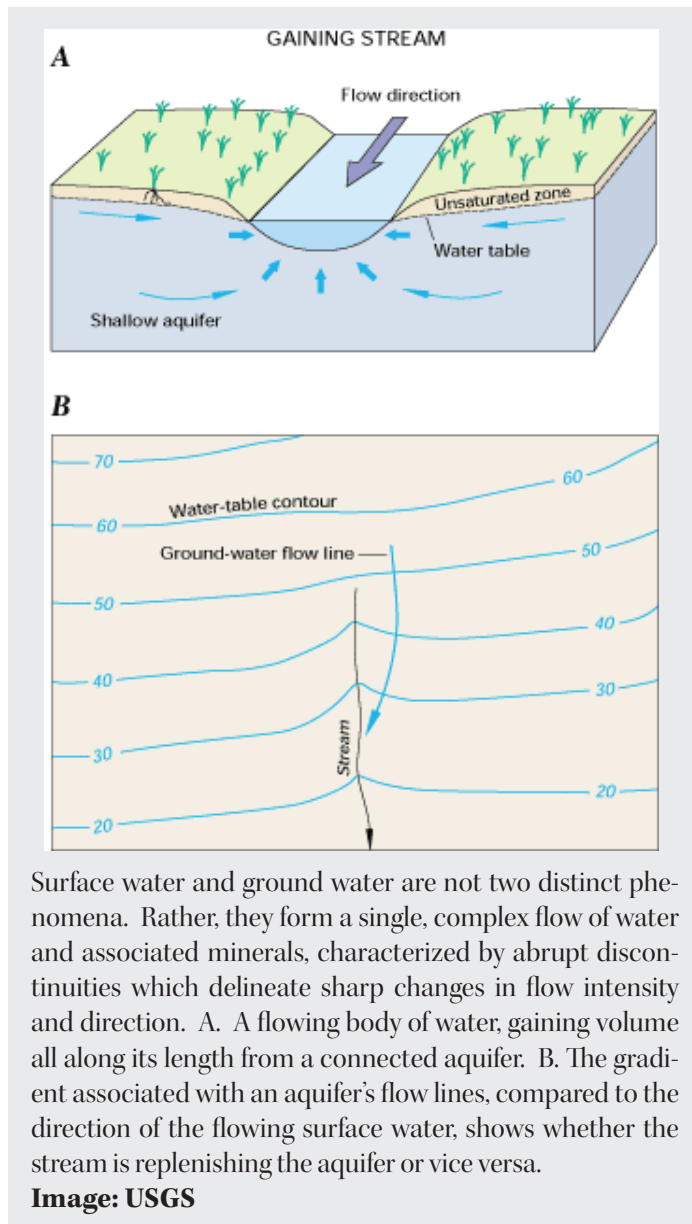
Our planet is sometimes unimaginatively pictured as a rocky sphere to which a thin layer of gas tenuously clings amidst the vacuum of space. Far from that bleak prospect, the Earth's surface represents a particularly intense region of transformation of the cosmic radiation which permeates all of space. In our neighborhood, the vast majority of this radiation is emitted by the Sun, which produces a large spectrum of electromagnetic frequencies, as well as a constant stream of electrically charged plasma called the solar wind. The solar wind, guided by the Sun's magnetic field, is involved in a constant interaction with the plasma that constitutes the upper regions of the Earth's atmosphere and Earth's own, constantly changing, magnetic field. This complex interaction produces highly structured phenomena such as the Van Allen radiation belts and the aurorae, while the ionosphere itself produces electromagnetic radiation in the low frequency range. The relative strength of the Sun and Earth's magnetic fields also modulates the influx of galactic cosmic rays, which changes climate through cloud formation, and acts directly on the evolution of living organisms over longer periods of time. It has also been documented that subtle fluctuations in the Earth's magnetic field, in part induced by its interactions with the Sun, directly influence the behavior and vital activity of living organisms and is likely a factor in their evolution. But, it is life itself which produced the ionosphere, through its creation of the atmosphere. Several recent studies also point to the possibility of life's direct role in the creation of the geomagnetic field, possibly through the movement of ocean currents, and through the influence of water on plate tectonics, which could affect heat convection of the hypothesized dynamo beneath Earth's crust. Whether this is the actual mechanism or not, it is in fact the case that the peculiar character of Earth's magnetic field is associated with its uniqueness as a bearer of living matter in the solar system. Thus, in sum, it is safe to say that weather, in space and on Earth, is a product of living processes.

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<sup>1</sup> One might, in fact, consider this entire process to be the creation of a sort of biospheric infrastructure, where biological fossils continually provide the conditions for the development of more advanced creative processes.

where the description requires a systems approach -- a tensor description -- particularly when we wish to discuss the conscious manipulation of such a system. Taking water as an example: In first approximation, at the lowest resolution, we can describe the water cycle as a simple process, beginning with sunlight's effect on the ocean surface, causing evaporation. This evaporated water rises into the atmosphere, some of which migrates over land and falls as precipitation. This precipitated water then makes its way, over time, back into the ocean by way of streams and rivers.

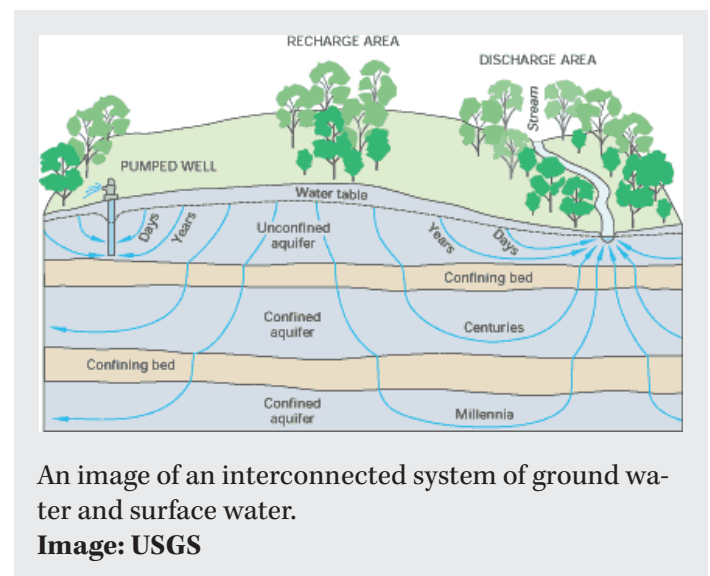
Upon closer examination, this process really consists of many interconnected sub-cycles, where



water plays its most important role, in facilitating the growth of plants. In this process there is no clear beginning, nor are there any simple linear or cyclical relationships. Plants consume both water and sunlight,

using them to produce oxygen, and to fix CO<sub>2</sub> into energy-dense organic molecules. The moisture which these plants release in transpiration then rises up to become cloud cover, feeding and enhancing the precipitation which had permitted their growth originally. If the vegetation becomes dense enough, this additional atmospheric moisture is enough to change weather patterns, alter the landscape, and reshape the course of rivers. At various stages of this process, large amounts of water enter the soil, to either be evaporated again into rainfall, or to be sucked deep down into the groundwater stores which form a continuous system of exchange with the above-ground lakes and rivers.

The result of this is that, globally, the same water falls an average of 2.7 times<sup>2</sup> on land before return-



ing to the sea, and the rate is obviously higher in areas of dense vegetation. Further, as the ground cover and soil moisture change, so does the reflectivity of certain parts of the Earth's surface, which in turn transforms how sunlight is absorbed and changes its effects on temperature and evaporation.

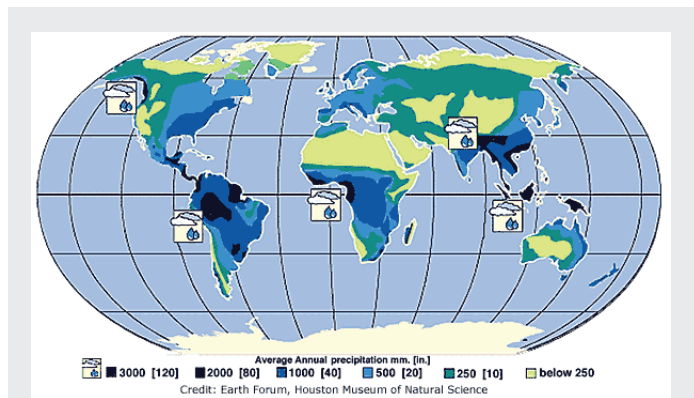
The number and types of interrelations are vast, but perfectly comprehensible to the human mind when aided by the proper conceptual tools. In fact, their thorough comprehension is the destiny of the human species, since the mastery -- and replication, in an improved form -- of their complex interrelations will be necessary in order for man to achieve his destiny of colonizing interplanetary and interstellar space. Already today, spacecraft designers must attempt to recreate portions of the oxygen, carbon, and water cycles

in miniature in order to maintain crews on their trips.<sup>3</sup> The same process, at much higher levels of complexity and efficiency, and combined with a deeper understanding of the role of cosmic radiation and other electromagnetic and gravitational phenomena in the maintenance and evolution of life on Earth, will be required for the establishment of permanent settlements on the Moon, Mars, and beyond.

Projects like NAWAPA will bring such goals -- necessary for the continued survival of the human species -- out of the realm of science fiction, and within reach of humankind.

The introduction of irrigation, and the consequent agricultural development, increases the amount of transpiration in a given area, creating more, sustained sub-cycles of rainfall, and generating rainfall which previously may not have existed.

What does this mean for NAWAPA? In this case, we are taking a portion of the hydrological cycle involving the western region of North America, which currently includes relatively few sub-cycles, and connecting it into a noospheric system of much greater



Rainfall map of the world. Note the discrepancy in amount of rainfall along the Pacific coast of the U.S.

**Image: USGS**

complexity. Water which evaporates off of the surface of the Pacific Ocean tends preferentially to travel up the coastline as cloud cover, and deposit itself in northern regions as solid ice and rivers. A large percentage of this freshwater then runs directly into the ocean off the coast of Alaska and North America, never taking part in any biospheric sub-cycles on land. Meanwhile,

3. As an example, take the limited example of water, oxygen, carbon, etc. recycling on the International Space Station.

4. 71,000 km<sup>3</sup>/yr and 434,000 km<sup>3</sup>/yr, respectively.

5. 505,000 km<sup>3</sup>/yr

the southern desert area of the west -- the Great American Desert -- remains dry, and barren.

To get an idea of this quantitatively:

The total amount of water evapotranspired from land and ocean amounts to 57,600 and 351,400 million acre feet per year (MAF -- the amount of water contained on one million acres of land if it is covered one foot deep in water) respectively,<sup>4</sup> for a yearly total of 409,000 MAF.<sup>5</sup> 27 percent of that, or 86,700 MAFY,<sup>6</sup> falls back onto the land as rain or snowfall, while the rest is rained directly back into the ocean. At any given moment, there is 12,600 MAF of water in the atmosphere, 3600 of which is over land. Approximately 2800 MAFY falls within just the Alaskan and Canadian catchment basin utilized by NAWAPA, an amount equivalent to more than half of the total precipitation of the entire continental United States! This produces 8-900 MAFY<sup>7</sup> of run-off into the Pacific and Arctic Ocean. This quantity is lost to the productive processes of the biosphere, never taking part in photosynthesis or any other biospheric process during its time on land. This cycle is a continuous cycle, constantly replenished, though, in parts, terribly inefficient.

Thus, it becomes clear that, contrary to popular misconceptions and outright lies, the water used by NAWAPA is not some stash which will be run down over time, nor is it water which otherwise would be used for other purposes. NAWAPA is the harnessing and improvement of this natural, global cycle and, because of this, will be capable of not only providing fresh water to the western U.S. and northern Mexico for perpetuity, experience has shown that it will also permanently transform the climate in these areas as a result, lowering the temperature and increasing rainfall. NAWAPA will transform this cycle, drawing a portion (160 MAFY -- 20%) of what would otherwise immediately become run-off water into a system of already existing rivers and newly-made canals. As it travels, the water will replenish groundwater stores and take part in greening large swaths of the Great American Desert. This will extend the time this water spends on land by orders of magnitude, as well as increasing the frequency of its circulation during that stay.<sup>8</sup>

6. 107,000 km<sup>3</sup>/yr

7. 990-1110 km<sup>3</sup>/yr

8 It is important to note that here, again, it becomes clear that the concept of a "water cycle" is inadequate. Water which participates in photosynthesis ceases to be water, and is instead broken up into free oxygen, released as a gas, and hydrogen, which is fixed into organic molecules, thus feeding into two entirely different "cycles." Thus, though the over-

Now, what will be the effect of the increased plant transpiration in the 21-50 million acres of new farmland and forests created as a result of the NAWAPA project? This will be up to double the current irrigable acreage west of the Mississippi. For the U.S., this amounts to a strip of newly irrigable land 1800 miles long and 35 miles wide -- nearly 4 times the size of California's Central Valley.

Again, the careful selection of regions of farmland, but also areas of new, highly organized and maintained forests, where once there was desert, will increase the overall soil moisture, as well as increasing the amount of overall evapotranspiration over land. This will lead to increased rainfall, and, if carefully structured, new and beneficial downwind rain and weather patterns. The water introduced by NAWAPA will be used not once, but multiple times, as it makes its way through innumerable smaller subcycles, falling multiple times as rainfall over land before finally

### *California's Central Valley*

In California, some of the country's most productive agricultural land (not to mention America's second largest metropolitan area) is spread over what amounts to a desert. This is made possible by a massive infrastructure network which diverts the flow of the Colorado River and northern Sierra Nevada mountain runoff through a series of dams, reservoirs, pumps and canals, for delivery of freshwater into the arid central and southern regions of the state. At the time it was initiated by Franklin Roosevelt in the 1930's, the Central Valley Project (CVP) was biospheric engineering on a grand scale, which was expanded beginning in the late 1950's under California Governor Pat Brown's State Water Project (SWP) initiative. A recent study showed that irrigation in the arid Central Valley has led to a decline in average daytime temperatures between 2°-3° C. Today, the CVP and the SWP together provide an average of 10 million acre-feet/yr (12 km<sup>3</sup>/yr), representing more than 25% of the state's total freshwater consumption. California's yearly share of NAWAPA water would more than double this amount.

making its way back to the sea, to someday eventually make its way back to Alaska to begin the entire cycle over once again. Only now, among its activities will be included a plethora of industrial and other uses. This same water might someday be the freshwater used to hydrate the first manned crew traveling to Mars!

In this way, NAWAPA can be seen as a transformation of a complex system of interweaving cycles,

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all quantity of water on the Earth may stay the same, it is not the case that this is always the "same" water.

### *Chlorophyll*

As an aside, it ought to be clear from what has been said so far that, due to the centrality of photosynthesis in this process, land which might otherwise be wasted on inefficient solar panels ought instead to be used to grow green plants -- the only efficient utilizers of solar radiation. These massive areas of new greenery, carefully selected as to quantity, quality, and location, will fuel the process of transformation, and beautify the hundreds of new cities which will be built to maintain this process.

increasing the complexity and efficiency of the overall process, while not subtracting anything.

Self-conscious use of the new hydrological subcycles will permit transformations of the several other cycles mentioned above. The increase of the forested area of North America will produce a larger, more efficient CO<sub>2</sub> sink, increasing the rate of the carbon cycle on land. We may even discover that the available CO<sub>2</sub> is too little for our purposes!

To fuel that carbon cycling, we will need to -- among other things -- increase the amount of available nitrogen in the soils, allowing for the growth of these photosynthesizing plants. The available water will be used to replenish groundwater stores such as the Ogallala aquifer, reduce the mineral contamination of water retrieved from the Colorado river, and clean the soil of farmland in the Midwest, as well as flushing and replenishing the Great Lakes. This same process will be the model for the similar development projects to be deployed in Mexico, Africa, Central Asia, Southwest Asia, Siberia, Australia, and similar regions worldwide, thus further extending man's conscious management of the biosphere as a whole. Afterwards, this process can and must be extended as well to include more directly the development of Earth's oceans.

It is significant to note that, despite the seemingly colossal scale of all of this, we are discussing relatively tiny portions of incredibly large numbers.

Only about a billionth of the radiant energy released by our Sun falls on the Earth at any given moment. Not more than 50 percent of this tiny bit of radiation fuels the processes of evaporation, transpiration, and photosynthesis which latter drives the biogenic migration of atoms, producing -- among all of the other things we have discussed -- all of the rainfall and all of the flow in the rivers we are here discussing. In order to accomplish NAWAPA's goals, only about 20% of the runoff from the targeted Alaskan and Canadian rivers is required to be redirected. This runoff represents per-

haps one percent of the total runoff of the Earth's crust, which itself is a small percentage of the total freshwater, 70% of which is locked up in snow or ice.

At any given moment, only about 1% of the total freshwater of the planet is "in play" in the near-surface biosphere -- only 1% of freshwater is directly accessible to living processes at or near the surface of the planet. But what occurs in that 1% drives the entire cycle, much in the same way as living matter -- a tiny percentage of all of the matter in the biosphere -- drives the entire biogenic migration of atoms, reshaping Earth's crust and oceans, creating Earth's atmosphere, and governing the electromagnetic interaction with the universe as a whole. Man, in terms of his mass, represents a tiny portion of even this tiny amount of living matter. Yet man, by the power of his mind, is the only force in the universe deserving of the title "co-creator" of that universe -- capable of understanding and improving the processes by which that universe was brought into being.

In this way it should become clear that NAWAPA is not merely a piece of interesting policy. It is the necessary next step in man's emergence from his civilizational adolescence. In order to accomplish this next step, a major cultural-political shift must occur, which will express the sharp rejection of the cultural and political turns of the last decades. NAWAPA alone will be a multi-generational project, requiring at least a quarter of a century for its completion. The expanded mission of developing the solar system will require several generations more. This is the antidote to the nofuture ennui of today's generation, forging the cross-generation connection which separates our species -- at its best moments -- from the beasts.

Like all great feats of human creativity, this is not a project designed for immediate consumption. This is a project designed to extend man's sense of self far beyond the confines of his sense perceptions and feelings of personal well-being, and connect him instead to generations which will continue his legacy long after his generation has left this Earth. The cultural transformation required to accomplish a project of this scale, must include a repudiation of the past decades' policies of free trade, and a reinstatement of the kinds of controls over banking and financial policy which the Glass-Steagall standard represents. We must see a clear rejection of the anti-science, anti-progress and anti-human policy represented by the recent decades' rise of green fascism.

Most importantly, we must demand the rejection

of this current president, Obama, whose personal sense of identity, like his policies, lies in those very same failed cultural characteristics which have brought us to this point of collapse. Then, and only then, may we free ourselves for the real work to be done.

## *The Moon-Mars Project*

As has been discussed, understanding the biosphere includes understanding the intimately connected set of relationships among terrestrial and cosmic phenomena, such as gravitation, the geo-magnetic field, solar radiation, as well as cosmic radiation. On Mars, the magnitude and state of these various elements is very much different. For example, the gravitational effect is 1/3 that of the earth and the magnetic field is faint and dispersed, which, along with other factors, figures in the absence of a substantial atmosphere on Mars, all of which are part of a differing dynamic relationship with the Sun itself. Thus, many factors which we heretofore had taken for granted on Earth, become existential challenges when orienting towards sustaining life on Mars, not to mention the first step in that process of colonization: that of the industrialization of Earth's Moon. This must be done for the purpose, of, among other things, utilizing the low gravity environment for building the ships to take us to Mars, as well as for the mining of the Helium-3, abundant in the lunar soil, to be used as the fuel for the yet-to-be developed fusionpowered rockets, the only fuel capable of achieving one- Earth-gravity equivalent acceleration -- an acceleration requirement necessary to deliver humans to Mars in a timely (4-7 days) and safe manner. Consequently, in understanding how we come to gain mastery over the organization of Earth's biosphere, we gain insight into exactly what parameters and requirements are necessary to create superior life-supporting systems beyond it.

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