

An Ecological Organic Paradigm:

A Framework of Analysis for Moral and Political Philosophy

Abstract: *A modern version of the classical Greek organic paradigm can be based on behavioral ecology, ecology being the study of the interrelationships between an organism and its environment. The ecological organic paradigm describes four general human mental functional capacities—appetite, social conscience, reason and an interpretive capacity—and associates them, in the context of evolutionary and psychological development, to four general categories of experience—primal individual needs, society, the natural world in which we live and metaphysics—with which we have to cope, adapt, and interrelate. The ecological organic paradigm is compatible with both natural and cultural evolution. The framework can accommodate both descriptive and normative concepts of human nature and it can accommodate both the individual and social dimensions of human knowledge and activity.*

The framework gives some coherence to the ethical categories. The questions, What is obligatory?, What is good?, What is fitting?, and What is humane?, are included within the framework as valid moral questions. Deontological, normative, communitarian and individual human concerns are all recognized.

One way to understand the ecological organic paradigm (EOP) is to contrast it with the general state of philosophy in the last one hundred years, which might be compared to the story of the blind men describing an elephant; each perspective describes a particular part but none gives a coherent view of the elephant. The EOP suggests that we reconsider, in the context of behavioral ecology, a modern version of the organic paradigm as at least one useful framework for describing the “elephant.”

The EOP is a framework of analysis that has the ability to bring a greater degree of coherence to discussions in moral and

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political philosophy and to provide a basis for accommodation in a pluralistic society and world community.

But in truth justice was, as it seems, something of this sort; however, not with respect to a man's minding his external business, but with respect to what is within... he arranges himself, becomes his own friend, and harmonizes the three parts, exactly like three notes in a harmonic scale, lowest, highest and middle. And if there are some other parts in between, he binds them together and becomes entirely one from many, moderate and harmonized. Then and only then, he acts... In all these actions he believes and names a just and fine action one that preserves and helps to produce this condition, and wisdom the knowledge that supervises the action...

Plato, *The Republic*, Book IV, 443c

I. Introduction

An organic framework of analysis is not a new or postmodern idea. It is a premodern idea. There have been several versions of an organic paradigm, but the concept generally refers to some application of a classical Greek understanding of human nature as a composite whole. The organic paradigm has often referred to a model of human nature as being a composite of physical, social, mental and spiritual dimensions. This understanding of human nature has sometimes been described as a metaphor because it has been perceived to be like, or to have a correlation with, various aspects of the world in which we live.

The organic model of human nature was eventually replaced in philosophy for at least four reasons. The primary reason was that the organic paradigm in its hierarchical Platonic form, as the tripartite soul, had been used to support similar hierarchical structures in the Church and the state. It had been used, for example, to support the rule of the king and the Pope. Second, metaphors suggesting organicism in society have also been avoided in our times in part because Hegel extended organicism to a metaphysical concept of *Volkgeist* that was subsequently used in part to support a totalitarian nationalism in Germany. Third, Darwin's description of evolutionary development was misappropriated by the hierarchical ideology of Social Darwin-

ism. Fourth, some aspects of modernism and postmodernism have been reluctant to recognize any natural or metaphysical constraints on either individual (or social) will and power.

Why, then, should we reconsider a modern version of the organic paradigm? The primary insight on this is that in the last one hundred years the biological sciences and medicine have tended to use categories similar to those of the organic paradigm, but have not necessarily interpreted the several dimensions of human nature to be hierarchical or ideological. Current interpretation would emphasize more a system of checks and balances for health and well-being. Second, a new Darwinism, which is less hierarchical and recognizes both natural and cultural evolution, or co-evolution, gives us sufficient conceptual space to reconsider the role of nature and an ecological version of the organic paradigm. Third, a broad enough definition of our interpretive capacity and metaphysics, on the other hand, can be used to again bring integrative and metaphysical considerations back to an appropriate place in academic discussions of moral and political philosophy. Fourth, the ecological organic paradigm is a framework of analysis that at least has the capacity for affirmation, accommodation, moderation, adaptation and synthesis. It has the capacity to accommodate pluralism in our own society and in the global community.

A modern version of the organic paradigm will prove to be a very useful tool or framework of analysis for understanding the dynamics of moral and political philosophy. An ecological organic paradigm can also bring some coherence to moral and political philosophy and it should be reconsidered.

II. An Ecological Organic Paradigm (EOP)

A modern version of the organic paradigm can be based on behavioral ecology, ecology being the study of the inter-relationships between an organism and its environment.¹ To do this from the standpoint of behavior and cognition, the organic paradigm needs to coincide with our general levels of awareness

or consciousness and be expressed in terms of our mental functional capacities. The modern ecological organic paradigm (EOP) being proposed thus will have the perspective of an ecology of cognition or an ecology of the mind or consciousness. It describes four general human mental functional capacities, in the context of evolutionary and psychological development, and loosely associates them to four general categories of experience with which we have to cope, adapt and interrelate.

The four functional cognitive capacities are described as appetite, social conscience, reason and an interpretive capacity. The dimensions of experience to which they each primarily, but not exclusively, interrelate are primal individual needs, society, the natural world in which we live and metaphysics. "Interpretation" and "metaphysics" are being used here as broad categories that represent integration, orientation, and narrative, concerning meaning and purpose, and they represent our need for a coherent self and world in which we live. They have to do not so much with the natural world in which we live and of which we are a part, but with our individual and collective place in that world. This framework of analysis of four functional cognitive capacities and their interrelationship to four general dimensions of experience will be referred to as the ecological organic paradigm.

The general framework of analysis that is being proposed is a modification of the work of Leslie Stevenson in *Seven Theories of Human Nature* (1987). In this work, Stevenson states that the best way to understand any philosophy or philosopher is to understand the assumptions being made concerning the nature of human beings, the nature of society, and the nature of the universe. Since the Copernican Revolution, however, assumptions about the nature of the universe have been increasingly divided into assumptions concerning the natural world in which we live and metaphysical assumptions about meaning and purpose that integrate our knowledge and create a narrative in space and time. One set of assumptions concerns the question *how*. The other set of assumptions concerns the question *why*. The ecological organic framework for under-

standing the dynamics of moral and political philosophy being proposed thus has four very general categories rather than the three described by Stevenson. These consider the assumptions concerning the individual, society, nature, and metaphysics. Our capacities of cognition that primarily relate to each of these categories are sequentially described as appetite, social conscience, logical reasoning, and an interpretive capacity for integration and narrative.

This modern ecological organic paradigm is derived in part from classical philosophy. It is also compatible, however, with some recent concepts that include both natural and cultural evolution (co-evolution) and some recent concepts of psychological cognitive development. This perspective not only includes both nature and nurture, but also sees an interrelationship between them. There is freedom within form. Human nature is neither seen to be infinitely malleable by changing its social context, nor is it seen as only determined by evolution and genetics. James Q. Wilson, in *The Moral Sense*, wrote that, "two errors arise in attempting to understand the human condition. One is to assume that culture is everything, the other is to assume that it is nothing" (1993, p. 6). At the human level, evolution in the broadest sense entails cultural history, but our cultural history in the broadest sense also entails evolution. Human history, in this perspective, did not begin 5000 years ago with the written word.

This framework can accommodate both descriptive and normative concepts of human nature, and it can accommodate both the individual and social dimensions of human knowledge and activity. In this framework moral and political philosophy are perceived to be dynamic, not only because human nature is multidimensional, but also because the experiences to which we relate change and are changeable. The different dimensions of our cognition, whether they be "gut reactions" or rational reflections, enable us to deal with both internal and external environmental complexity (Godfrey-Smith, 1996). Because of these multiple factors one does not anticipate a convergence through reductionism, such as one sometimes

sees in the basic sciences (Flanagan, 1997).² Such reductionism has sometimes been referred to as physics envy. On the other hand, the logical implication of such a framework is not necessarily subjectivity, relativism, arbitrariness, or material utility, but more toward what Aristotle described as *phronesis* or practical wisdom. It should thus not be unexpected that the paradigm also is compatible with the categories of what is sometimes called a “folk psychology,” which is based on introspection and accumulated experience. This framework of an ecological organic paradigm is not entirely new for it is based in part, for example, on Aristotle’s sense of the composite whole and it addresses the problem of the one and the many. It is a reconsideration of an old and common idea.

The Classical Origins of the Organic Paradigm

The Greek philosophers not only understood man to be a political animal, that is meant to live in a *polis* or community, but also understood the community to reflect the parts of human nature as a body politic (Hale, 1973). This type of inquiry by analogy is the method of reasoning used in Plato’s *Republic*. The organic metaphor of the “body politic” is a source in Western civilization of such important political concepts as mixed government, the division of power by function and the separation of church and state. For the Greek philosophers *eudaimonia* (translated as meaning and purpose or happiness) for the individual was analogous to what lead to the highest good or *summum bonum* for the state. Political philosophy was an extension of moral philosophy and *eudaimonia* was not something apart from goodness and virtue. Plato compared the concerns and skills of an ideal ruler to the concerns and skills of a physician treating a patient.

As Aristotle noted, there is an intrinsic and teleological element in the unity, order, and wholeness of living organisms which confers appropriate function or “purpose” on the multiplicity of their parts. The acorn, to use Aristotle’s example, given the proper conditions, has the potential or inherent design to become an oak. In his aesthetic theory, Immanuel

Kant drew an analogy between the organic units of a work of art and a living body. He also, however, made distinctions. In a living organism the “parts produce one another: it is self-organizing”; an organism that goes out of order “repairs itself”; and a natural organism can reproduce itself (Orsini, 1973). This is a recognition that living organisms have an intrinsic order to develop, sustain and reproduce life. This is sometimes described as an immanent teleology as opposed to a cosmic teleology (Arnhart, 1988; Lennox, 1993).

Thomas Nagel in “Aristotle and *Eudaimonia*” (1972, p. 252) wrote that:

“The Nichomachean Ethics exhibits indecision between two accounts of *eudaimonia*—a comprehensive and an intellectualist account. According to the intellectualist account, stated in Book X Chap. 7, *eudaimonia* is realized in the activity of the most divine part of man, functioning in accordance with its proper excellence. This is the activity of theoretical contemplation. According to the comprehensive account (described as secondary at 1178a 9) *eudaimonia* essentially involves not just the activity of the theoretical intellect, but the full range of human life and action, in accordance with the broader excellences of moral virtue and practical wisdom. This view connects *eudaimonia* with the conception of human nature as composite, i.e. as involving the interaction of reason, emotion, perception, and action in an ensouled body.”

From a different perspective, Aristotle understood a human being or man to be an animal, a “political animal,” a rational animal, and a contemplative animal that pursues *eudaimonia*.

It is the recognition of the multiple dimensions of human nature that will be the most productive part of an ecological organic framework. The great synthesizers of thought in Western civilization, such as Plato, Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas and Kant, utilized the multiple aspects of human nature in their systematic constructs. A similar organic functional approach, in an ecological context, can be useful for an analytical framework of analysis.

The ecological organic paradigm being described attempts to give a useful description of the dynamic aspects of human nature from the standpoint of our mental functional capacities and their interrelationship with internal and external environmental complexity. It is meant to be a general framework of analysis without necessarily subscribing to a particular ideology. As a metaphor, there is no claim of exclusivity. There are more reductive metaphors, such as Cartesian dualism, and there are more expansive metaphors, such as “the fabric of life.” A metaphor that has its origins in classical philosophy and has similar components to those of an ecological organic framework is the ship metaphor as described by C. S. Lewis (1943, p. 70–71). A successful expedition requires that each ship be in order and seaworthy, that the ships be able to sail together as a fleet without running into one another or getting separated and lost, that there is the knowledge and skill to successfully navigate to the destination, and that there is a purpose fulfilled by going to the destination or making the journey. Without claiming exclusivity, the ecological organic paradigm is meant to be a generalized framework of analysis that can be used to bring some coherence to understanding a similar dynamics in moral and political philosophy.

The Organic Paradigm in Folk Psychology

Paul Churchland, one of the leading philosophers of neurobiology, recently wrote in *The Engine of Reason, The Seat of the Soul* (1995) of the persistence of our conceptual commitments to the general categories of “folk psychology,” which are similar to those of the ecological organic paradigm. Churchland thinks that the developing understanding of neurological mechanisms and artificial intelligence will change our common ideas about cognition and consciousness. He thus makes what he describes as an uncertain challenge to “our shared portrait of ourselves as self-conscious creatures with beliefs, desires, emotions, and the power of reason.” He states that

“this conceptual frame is the unquestioned possession of every normal human who wasn’t raised from birth by wolves.

It is the template of our normal socialization as children; it is the primary vehicle of our social and psychological commerce as adults; and it forms the background matrix for our current moral and legal discussions. It is often called “folk psychology” by philosophers, not as a term of derision, but to acknowledge it as a basic descriptive and explanatory conceptual framework with which all of us currently comprehend the behavior and mental life of our fellow humans and ourselves” (pp. 18–19).³

There does not need to be a dichotomy, however, between the physiological mechanisms described by Churchland and the functional categories described in folk psychology and an ecological organic paradigm.

Churchland describes various types of learning as the development of prototypes through experience. These prototypes develop a physiological and anatomical basis. Concerning our visual capacity, for example, there are mechanisms in our visual neural network that develop and allow us to more readily perceive a straight line. By a mechanism of vector processing and completion we can learn to visually perceive a straight line by pattern recognition, inference, and even illusion. It is interesting to note that the concept of a straight line, which is one of the axioms of Euclidean geometry accepted by definition rather than proof, has a basis in our visual mechanism once it is developed from natural experience. This natural capacity for visual development that is molded by experience, like our capacity to learn language, can be subverted by sensory deprivation. Euclidian geometry considers the few axioms from which it is derived to be self-evident. The ability to recognize a straight line is at least adaptive for our survival. It is important for such things as maintaining a vertical posture and recognizing predators and prey. This does not, however, preclude non-Euclidian geometries. Explanations in evolutionary epistemology are often perceived to be adaptive to the environment by natural selection.

Jefferson believed that we have a natural capacity for a “moral sense” arguing that, since we were made to live in soci-

ety, “He who made us would have been a pitiful bungler if he had made us without an inherent capacity to do so” (Peterson 1977, p. 424). Jefferson saw our capacity for a moral sense, however, as a potential that needed to be developed by use as does the strength of a muscle. He noted that there may also be defects as with other attributes. Jefferson considered the capacity for a moral sense to be common to all humanity, including American Indians and blacks (Jefferson, 1785/1972, p. 142, p. 227). He also wrote that, if you state a moral question to a ploughman and a professor, the former will decide it as well, and often better than the latter, because he has not been lead astray by artificial rules (Peterson 1977, p. 424).

A current example of folk psychology can be found in the enormously successful self-help book by Steven R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (1989, p. 288). In a chapter entitled “Sharpening the Saw”, he addresses the need to improve our physical, social, mental, and spiritual capacities. Covey also describes instances in which we may have a “mini-paradigm” shift and re-see the moral salience of a situation. Peggy DesAutels, in an essay entitled “Gestalt Shifts in Moral Perception”, uses an example from Covey’s book to describe how we can shift within our conceptual categories and within our learned, diverse, moral prototypes (as described by Churchland) to adjust to a changing context (1997, pp. 129–143). Covey’s book can also be useful in describing the benefits of our capacity for intentionality and purpose. The first two habits of highly effective people are to begin with the end in mind and to be proactive.

If one considers any group of friends, some will usually be recognizable as functioning primarily in a physical, social, rational, or interpretive mode of being, though we all incorporate each of these elements in our personality.

The Organic Paradigm in Evolutionary and Psychological Development

A theory of the progressive evolutionary development of the brain, which can be extended to support the cognitive cat-

egories of the ecological organic paradigm, is Paul MacLean’s concept of the *triune brain* (Sagan 1977, pp. 57–83; Konner 1983, pp. 147–152; Adams and Victor 1993, pp. 411–12). The triune brain model describes the progressive evolutionary development of three layers of the forebrain which MacLean believes can still be distinguished neuroanatomically and functionally in our own brain structure. He describes initially a “reptilian complex” which surrounds the midbrain and which probably evolved several million years ago. It relates to such primal instincts as sex, survival, and aggression. This is surrounded by a limbic system that is fully developed in mammals, but not in reptiles. He relates the limbic system primarily to emotions and a social capacity other than primal hierarchy. Surrounding the rest of the brain is the neocortex, which in humans makes up by far the largest portion of the brain and is associated with reason. One could add to this, at least functionally, the language centers in the left hemisphere of the brain, which enhance our capacities for the abstract thinking, memory, and imagination needed for integration and narrative. Ludwig Wittgenstein, for example, when speculating on the extent to which ideas may be independent of the language used to express them, wrote, “The limits of my language mean the limit of my world” (1922, 5.6). Sir John Eccles, in *Evolution of the Brain: Creation of the Mind* (1989), noted that the human brain shows special enlargement in the frontal lobe associated with planning, projecting the future, and perhaps abstract thought and in the language areas of the left hemisphere. He refers to these areas as the neo-neocortex.

The functions of the human brain are dynamic and integrated. They have what has been described as “cognitive fluidity” (Mithen, 1996, Chapter 11). From the perspectives of both evolution and developmental psychology, however, the four categories are broadly descriptive of our mental development.

In the field of child developmental psychology, Jean Piaget described the progressive development of our mental capacities. The work of Lawrence Kohlberg in *The Philosophy of*

Moral Development: Moral Stages in the Idea of Justice (1981) is an extended application of the work of Piaget. Kohlberg's central premise is that our moral development is not unlike the development of our other mental behavior. He describes a mental and moral development in the child that begins with concrete self-oriented reasoning and progresses to social reasoning, then logical reasoning, and finally abstract reasoning (see also, however, Flanagan 1991, pp. 119–173; Gilligan 1982; and Lapsley 1992). An argument can be made that our individual mental and moral development recapitulates the evolutionary development of our mental capacities. It is interesting that, in a somewhat similar manner, F. M. Cornford in *Before and After Socrates* (1932) described classical Greek civilization as progressing from the *concrete* thought of Homer, to the *social* thought of Athens in the time of Pericles, to the *logical scientific reasoning* of the pre-Socratics, Hippocrates, and Thucydides, and culminating in the more *abstract* thought of the classical philosophers (see also Finley, 1966).

Some Qualification of the Cognitive Capacities

The basic assumption of the ecological organic paradigm is that the four described cognitive capacities or mental functions were advantageous and adaptive coping mechanisms in natural and cultural evolution.⁴ The four cognitive categories are very general and inclusive and are intentionally described as capacities or potentials. Because of their derivation in evolutionary development as capacities and their similar progressive appearance in individual psychological development related to experience, these cognitive categories are expected to have some universal applicability as a framework of analysis. The interpretive capacity is integrative and it is thus not radically separated from practical perception and action, feelings, or empirical thought. All of the categories are perceived to be interactive and dynamic. The ecological interrelationships described are only primary and not exclusive.

Our many social interrelationships extending from our family to our common humanity, for example, are related to a

diverse array of social capacities which have broadly and collectively *for the purpose of analysis* been described as our social conscience. Our social interactions, however, are also obviously affected in a dynamic way by our other attributes of appetite, reason, and interpretation. Charles Darwin wrote that “ultimately our moral sense or conscience becomes a highly complex sentiment—originating in the social instincts, largely guided by the approbation of our fellow-man, ruled by reason, self-interest, and in later times by deep religious feelings, and confirmed by instruction and habit” (1936, p. 500).

The cognitive function described as “interpretation”, which is being correlated with metaphysics, is to be understood as a broad category.⁵ It refers to our ability to integrate the various dimensions of our life into a whole and our ability to orient ourselves in time and space through narrative. As a category of analysis, it is meant to accommodate both religious concepts of the soul and secular concepts of the self. The term “metaphysics” is also being used in a broad way as a general category. It is not being specified as either simply an order that we project upon the world or simply a natural order of the world that we perceive, intuit, or has been revealed to us. This also is probably not an either/or issue (Penrose 1994, p. 414; Lachterman 1989; Barrett 1986, part II). As a general framework of analysis the categories are meant to be inclusive.

Broadly defined, the cognitive capacity for metaphysical interpretation is not only a part of human nature, but it may be the most distinguishing part of human nature (Mayr 1988, p. 75).^{6,7} Like our other cognitive capacities of appetite, social conscience and logical reasoning, our cognitive capacity for interpretation can be seen as an adaptive mechanism of selective advantage. In his book *An Anthropologist from Mars; Seven Paradoxical Tales*, Oliver Sacks suggests, “a new view of the brain, a sense of it not as programmed and static, but rather as dynamic and active . . . ceaselessly adapting to all the needs of the organism—its need above all, to construct a coherent self and world” (1995, p. xvii). The dynamics of this could be described better, however, by using

the phrase “to construct and understand” a coherent self and world.

The cognitive capacity of appetite is similar to the “appetite” described by Plato, the “reptilian complex” described by MacLean, and the id described by Freud. It represents the self-interested primal needs of the individual for such things as food, survival, and reproduction. Freud represented the id, it may be noted, as having little regard for problems of self-contradiction or coherence.

It is also understood that most societies, from an anthropological perspective, have not markedly distinguished scientific from metaphysical concepts of the universe. Freud, in his psychological framework of analysis, had only three categories because he combined logical, empirical reasoning (that reasoning related to the reality principle) and interpretive, integrative reasoning together within the category of ego. The ecological organic framework, nevertheless, remains very useful for it can also clarify such points.

III. A Framework of Analysis for Understanding the Dynamics of Moral and Political Philosophy

An underlying premise of the modern ecological organic paradigm is that with the combination of natural and cultural evolution there is an interaction between an organism and its environment. Human beings are not perceived to be just a passive mirror of nature though we are a part of nature. One could argue from several perspectives for the fitness of the planet Earth toward the development of life, and also for the tremendous adaptive advantages of any kind of intelligence or cooperation for natural selection (Henderson 1970; Axelrod 1984). One could also argue that the external natural world in which we live is indifferent to our particular fate. One could also hold both positions. Another of the premises of the organic paradigm, however, is that, at least by natural selection through evolution, we are not indifferent to our fate. Being proactive and goal oriented has been an evolutionary advan-

tage and it has been “highly effective.” As living organisms that evolved through a process of natural selection, we have basic instincts for survival, food, and reproduction. The long dependency of our childhood requires social abilities and we have the capacity for reason. We have intentionality. We have a capacity to transcend our environment and, to a limited but significant degree, choose alternative futures. *If* one postulates the goals of human prosperity and posterity, *then* moral and political values become conditional factors for achieving these ends. Right reason is not the same as objective scientific reason. Natural Law is not the same as the law of nature (Corwin 1955). Natural Law is not just descriptive, but normative and prescriptive.

A first premise that can help define a moral system is that moral behavior is distinguished by an *affirmation* of life, even though this does not always mean preserving life at all costs. This premise refers, in general, to an affirmation of life that both attempts to overcome adversity and aspires to flourish. This quality of moral concerns has been described as “depth” and it distinguishes morality from a “value neutral” ethics (Kekes 1989). “Depth” relates to a distinction of values that affirms life and contributes to our well-being.

A second premise that can help define a moral system is the issue of inclusion or what has been described as “breadth” (Kekes 1989). From the models that help define an ecological organic paradigm, it can be concluded that for a moral system to be what has been described as sufficiently “broad,” it needs to be inclusive of each of the multiple dimensions of human nature and perspectives of the world in which we live.

Much of our discourse could be clarified by recognizing both “breadth” and “depth” in moral philosophy. There are, for example, two great moral traditions in Western civilization.⁸ The first is from classical civilization and is based primarily on a distinction of values regarding such things as truth, goodness, and beauty and such qualities as virtue. The second concerns the equal dignity and worth of individuals as persons and is derived primarily from Judeo-Christian sources

such as the Golden Rule and imago Dei and later Kant's categorical imperative. The concept of moral "depth", refers to an affirmation of life and *a distinction of values that relates primarily to attributes and behavior*. The concept of moral "breadth" extends this affirmation to the individual, the social community, our common humanity, concerns about the natural world in which we live, and metaphysical concepts of meaning and purpose. For a moral system to have sufficient "breadth," for example, there needs to be a *respect for persons and an affirmation of our common humanity*. The two ethical systems are often confused in dialogue when there is no recognition of the difference between an *equality of persons* and a *distinction of values that relates to attributes and behavior*.

In summary, by these definitions of a dimensional moral system of "breadth" and "depth" there are valid moral concerns if we affirm our individual selves, a premise of community, our common humanity, and a concept of causation and intergenerational continuity. In addition, there needs to be an acknowledgment of some of the natural possibilities and constraints within which we live. Without making such distinctions and definitions moral discourse, in general, becomes very confused and ambiguous. Morality would thus be defined as having at least some parameters within the larger field of ethical discourse and inquiry.⁹

The organic paradigm is compatible with an affirmation of life as the basis of a distinction of values or "depth." It is also able to accommodate "breadth", which extends the affirmation of our individual dignity and worth to our common humanity. It provides some coherence, for example, for the ethical and meta-ethical categories. It provides a basis for accommodation or what John Rawls has referred to as an overlapping consensus (1993; see also Lippman 1955, chap. 11 and Minogue 1983). The questions *What is obligatory?*, *What is good?*, *What is fitting?*, and *What is humane?* are all included within the organic framework as valid moral questions. Deontological, normative, communitarian, and individual human concerns are all recognized. Recognizing the dynamic

aspects of human nature and the world in which we live will not satisfy those in a quest for certainty, but it will be very valuable as a tool and framework of analysis.

A multidimensional understanding of human nature and the complex environment in which we live, results in the recognition of multiple ends and goals. It is important, therefore, that the procedure for choosing between such competing and sometimes conflicting goals attempts to do justice to the ends. The means need to do justice to the ends. In our individual lives this often involves the issue of integrity. "Integrity" has the same origin as the word "integer" and it refers to wholeness.

Shirley Letwin described integration as part of the cultural characteristics of the gentleman in *The Gentleman in Trollope; Individuality and Moral Conduct* (1982). The term "gentleman" was for her not gender specific. The gentleman is marked off by a conception of his own integrity and a concern for the coherence of his own life, thoughts and actions. He moves through life "constantly repairing the tears and gaps in the fabric of life caused by passion and misfortune" (Minogue, 1983). This can be contrasted with a more dialectical Freudian view of the self-divided man perceived as being in conflict with himself. As a framework of analysis, the EOP can recognize both the possibilities and the limitations of these views of human nature.

In a broader context, the ecological organic framework of analysis suggests that one could analyze and compare political philosophers or philosophies by placing them on a graph. One axis would represent a spectrum that would extend from the individual to society. The other axis would extend from science or materialism to metaphysics or idealism. One could also add a third vertical axis that would represent the degrees of coercive power in the system.

There has been some reluctance in legal theory to consider an organic framework of analysis as this doesn't always lead to a clearly preferable answer, let alone one right answer, in the very difficult cases. As a framework of analysis, the EOP would correctly be perceived to be an umbrella term that can incorporate diverse tendencies in moral and political philoso-

phy. At the bottom of our legal system we rely on the procedure of a vote by a jury to determine the facts in a case. At the top of our judicial system we rely on the procedural vote of nine Supreme Court Justices to interpret the laws, which are sometimes conflicting. Yet, in explaining how the judges themselves decide these very difficult cases, Benjamin Cardozo in *The Nature of the Judicial Process* (1921) resorted to something very close to folk psychology or common sense philosophy. He wrote, "I can only answer that he must get his knowledge . . . from experience and study and reflection; in brief from life itself" (113; see also, Breyer 1998).

Political philosophy and government by definition involve community, and government also concerns the use of coercive power. Government, in one view, can be considered a monopoly of coercive power (Weber 1921/1964, p. 154). It arises in part, as Hobbes pointed out, from the need to avoid anarchy. Rousseau noted, however, that even the strongest are not strong enough to rule without converting obedience into a sense of duty. It is the *self-imposed moral foundations* of government that change mere obedience to the coercive powers of government into a sense of consensual responsibility for a moral duty, a just order, the common good, and human rights.

The modern organic framework that has been described can be used for the purposes of general political analysis. The ecological organic paradigm can also be used to analyze considerations of "breadth" and "depth" in moral philosophy. The framework of analysis considers the assumptions concerning the individual, society, nature, and metaphysics. It incorporates what we may understand and do, based on our cognitive capacities of appetite, social conscience, reason and interpretation.

IV. Why the Organic Paradigm was Abandoned in Philosophy and Why it should be Reconsidered

The organic framework in its hierarchical Platonic form, along with such other metaphors as The Great Chain of Being,

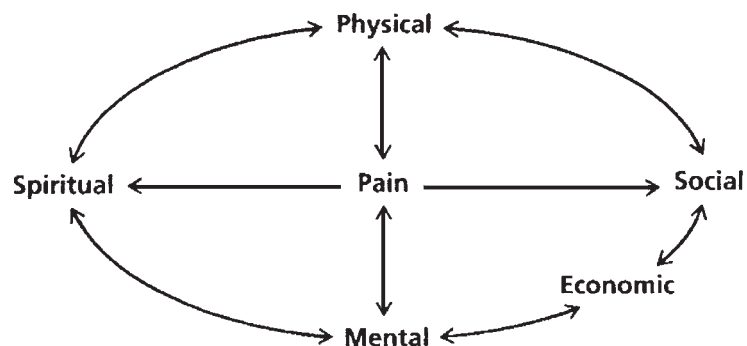
was used primarily to support the prevailing social structures and institutions of the times. For 1500 years such metaphors helped to provide support for the hierarchy in the Church and the state. King James I of England understood the importance and spectrum of such paradigms of thought when he was reported to have said "No bishop, no king" (Roberts and Roberts 1980, p. 328).

The Scientific Revolution challenged the assumptions of the past and the Renaissance and the Reformation placed increased emphasis on the dignity and worth of each individual. The organic paradigm was thus eventually replaced in moral and political philosophy primarily by the concept of the social contract, which begins with the premise that all persons are born free and equal in a state of nature. The Stoic concept of equality, that we all have sufficient reason to understand a natural moral order, was always burdened in its challenge to hierarchy because the populace was illiterate and because in the Platonic framework of human nature reason was also used to justify hierarchy. The hierarchical social structures were more successfully challenged by Judeo-Christian concepts of equality based on ethical monotheism and love of one another with the best examples occurring when the particular religious beliefs were in a minority position. Moral and political concepts of equality, however, have been most widely accepted when they have been based on a concept of human rights that can be understood at the level of self-interest.

Moral theory also became more secular in what came to be widely perceived as a mathematical and mechanical universe. This view of an orderly world was also often accommodated and appropriated by a more natural theology. Such changes, it was thought, might also make possible a utilitarian determination of human well-being, not by seeking such uncertain principles as truth, goodness, beauty, and virtue, but by an egalitarian calculation of the consequence of actions in the terms of pleasure and pain.

Currently there are several reasons, however, why an organic paradigm should be reconsidered.

1. Developments in the biological sciences and medicine in the past one hundred years would tend to place a greater emphasis on a more balanced concept of human nature. Current scientific thought now considers feedback mechanisms and a system of checks and balances to be almost an essential part of the definition of a living organism. One example of a more balanced concept would be what Claude Bernard called the “internal milieu.” This is the metabolic homeostasis of the internal environment or extracellular fluid in which our cells all live and which they monitor and help to maintain. Another example from medicine would be a current model used to evaluate pain (American Medical Association 1993, p. 307).



The basis of even a utilitarian calculation of the greatest good, based on pleasure and pain, can thus be seen to depend on the categories of the older organic paradigm and folk psychology. These categories are compatible with those of a modern ecological organic paradigm and the framework need not necessarily be hierarchical.

2. As will be shown in an extended example to follow, the framework of analysis of the organic metaphor is even instrumental to a historical and analytical understanding of the social contract, the primary paradigm that replaced it. The general categories of the organic framework, but not their earlier hierarchical form, are instrumental to an understanding of

the several aspects of equality on which United States constitutional democracy, as a social contract, is founded.

3. A central problematic or political issue of our time is the accommodation of pluralism. The ecological organic paradigm recognizes the multiple dimensions of human nature and, therefore, does not aspire to certainty or necessarily support any singular ideology. It does, however, provide a framework that at least has a capacity for accommodating pluralism. Recognizing, even very broadly, the multiple potentials of human nature can provide a rational basis for at least a threshold of values and conditions for the realization of those potentials as well as a basis for moderation and balance.

4. A barrier to learning in the past has often been the unavailability of information. A barrier to learning in the near future will be the difficulty of both selecting from an overabundance of information and associating such information in a meaningful way. A modern organic paradigm should be reconsidered because it can provide a useful framework for understanding the dynamics of moral and political philosophy. Folk psychology, as an equivalent of the ecological organic paradigm, has survived because it has provided some coherence. The ecological organic paradigm does not attempt to describe the specific anatomical mechanisms of perception and cognition. It provides coherence because it describes, in a general way, those cognitive functions that have progressively developed as coping mechanisms in both natural and cultural evolution.

5. A new Darwinism, which recognizes both natural and cultural evolution, rejects the false exclusionary dichotomies of nature versus nurture, fact versus value, and nature versus free will (Arnhart, 1995). If facts are not related to values, for example, the phrase “political science” is an oxymoron. In practice our perception of the facts usually has a very significant influence on our moral and political decisions. A more accurate description of the relationship would be that what we perceive to be the facts is not the *sole* determinant of our values. By recognizing the multiple dimensions of human nature, the ecological organic framework is able to

accommodate what were previously sometimes seen as either/or dichotomies.

6. As a metaphor, the ecological organic paradigm will remind us of the interrelationship between the character of the people and the character of the state. In his First Inaugural Address (Allen, 1988, p. 462), George Washington stated that it was imperative “that the foundations of national policy be laid in the pure and inimitable principles of private morality.” Aristotle, on the other hand, understood the central role of the polis or community in forming individual character. Our individual and social moral character has perhaps become the most significant factor in the survival of ourselves, our society, our environment, and intergenerational continuity.

7. Ecology changes. We live in a nuclear age that has seen defense strategies of mutual assured destruction and response times measured in minutes. We will be facing the moral problems of genetic engineering and population control under the conditions of limited resources and a threatened environment. Technology has markedly increased the possibilities of both totalitarianism and terrorism. Yet we live in a century that coined the word “genocide” and a century that will be identified with individual alienation. The general concern has been that our technological development may have exceeded the parameters of our biological adaptive mechanisms and our moral development. We also live in a time of pluralism in our own culture and in what is increasingly becoming a pluralistic global community. As the sociologist Max Weber described, this degree of pluralism usually requires societies to be based on legal authority, rather than traditional kinship-descent or charismatic social organization (Weber 1921/1964, p. 328). These conditions point to the need for moral and political structures that both affirm life and can accommodate pluralism. They illustrate the need for limitations and moderation, but also the need for a model with a capacity for synthesis. A modern version of the organic paradigm should be reconsidered because it can provide a framework that has the capacity for affirmation, accom-

modation, moderation, adaptation, coherence, and synthesis.

8. The recurrent interest in a naturalized epistemology perhaps began in 1969 with a paper by W. V. Quine, “Epistemology Naturalized”, in which he wrote that, “epistemology goes on, though in a new setting and a clarified status. Epistemology, or something like it, simply falls into place as a chapter of psychology and hence of natural science” (1969/1996, p. 82). Psychology, however, is related to and needs to be understood in the context of the other biological sciences as well as the humanities and from the perspective of behavioral ecology. Toward the end of the *Origin of Species* Darwin wrote, “In the distant future I see open fields for far more important researches. Psychology will be based on the foundation . . . of the necessary acquirement of each mental power and capacity by gradation” (1936, p. 373). Our cognitive capacities, our consciousness and ability to know, have in the past developed and continue to develop as part of an interaction with the complex world in which we live. The ecological organic paradigm can help to clarify the primary assumptions on which our thoughts and actions are based and take into consideration the contexts in which they occur.

9. In an article entitled “The Foundationalism in Irrealism, and the Immorality”, the philosopher John F. Post (1996) states that “philosophers have tended to develop an image of themselves and their enterprise as largely independent of whatever the sciences might turn up.” He quotes Wittgenstein as saying, “Darwin’s theory has no more to do with philosophy than any other hypothesis in natural science” (Wittgenstein 1922, 4.1122). Post then writes, “But what happens when we consider concepts, language, and meaning not from the point of view of how they seem to us on reflection from within, but from the point of view of how they appear from without, in particular to biological science? By biological science I do *not* mean any of its possibly reductive subdisciplines, such as molecular biology or neuroscience, and certainly not any sociobiology. I mean the nonreductive, holistic biology of historically evolved living organisms in relation to their normal environments and to each

other.” He continues that “One of the key notions of such biology is that of the *proper function* of an organ, device or behavior. For example, the proper function of the heart is to pump blood; to be a heart is to pump blood. Why?” He then sites Ruth Millikan in stating that the proper function of your heart is to pump blood because it was by pumping blood that past hearts (or enough of them) enabled containing organisms to survive and reproduce at rates higher than those without them. Post objects to language-game irrealism because it means that we who play the game are in charge only because of the rejection of relevant external constraints (Post, 1996, pp. 7–8).

The ecological organic paradigm takes the concept of “selection” seriously, but at the human level applies this both ways in the interaction between humans and their environment. The framework is based in the biological sciences, but it also retains a place for interpretation and metaphysics broadly understood.

V. Examples of the Ecological Organic Paradigm as a Framework of Analysis

Two examples will be used to illustrate the usefulness of the ecological organic framework of analysis in moral and political philosophy. The first will be an analytical and historical consideration of *equality*, which Jefferson¹⁰, Madison¹¹, Tocqueville¹², and Lincoln¹³ all considered the primary moral concept of United States constitutional democracy. For Jefferson the concept that “all men are created equal” was a moral assertion. This assertion is the first premise of the Declaration of Independence, which is argued in the manner of Euclidean geometry. It thus puts everything that follows, including life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, into a moral context. For Jefferson the phrase was an affirmation of his own and our common humanity and it could thus be called a self-evident truth. The second example will use the ecological organic analytical framework to consider the several dimensions of the contemporary moral and political issue of abortion from the perspective of the physician.

Equality

The ecological organic framework of analysis helps to clarify the several different dimensions of the moral and political concept of universal equality. Within Western civilization there developed several sources of moral authority for law and several corresponding ethical and legal systems. Canon Law, Roman Law, English common law, and the social contract theory associated with constitutional law, each had a different primary source of moral authority. Each of these systems of law was, consequently, based on a different type of ethical system, and each focused primarily on a different facet of human nature. Constitutional democracy integrates aspects of these four ethical and legal systems as they relate to universal equality and the coercive powers of government.

Metaphysics and Interpretation: Canon Law, for example, was based on the authority of God and related primarily to what it understood to be the soul of man. Its ethic is deontological, *deon* meaning “duty” in Greek. That is, it is based on a universal duty “to love God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself” (Leviticus 19:18, Deuteronomy 6:5, Luke 10:27, Mark 12:29–31). This also happens to be an example of a use of the organic framework in a Judeo-Christian context. Canon Law contains universal ethical principles based on a reverence for God and reciprocity towards one’s fellow man. The equal dignity and worth of all persons in this religious system derives from a belief in God and that man and woman were made in God’s image (Gen 1:27). Equality is intrinsic and not derived from one’s individual attributes, but from the relationship between God and humanity.

Nature and Reason: Roman Law, on the other hand, incorporated significant aspects of natural law based on the authority of a perceived natural moral order in the universe. Such a natural moral order could be understood by all persons, it was believed, because all humans share a capacity for right reason, an ability to know right from wrong. All of the various

people within the vast Roman Empire, for example, could be expected to learn and know that it is wrong to steal. This ethical system of natural law is primarily normative (based on norms or ideals). Universal equality in classical civilization is based on all human beings having a capacity for right reason and also on a concept of reversibility (a reversal of position or fortune) which requires a rational imagination. Aristotle, in his *Poetics*, described reversibility as one of two major elements in Greek tragedies. The second element is catharsis, part of which is a realization that we all, even heroes and kings, have character flaws and are also subject to fate, both of which can lead to a reversal of fortunes. The more recent concept of justice as fairness as described by John Rawls in *The Theory of Justice* (1971), with an original position in which one does not know either his or her fate or circumstances in life's game, is an extension of the concept of reversibility.

Society and Social Conscience: Common law in English feudal society derived its moral authority from yet another source—not from God or nature, but from social custom and tradition. This was primarily a communitarian ethical system. It related to the social conscience of the people based on their concepts of rights and responsibilities in society. Traditional English rights progressively became a basis of communal solidarity.

The Individual and Appetite: Finally, the social contract theory associated with constitutional law derives its moral authority beginning with the individual in a state of nature concerned primarily about his own safety and happiness. Its very premise is not only that all are free and equal in a state of nature, but that everyone is also endowed with natural rights that they are entitled to defend. Such a theory is based on individual concerns and contract. The universality of social contract theory as it applies to democratic processes and constitutional law, however, makes it also essentially a humanitarian ethic. It contains an ethic of universal equality based on what we now refer to as human rights and a just claim to resist the violation of those rights.

American constitutional democracy integrates and balances

these four ethical perspectives as they apply to the several aspects of universal equality and the coercive powers of government. The accommodating common moral concept is not just a deontological ethic, with concepts of reverence and reciprocity, relating to God and a person's soul; nor is it just a normative ethic, based on concepts of right reason and reversibility, relating to a perceived moral order in nature and our capacity to understand that order with our reason; nor is it just a communitarian ethic, with concepts of social rights and responsibilities, as they relate to the several aspects of society and our social conscience; nor is it only an individual ethic, with a concept of human rights and the right to resist tyranny, relating to the individual and our fundamental human needs and desires. The accommodating or unifying moral concept is universal equality, which can be derived analytically, and has been derived historically, from each of these sources of authority and aspects of human nature (Rutherford, 1992).

Universal equality achieves some moderation when the concept of the dignity and worth of the individual is understood as a matter which requires the consideration and balancing of at least four different capacities and perspectives. Consider, for example, that the United States government was founded for the declared purposes of providing for the general welfare (legislated needs), establishing justice (adjudicated social conscience), maintaining domestic tranquility (executive order) and securing freedom for ourselves and our posterity (non-coercive meaning and purpose). In attempting to achieve institutional accommodation of these objectives on the basis of equality, this system of government does leave the question of meaning and purpose to the individual. This is what Jefferson, following Aristotle, meant by "the pursuit of happiness," which is quite different from the pursuit of pleasure as we understand it. The level of function that interprets, integrates, and narrates meaning, purpose, and continuity in our lives, and deals with the ultimate questions of metaphysics and religion, is separated from the coercive powers and structure of government. In turn, the individual moral personality

is the basis of both our constitutional principles and democratic processes.

Universal equality is both the fundamental *qualitative moral principle* of our constitutional system of government and the basis of the *quantitative democratic process* by which it was ordained and ratified and by which it functions. We thus need to refer to our government as at least a *constitutional democracy* in order to understand and convey its moral foundations.

Thomas Hobbes in *Leviathan* (1651/1981, pp. 82–6) wrote that all persons are equal in that they fear a violent death, and they are not only capable of killing one another, but also, in the state of nature, they are free to do so. It is not contradictory to state that constitutional democracy is also our way of ritualizing aggression and coercive power. We limit and divide the coercive powers of government and we vote. As Reinhold Niebuhr noted, “It is man’s capacity for justice that makes democracy possible, but it is his tendency to injustice that makes it necessary” (1944, p. xi).

Abraham Lincoln, in his First Inaugural Address, stated that “a majority, held in restraint by constitutional checks and limitations, . . . is the only true sovereign of a free people. Whoever rejects it, does, of necessity, fly to anarchy or to despotism.” Representative democracy, the staggering of elective terms of office, the requirement of a super-majority to amend the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and an independent judiciary with judicial review are some of the constitutional checks and limitations placed on transient majorities. Federalism is, in part, a recognition that equal does not mean identical.

Abortion

The organic framework of analysis is not meant to defend a particular conclusion, but it will help to understand the spectrum of moral and political considerations involved in a complex issue such as abortion. The example is also meant to show that what we perceive to be the facts in medicine are part of our considerations, though they are not the *sole* determinants of our values and decisions.

One original reason for abortion laws in Texas, the jurisdiction of *Roe vs. Wade*, was the very high mortality and morbidity of the procedure in a time before antibiotics. The current state of medical science also forms the criteria for the present laws relating to trimesters, which is in part related to the possible viability of the fetus. In addition, the technological aspects of genetic counseling, the treatment of infertility, and methods of birth control all affect the issue. These changing facts in *medical science* are one of the considerations in the decisions concerning abortion. There are also *social* issues for the physician. The physician is licensed by the state, for example, and has an obligation to abide by the laws of the society in which he or she practices. If the law permits abortions, then there is also a *metaphysical or religious* issue for patients, doctors and hospitals as to whether they want to choose or perform the procedure. Finally, there are the central issues of the *individual* rights and well being of both the mother and the fetus or unborn child. If one understands government to be a monopoly of coercive power, there are also the issues of privacy as opposed to what are the legitimate concerns of the state. On the other hand, there is also the political issue of the uses of taxation in a pluralistic society. If the morbidity and mortality of the procedure were the same as they were in 1900, however, the other issues concerning abortion would not be on the political agenda. Facts are important, and sometimes an overriding consideration, but they are not the *sole* determinants of our values.

VI. Further Observations and Conclusions

In the ecological organic framework of analysis, integration is concerned internally with a reconciliation of our mind’s four capacities of interpretation, reason, social conscience, and appetite. External integration relates to a reconciliation of our metaphysical ideas, our relation to the natural world in which we live, our relation to society, and our own individual self-interest. This is perhaps better understood by examining the opposite concept of alienation. Discord and alienation often

result when one of our levels of understanding is emphasized to the exclusion of the others, or when, as a society, we develop ideologies that relate to one of our concepts of metaphysics, nature, society, or human beings, but to the exclusion of the other three. In a pluralistic society there is a potential political problem when any one dimension of human nature is emphasized to the exclusion of the others or when any dimension of human nature is excluded or not taken into consideration.

Singular theories that have based order and moral authority on *only* material needs, an aspect of social conscience, reason, or a metaphysical or religious concept, or *only* on the individual, the state, natural science, or ideology have often led to disintegration and individual or communal tragedy. By focusing on even perhaps a particular truth in a quest for certainty, they have too easily justified the use of coercive force or been the cause of alienation. The quest for certainty understandably often seeks truth in only one parameter.

A general observation based on the ecological organic paradigm is that those philosophies that are founded on only one dimension of humanity or the world in which we live will come under pressure to modify and extend their constructs to accommodate the other dimensions, just as Ptolemy's model of the universe needed to continuously add epicycles to account for the observed data.

What some have described as our postmodern condition is the other side of the coin. It is a consequence of the fallacy of concluding that because a single parameter doesn't explain everything, it is invalid and thus cannot be used as a compass or a way of knowing anything. Some aspects of Western civilization have thus dispensed and discarded in chronological order religion (the Church, the Bible), nature, society, and interconnected individualism as a legitimate basis of knowledge or moral and political authority. This leaves one only with the certainty of a closed system of one's own subjective meaning, which in the language of philosophy is non-verifiable and in moral and political terms is unaccountable. As a Woody

Allen character in the movie *Bullets over Broadway* states, "The artist creates his own moral universe." A radical skepticism, which separates the knower from that which is known, can understandably lead to this type of alienation. It is popular in our times, however, because it can also be a rationalization for self-indulgence and liberty pushed to license. This version of postmodernism can mean simply never having to say you are sorry. A similar version of postmodernism, by denying an epistemological basis for anything, allows the validation of everything and can be summarized as having the philosophical insight that "stuff happens." Another possible criticism of much of current philosophy is that, like Bacon's criticism of scholasticism, it has become focused on the abstractions of language at the expense of relating to the world in which we live.

The ecological organic paradigm suggests an alternative between the extremes of modernism and postmodernism based on prudence and moderation rather than a quest for certainty or a radical skepticism. Recognizing even the very broad capacities of human nature provides a basis for the values needed to develop those potentials. Aristotle defined man as a political animal and such an assertion, for example, is a basis for values which are felt to be necessary and desirable for living in a community. We have done something similar with human rights in an attempt to define a threshold of values that the individual does not delegate to society or government. Concerns for such things as a level of universal education and stewardship of the environment are values based on our capacity for reason and practical wisdom related to nature. Freedom of opinion and a separation of church and state were accommodations which recognized the need to at least establish the conditions for spiritual and metaphysical values in a pluralistic society where devastating wars had been fought over such matters. Where Kant in his own mind separated theology from empirical knowledge, Jefferson was instrumental in only separating religion from the coercive powers of government. He understood that one of his most significant works

was the *Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom*. This is a recognition that some of our highest aspirations, strongest commitments, and deepest faiths cannot and should not be coerced.

In the perspective of the ecological organic framework, social abilities, reason, and a coherent self with meaning and purpose are not just the slaves of the passions, but are themselves ends as well as means. Because there is variety in humanity and our development, because we have limited knowledge and are prone to error, because ecology changes, and because there will sometimes be conflicting motivations, desires, and goals, the values derived from such an understanding of humanity will at best be based on prudence, practical wisdom, and our own commitments rather than certainty.¹⁴ On the other hand, what is also implied by the ecological organic paradigm is that if such capacities developed in natural and cultural evolution as adaptive coping mechanisms, then we probably ignore their balanced development and the values associated with such development at the expense of our own well-being and possibly in a pluralistic world at our own peril. The organic framework is not only compatible with a new Darwinian behavioral ecology, but also with folk psychology, which is based on introspection and a history of accumulated experience.

A consideration of a threshold of values based on the ecological organic paradigm should lead to a *reconsideration of pragmatism as a "balance of consciousness."* Such an understanding of practical action and thought or pragmatism, it could be argued, was not first put forward by Charles Pierce, William James and John Dewey, but by the Founding Documents of American constitutional democracy. An understanding of pragmatism as a "balance of consciousness," however, is probably no longer retrievable from subsequent interpretations, revisions and distortions.¹⁵ For this reason, an ecological organic paradigm perhaps better accommodates the "balance of consciousness" of folk psychology as well as the dimensional moral philosophy of "depth" and "breadth" that has been described.

Like our genetic code, our cultural ideas have a lot of reces-

sive, extraneous, duplicated and redundant material. There is a lot of stuff in the attic, basement, and garage that we pull out when it is needed. One of the more perceptive writers and statesman of our times, Vaclav Havel, has said that we need a declaration of interdependence; that we need to recognize that we are a part of the universe rather than the masters of it; and that we "are mysteriously connected to the universe... just as the entire evolution of the universe is mirrored in us" (1994). Havel, the current President of the Czech Republic, also recently told law students at Stanford University that "If democracy is not only to survive but to expand successfully and resolve those conflicts of cultures, then, in my opinion, it must rediscover and renew its own transcendental origins. Human dignity, freedom and responsibility. . . . The source of these basic human potentials lies . . . in man's relationship to that which transcends him. I think the fathers of American democracy knew this very well" (1995).

A contemporary version of the organic paradigm that is compatible with an affirmation of life and recognizes the dynamic aspects of our common humanity is a framework of analysis that can perhaps help us understand both of these statements of Havel concerning nature and transcendence. They will not necessarily be considered a dichotomy. Such a framework was understood by the Founding Fathers and it should be reconsidered. In Federalist No. 51, James Madison (1788/1987, p. 319) wrote, "But what is government itself but the greatest of all reflections on human nature?"

Notes

1. "The New Darwinian Naturalism in Political Theory" by Larry Arnhart (1995) is a pivotal article in evolutionary theory with extensive references. See also *The Origins of Virtue; Human Instincts and the Evolution of Cooperation* by Matt Ridley (1996), *Being There: Putting Brain, Body, and World Together Again* by Andy Clark (1997), *The Symbolic Species: The Co-evolution of Language and the Brain* by Terrence W. Deacon (1997),

and “Holistic Darwinism: ‘Synergistic Selection’ and the Evolutionary Process” by P. A. Corning (1997).

2. In the preface of *Evolving the Mind: On the Nature of Matter and the Origin of Consciousness* (1996, viii), A. G. Cairns-Smith wrote, “William James gave us a general resolution of this dilemma more than a hundred years ago. In a nutshell: *matter* is not what it seems. Or as we should say now there must be more to biological material than is summarized in the models of molecular biology. To make any sense of this we will come to dig a little deeper: science is not what it seems . . .”

3. “The Puzzle of Conscious Experience.” by David J. Chambers (*Scientific American*, December 1995, 80–86) is a review of the various ideas about consciousness by neuroscientists.

4. See “Epistemology from an Evolutionary Point of View” by Michael Braidie (1994) in *Conceptual Issues in Evolution*, ed. Elliot Sober, for some of the current ideas in this field. Traditional evolutionary epistemology by itself, however, does not address well some of the existential problems of moral and political philosophy. Traditional evolutionary theory by itself does not address well the questions “What is the best way to live?” or “What about us somatic cells?”

5. Michael S. Gazzaniga in *Nature’s Mind: The Biological Roots of Thinking, Emotions, Sexuality, Language and Intelligence* (1992, chap. 6) uses the designation “interpreter” to describe a special capacity residing in the left hemisphere of the brain which he believes to be the core of human belief formation. I use the term interpretation more as a functional capacity for integration and narrative, recognizing the significant importance of language, memory (Dykstra, 1987), and imagination or “vision” in this.

6. Perhaps the most interesting example of this opinion is in the first two paragraphs of *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* by William James (1907/1990) in which he quotes Chesterton, “There are some people—and I am one of them—who think that the most practical and important thing about a man is still his view of the universe. . . . we think the question is not whether the theory of the cosmos

affects matters, but whether, in the long run, anything else effects them.” James then writes, “I think with Mr. Chesterton in this matter.”

7. Jordan Peterson, a psychologist, in *Maps of Meaning: The Architecture of Belief* (1999) notes that human beings are territorial and “that because people are capable of abstraction, the territories we defend can become abstract” (Lambert, 1998).

8. There is at least a third major early Western historical moral tradition that is Anglo-Saxon. This tradition was important for the development of individual rights and resistance to tyranny as well as consent and contract, but since the two World Wars this has been largely ignored in academic circles.

9. The distinction between morality and ethics would be only one of convention and compromise. The word “morality” is of Latin origin and the word “ethics” is of Greek origin and they both originally had the meaning of “custom(s).” In our time, however, a discussion of ethics often considers all possible positions, including the merely subjective. Some consider ethics to be only cultural and others want it to only refer to universals. Richard Rorty, one of the more widely known contemporary philosophers, believes that a primary aim of liberalism should be to avoid being cruel. Yet concerning epistemology he wrote, “I do not think there are any plain moral facts out there in the world, nor any truths independent of language, nor any neutral ground on which to stand and argue that either torture or kindness are preferable to the other” (1989, p. 173). Richard A. Posner, a judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, began his Holmes Lecture at Harvard Law School in 1997 on “The Problematics of Moral and Legal Theory” with the assertion that all morality is local (1998, vol. 111, p. 1637). These can be compared to the position of Hadley Arkes, a professor of jurisprudence and political science at Amherst College. In *First Things: An Inquiry into the First Principles of Morals and Justice* he claims that there are universal first principles the denial of which would be a self-contradiction (1986, p. 426).

10. For Jefferson on universal equality see Padover (1943,

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