

TOWARD A  
NATURALISTIC  
POLITICAL THEORY

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*Aristotle, Hume, Dewey,  
Evolutionary Biology,  
and Deep Ecology*

TERRY HOY

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# Introduction

In a study, the intent of which is to defend a concept of a naturalistic political theory, it is necessary, at the outset, to clarify the meaning of such an intention as a corrective to the distortion in the seventeenth century tradition of early Enlightenment Naturalism. What was distinctive in this development, it has been commonly recognized, was a radical break from the classical Aristotelian concept of a *telos* of nature as the unfolding of human moral ends and purpose towards a mechanistic view in which that which controls human behavior has to do with material substance obeying mechanical laws of physics. What controls human behavior is not an end, but a cause; the psychological mechanism of the human animal.<sup>1</sup>

The political implication of seventeenth-century mechanistic interpretation in the contribution of Hobbes and Locke provided an impetus to a concept of reason seen as instrumental to human passions and desires. According to Hobbes, a radical egoism and a “war-like” state is characteristic of human beings in a pre-social state of nature, and it is the desire for self-preservation that leads to the



development of a sovereign state as an instrument for security. Locke did not share the Hobbesian view of nature as the “war of all against all,” but rather a view of nature as a source of freedom and equality; the natural rights of life, liberty, and property. The inconveniences of the state of nature, due to lack of a settled law or impartial authority, becomes the motivation for the social contract by which individuals enter into civil society for the purpose of protection of natural rights. But if Locke’s theory was in opposition to Hobbes’ concept of an absolute sovereign, he shared the Hobbesian view of the fundamental egoism of human nature; a concept of pleasure and pain similar to Hobbes’ concept of self preservation.<sup>2</sup> The basic feature of Lockean liberalism can be seen as a continuity with nineteenth century tradition of Benthamite utilitarianism: an ethics that is derivative from human sensations: feelings of pleasure are good, and pain is to be avoided. The interest of the community is the sum of the interests of the individuals that compose it, and the role of government is to promote the greatest happiness of the greater number.

It would be common to believe that it is the Lockean utilitarian tradition of classical liberalism that, as Louis Hartz points out, became the underlying consensus of the American political heritage.<sup>3</sup> But what has been a striking trend in recent political theory is a growing consciousness of the contradictions and ambiguities that this heritage has entailed. There would be few who would wish to deny that the historical transformations associated with the individualistic-utilitarianism tradition of Enlightenment liberalism were an impetus to the liberative, emancipative achievement of modernity: the break from the slavery and class distinctions of ancient civilization; the achievements of Enlightenment modernity in regard to the spread of constitutional democracy and civil liberties; the improvement in material conditions and health of the vast majority of citizens in modern industrial society. Yet the developments

of the post-Enlightenment era have been witness to the advent of colonialism and imperialism; totalitarian extremism of Left and Right; two catastrophic wars; the economic structures of capitalism that have enthroned a "Calliclean" life of endless consumption, growth and bigness; the persistence of inequalities, and social injustice; environmental degradation due to the ascending of market priorities; the loss of genuine human community and civic virtues.

What is compelling in contemporary perception of the "dark side" of Enlightenment modernity does not require abandoning the contention that it has been at least a relative gain over institutional structures of ancient civilization such as slavery, class hierarchy, feudalism, and ecclesiastical and political domination. What can be contended, rather, is that a corrective to the distortion in the instrumental-utilitarian tradition of liberalism requires reconstructive orientation in which the authentic achievement of the Enlightenment can be salvaged from its distortions and errors. It is the contention of Charles Taylor, for example, that a central malaise of modernity has been an "atomism" that he sees to be the product of the seventeenth century contract theory and the primacy of rights doctrine associated with John Locke. Taylor believes it is necessary to recover a social view of man as one that holds that an essential constitutive condition for a human good is bound up with being in society, a community of language and mutual discourse about the good and bad, justice and injustice.<sup>4</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre has become an influential spokesman for a view that the ethos of modernity, as a product of the Enlightenment, is characterized by a "moral disarray and disorder" in which disagreement about such issues as abortion, war and justice have no point or arbitration beyond the claim of "emotivism"; in which all evaluative moral judgments are nothing but the expression of preference, attitudes and feelings. The corrective, he believes, must be sought in the recovery of

the Aristotelian concept of a *telos* as the contrast between “man-as-he-happens-to-be-and-as-he-could-be if he realized his essential nature,” but severed from its association with a metaphysical biology, and formulated as the understanding of moral virtues given in tradition and historical narrative.<sup>5</sup>

Both Taylor and MacIntyre are illustrations of a historical-hermeneutical interpretation that has been greatly influenced by the contribution of Hans Gadamer. The keynote of Gadamer’s hermeneutical interpretation is the challenge to the ahistorical objectivism of Enlightenment rationalism and its view of human reason as correspondence to an objective, external reality. Hermeneutical interpretation, he believes, must overcome the antithesis between historicity and knowledge. What this entails, he believes, is a “hermeneutical circle” that is neither subject or object, but the “interplay of the movement of tradition and the movement of interpretation.” The meaning that governs our interpretation of a classical text is not an act of subjectivity, “but a consciousness of a community that binds us to a tradition.” But tradition is not simply a precondition into which we come. We produce it, ourselves, insofar as we understand and participate in the evolution of a tradition. Gadamer emphasizes that this does not entail setting ourselves in the “spirit of the age.” For we are always in a situation having a “horizon” or “range of vision” that includes what can be seen from a particular standpoint. The historical movement of life is not bound to any one standpoint; there is no “closed horizon.” Hermeneutical interpretation is thus not passing into an alien world unconnected to our own. The horizon of the present, he contends, cannot be formed without the past. There is always the possibility of a “fusion of horizons.” Gadamer perceives in Aristotle’s *praxis* a model for hermeneutical interpretation. This springs from his distinction between the knowledge of *phronesis* and theoretical knowledge of

*episteme*. The latter is the mode of what is mathematical, unchanging, and amenable to proof that can be known by anyone. But the knowledge of *phronesis* is the knowledge of man as acting, being concerned with what is not always the same as it is, but can also be different; "the purpose of his knowledge is to govern actions."<sup>6</sup>

Gadamer also points out that Aristotle is the origin of a classical view that man is a living being who has *logos*, man as *animal rationale*, distinguished from other animals by the capacity for thought. But Gadamer points out that the primary meaning of *logos* is language in which men manifest to each other what is right and wrong. It is by virtue of this fact that among men there can be a common life, a political constitution, and organic division of labor. All this is involved in the simple assertion that "man is a being who possesses language."<sup>7</sup>

The contemporary trend toward a concept of historical-hermeneutical interpretation has been a constructive corrective to the ahistorical objectivism of Enlightenment rationalism. Yet this development is subject to two serious objections. One is the contention that hermeneutical interpretation, as applied to tradition and historical narrative, lacks a criteria of moral adjudication; the problem of how a given society's norms and standards can be critically assessed as against individual choices or preferences. This is a critical objection that Habermas brings against Gadamer. Habermas agrees with Gadamer's emphasis upon the need for hermeneutical interpretation in opposition to the narrow strictures of scientific positivism, and a technological rationalism. He agrees that critical reflection cannot "leap over the interpreter's relation to a tradition." But it does not follow that a tradition cannot be profoundly altered by scientific reflection. What Gadamer fails to recognize is that language is dependent upon social practices not reducible to normative relationships; where language serves to legitimize relationship of organized force. Language thus be-

comes ideological, originating not only from systems of dominance, but from social labor, and from the institutional structures of science and technology.<sup>8</sup>

The second objection is that while what is no longer credible in either a classical metaphysics or Enlightenment objectivism does not warrant the conclusion that a historical-hermeneutical interpretation must thus be disjoined from scientific evidence in regard to psychological, biological dispositions of human nature. This is a point effectively made by Marjorie Grene. Grene is fully in agreement with Gadamer's contention that our "being a person is to be in history" the artifacts, language, social institution that constitute culture. But what she believes essential is a reinstatement of the "natural foundation of the historical" in a way modern philosophy has failed to do. In Grene's view, biology does not construct culture, but it establishes the place within which culture becomes possible and remains possible. "Human being, or Being in the world, in other words, is possible only in the achievement of a certain kind of living being, with certain organic endowments and a certain kind of biological as well as social environment. . . . What we have to recognize is the place cleared *within* nature for the possible of the human, that is, historical or historicizing—historicized nature."<sup>9</sup>

It will be the intent of this study to argue that a framework for a concept of a naturalistic political theory can be effectively formulated within the concept of a "historicized nature" having significant continuity from Aristotelian naturalism through the contribution of Hume, Dewey, Evolutionary Biology, and Deep Ecology. It will be the intent of Chapter 1 to show how central features of Aristotelian categories can be congruent with the concept of a "historicized nature." This would be apparent, for example, in Aristotle's view that the state has its origin in bare needs of life, but continues for the sake of the good life; that man is by nature a political animal having the gift of speech as

the basis for moral evaluation; his view that moral virtues are engendered in us neither by nor contrary to nature; we are constituted by nature to receive them, but their full development is due to habit.

A view of Aristotelian categories as an expression of a historicized nature can also be congruent with what Gadamer sees to be the meaning of Aristotle's *praxis* as a paradigm of hermeneutical interpretation; the application of general principles to historical contingencies of human action or conduct. But it will be argued, in opposition to Gadamer, that this does not require a disjunction of the concept of *praxis* from Aristotle's biological naturalism because of what this entails as a no longer credible metaphysics. It will be argued that the unity of Aristotle's *praxis* and his theoretical view of *telos* of nature can be sustained in the context of an "internal" or "pragmatic realism" in terms effectively articulated by Hilary Putnam. Scientific understanding, he contends, entails resort to use of metaphors, and such metaphors are comparable to *moral images* of the world. Kant's concept of equality and freedom, he believes, can be seen as a *moral image of the world*, rather than what needs to be seen as the categorical imperatives of an autonomous reason. But Putnam also believes it is necessary to go beyond a Kantian concept of truth as what has "rational acceptability within a community of peers" towards a more Aristotelian interpretation as a "thick image of human nature." Martha Nussbaum, it will be shown, provides an extension of this implication: a concept of human functions and capacities essential to human well being that have a cross-cultural commonality. It will also be shown that, in a collaborative essay, Putnam and Nussbaum effectively argue that Aristotle's naturalism, as outlined in *De Anima*, provides a corrective to inadequacies in the mind-body dualism and reductive materialism of seventeenth century rationalism that was to be a strong influence upon the development of the Lockean-utilitarian

tradition of liberalism. Aristotle's theory of perception, they contend, is consistent with a non-reductivism and the explanatory unity of the intentional without losing that sense of the natural and organic unity of intentional with its constitutive matter; their view that Aristotle's thought is "consistent with Wittgenstein's desire to have a natural history of man."

But it is not the intent of this study to argue that a naturalistic political theory is simply a return to Aristotelian categories, for the Putnam-Nussbaum defense of the contemporary relevance of Aristotelian categories is within the reconstructive orientation provided by an internal or pragmatic realism that is the product of Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment philosophical development and its association with political, economic transformation of modernity that were a radical break from pre-modern society. It will be the intent of Chapter 2 to emphasize the landmark importance of Hume as an expression of early Enlightenment skepticism toward a classical metaphysics and the impetus to religious tolerance, civic liberties, and constitutional government. But it will be the intent to show that what is of key significance in Hume's contribution is that although it is an expression of the central dynamic of Enlightenment liberalism, it is also an opposition to the Lockean-utilitarian tradition of classical liberalism, and a significant continuity with Aristotelian implications. This springs from his view of natural sentiments pertaining to moral principles in the interest of humanity beyond egoism and self-interest; his rejection of the concept of a "pre-social state of nature," and a cognizance of the role of sociality and human artifice in shaping principles of justice. It will be the intent of Chapter 3 to show that although John Dewey believed his contribution to be carrying out Hume's project, he provides a corrective to difficulties in Hume's moral theory, and a concern for the reconciliation of freedom and equality not envisioned by Hume in the

context of his times. Chapter 4 will outline the importance of recent development in Evolution Biology that provides scientific basis for human capacities that are the product of biological-cultural interaction in human evolution that reinforces the continuity from Aristotle through Hume and Dewey. It will be the intent of Chapter 5 to outline recent developments in "Deep Ecology" as a framework for sustaining the relation of human to non-human nature. It will be the intent of the final chapter to argue that an integrative framework for a naturalistic political theory can be best provided in the theoretical categories of Dewey's concept of a Naturalistic Humanism.





## *Chapter 1*

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# Aristotelian Naturalism: Classical Categories and Reconstructive Orientation

Contemporary political theory has been characterized by a striking renewal of interest in Aristotle due to a growing disillusionment with the individualistic-utilitarianism premises of classical liberalism. This development is evident not only among so-called communitarian critics of liberalism, but exponents of a reconstructive liberalism who would seek to salvage the authentic achievement of the Enlightenment from its distortions and errors. But if one is to take seriously the viability of Aristotle's ethical-political theory as a resource of clarification of contemporary problems, it is necessary to confront the critical objection mounted by John Wallach. It is Wallach's view that the current forms of Aristotelian renewal are a "curious development" in view of how Aristotle's metaphysical naturalism was a resistance to scientific advance of modernity and how it was applied to a wide range of social, racial, and sexual prejudices. What the current Aristotelian renewal entails, he believes, is a "depoliticizing" and "dehistoricizing" of Aristotle's writings, disconnecting the

form and substance of his political theory from the historical content that constituted its meaning and scope.<sup>1</sup>

Wallach rightly reproaches any uncritical application of Aristotelian categories to contemporary historical realities. But what he overlooks is the nature of a hermeneutical interpretation given influential articulation by Hans Gadamer. It is the view of Gadamer that it is one of the illusions of the Enlightenment that there can be a knowledge independent of our "historical being in the world," and what this means as our relation to past traditions. The task of hermeneutical interpretation is thus the understanding of the meaning of a text "for us," differentiated from what is strange or alien and from what may be independent of the intentions of the author.<sup>2</sup> Gadamer perceives in Aristotle's *praxis* a model for hermeneutical interpretation: the practical judgment of human action as differentiated from the theoretical knowledge of science.<sup>3</sup> But if Gadamer believes Aristotle's *praxis* can be a model for hermeneutical interpretation, he is clearly assuming that this implication must be disjoined from Aristotle's metaphysical biology. It will be the intent of this study to argue that while Gadamer's concept of hermeneutical interpretation provides what is essential to a defense of present-day meaning of classical Aristotelian categories, it is also essential to sustain this meaning as an integral unity of his ethical political theory with his scientific naturalism, and that the collaborative efforts of Hilary Putnam and Martha Nussbaum provide an effective framework for this possibility.

It is essential, at the outset, to outline key features of Aristotle's naturalism and what is involved in the contention that a reconstructive interpretation of its meaning can be congruent with the requirements of hermeneutical interpretation. It would be common to believe that such a congruency is implausible, in view of what Aristotle's naturalism entails as a metaphysical biology. This would be

apparent in his view of the substance that belongs to bodies, animals, and plants, natural bodies such as fire, water, and earth. One of the marks by which we determine substance is the essence of each thing: what is said to be in virtue of itself (1029<sup>b</sup>–13). In his *Metaphysics*, Aristotle comments that the soul is the primary substance and the body is matter. Man is the compound of both taken universally (1037<sup>a</sup>–5). A central keynote of Aristotle's metaphysics is the concept of priority of "actuality over potentiality." Everything that comes to be moves towards a principle or an end. "For that for the sake of which a thing is, is its principle, and the becoming is for the sake of the end; and the actuality is the end, and it is for the sake of this that the potentiality is acquired" (1050<sup>a</sup>–10). Aristotle also believes that in defining kinds of substance, there is finally an "eternal unmovable substance" (1071<sup>b</sup>–5).

Yet another feature of Aristotle's naturalism can be seen in compatibility with hermeneutical interpretation. This is apparent, for example, in Aristotle's cognizance of a "dialectical" versus "demonstrative" inquiry in science. In demonstrative inquiry, a syllogism is taken to be true because of an assumption of principles, but a dialectical proposition is inquiry from the "interrogator's point of view"; something that "appears and is commonly believed" (24<sup>b</sup>–15). What is also of key importance in Aristotle's *De Anima* is a view of perception that is rooted in matter, but not a reductive materialism. Inquiry about natural things, Aristotle contends, starts from "affections of the soul," passions, gentleness, loving, and hating that affect the body in a certain way. "Affections of the soul" are principles involving the potentialities of matter. Such potentialities have to do with "nutrition sense-perception, desire, movement in respect to place and thought." But Aristotle emphasizes that if the soul does not exist without a body, it is not, itself, a kind of body; "the soul is a kind of actuality and principle of that which has a potentiality to be such"

(414<sup>a</sup>–25). An important component of Aristotle's view of a perception is the differentiation between desire and intellect. "Both can produce movement in respect of place, intellect and desire, but intellect within reasons for the sake of something and is practical; and it differs from the contemplative intellect in respect to the end. Every desire, too, is for the sake of something; for the object of desire is the starting point for the practical intellect, and the final step is the starting point for action" (433<sup>a</sup>–15).

A further important component of Aristotle's perception is the role of imagination (*phantasia*) as things that appear to us in dreams. This does not mean imagination is always correct, and it can be false. But "imagination is taken from light, because without light it is not possible to see" (429<sup>a</sup>–34). A central feature of *De Anima*, Charles Kahn believes, provides a basis for reconciling the split between nature and human beings. While we are part of nature as any other animal, human behavior entails access to a "noetic" domain that is adaptable to modern claims about culture and language and the development of symbols, art forms, and social institutions. Kahn contends that *De Anima* is, in fact, a "kind of Wittgensteinian protest against a Cartesian and computational model of thinking as a private language or personal operation in the mind or brain."<sup>4</sup>

What Kahn contends provides a key to sustaining the contemporary relevance of Aristotelian naturalism that would not deny the features that it entails as a no longer credible metaphysics, but that other features can be incorporated within a reconstructive interpretation that can overcome the disjunction of hermeneutical interpretation from a concept of human nature. It is here that the collaborative efforts of Martha Nussbaum and Hilary Putnam provide a framework for such a possibility. Nussbaum argues, in fact, that Aristotle's naturalism is not guilty of an untenable metaphysics, for his theory of perception is a rejection of the Platonic distinction between appearance

and reality; a confrontation with what presents us as conflict, confusion and contradictions, bringing conflict to the surface, marshaling consideration for and against; a process analogous to that of a competent judge. Aristotle's position, she believes, can be considered a realism that is beyond relativism, and a full-bodied notion of objectivity, but hospitable to a view that "truth is one for all thinking, language-using beings."<sup>5</sup>

Putnam agrees with Nussbaum that a good deal of Aristotle can be "read in a less metaphysical way than scholastics have read into him."<sup>6</sup> But he does not believe that all of his writings can be so read. Putnam comments that:

The greatest difficulty facing someone who wishes to hold an Aristotelian view is that the central intuition behind that view, that is the intuition that a natural kind has a single determinate form (or nature or essence) has become problematical. . . . The Aristotelian insight that objects have structure is right, provided that we remember that what counts as the structure of something is relative to the ways in which we interact with it. Intentionality and the structure of the world and the structure of language are all intimately related, but it seems that the hope of relating the notion of intentionality to the metaphysical notion of structure (or forms) which itself has no intentional presuppositions, is illusory.<sup>7</sup>

Putnam is a leading exponent of an "internal realism" which would be in accord with the hermeneutical interpretation that human understanding cannot lay claim to an ahistorical or objectivist view of the universe independent of our conceptual schemes.<sup>8</sup> But Putnam does not believe an internal realism requires resignation to a cultural relativism in which truth claims are simply the "right assertability of one's cultural peers."<sup>9</sup> What we assert to be right is always within a background tradition, but what is given within a tradition presupposes a criteria of reason by which traditions can be criticized. We

cannot escape the fact of our pluralism or fallibilism. But one does not have to believe in a unique “*best* moral version, or unique *best* casual version; or unique *best* mathematical version; what we have are *better and worse* versions, and this is objectivity.”<sup>10</sup>

What is significant in Putnam’s account of an internal realism is that although he believes it to be in opposition to Aristotle’s metaphysics, he nonetheless concedes that what he is defending can be appropriately characterized as an “Aristotelian realism without Aristotle’s metaphysics”; a defense of a “common sense world against the excesses of metaphysics; a middle way between metaphysics and relativism.” What Putnam is clearly implying in this statement is that *important features* of Aristotle’s naturalism can be defended within an internal realism.<sup>11</sup> It is this implication that is central to his collaborative essay with Martha Nussbaum in which they contend that Aristotle’s *De Anima* provides a corrective to inadequacies in the mind-body dualism and reductive materialism of seventeenth-century objectivism. Human perception and desire, in other words, cannot be explained from the “bottom up”; there is a psychological transition without a material transition. “Becoming aware is neither correlative with nor realized in the transition of matter.” Aristotelian naturalism is not a sharp distinction between cognitive and emotive. Desire and emotion are created throughout the corpus as forms of selective unintentional awareness. Aristotle’s naturalism is thus congruent with Wittgenstein’s “preserving the non-reducibility and also the experienced complexity of an intentional phenomenon such as perceiving, belief and desire.” Putnam and Nussbaum thus believe Aristotle’s naturalism is an opposition to both a reductive naturalism as well as a Platonic intellectualism. We can have, they concluded,

the nonreductionism and the explanatory priority of the intentional without losing that sense of the natural organic unity of

the intentional with its constitutive matter that is one of the great contributions of Aristotle's realism. We suggest that Aristotle's thought really is, properly understood, the fulfillment of Wittgenstein's desire to have a natural history of man.<sup>12</sup>

It was the intent above to argue that the internal realism of Putnam and Nussbaum provides a framework for sustaining the contemporary relevance of Aristotelian naturalism in congruency with hermeneutical interpretation. Central in this contention is their view of how Aristotle preserves the "non-reducibility and also experienced complexity of intentional phenomena or perception, belief and desire, criticizing both materialist reductionism and Platonic intellectualism."<sup>13</sup> While such a contention is an emphasis upon human beings as part of nature as any functional organism, it is also an emphasis upon a "noetic" dimension that encompasses the domain of culture, language symbols that are the keynote of hermeneutical interpretation. It is now necessary to show how such a connection applies to what Aristotle's ethical-political theory entails as an integral connection to his naturalism.

In the beginning of his *Ethics*, Aristotle comments that every art, every investigation aims at some good: the end of medical science is health; of military science, victory; economic science, wealth. "If, then, our activities have some end which we want for its own sake, and for the sake of which we will all other ends . . . it is clear that this must be the 'Good that is the chief good' " (1094<sup>a</sup>-20). In his *Politics*, Aristotle comments that "Every state is a community of some kind and every community is established with a view to some good." It is the state, or political community, he contends, that embraces all the rest, aiming at the good in a greater degree than any other and at the highest good. The integral connection of Aristotle's political theory with his naturalism is clearly evident in his view of the origin of the state. The family, he contends, is the



association established by nature for the supply of basic needs. When several families are united, and association aims at more than supplying basic needs, the first society to be formed is the village, and when villages are united into a community large enough to be self-sufficient, the state comes into existence, "originating in the bare need of life and continuing for the sake of the good of life" (1252<sup>b</sup>-30).

It would be important to emphasize what Aristotle perceives to be distinctive features of human nature differentiated from plant and animal life, and thus what can be appropriately characterized as a "second nature." The state is a creature of nature, but man is by nature more of a "political animal" than bees or other animals due to the gift of speech as a basis for setting forth what is expedient and inexpedient, just and unjust (1253<sup>a</sup>-15). In his *Ethics*, Aristotle comments that if happiness is the chief good, a clear account requires a consideration of the function of human life that seems to be common even to plants. But in seeking what is peculiar to man, we must exclude the life of nutrition and growth. Next in order is the life of perception, but this is common to all animals. There remains, then, the life of the elements that have a rational principle: "The activity of the soul in conformity with excellence" (1098<sup>a</sup>-15). In considering function of the soul, Aristotle distinguishes between what is in part rational and part irrational. One part of the irrational soul is vegetative, the sources of nutrition and growth. But there is another element of the irrational soul that is receptive to reason, urging men in the right direction and encouraging them to take the best course, indicated in the use of admonition, reproof, and encouragement. Aristotle also speaks of two kinds of virtue: intellectual and moral. Intellectual virtue owes its inception and growth to instruction, but moral good is the result of habit. The moral virtues then are engendered in use neither by nor contrary to nature; we are

constituted by nature to receive them, but their development is due to habit (1103<sup>a</sup>–20). Thus all those faculties with which nature endows us we first acquire as potentialities, and only later effect their actualization. All the virtues we acquire are the result of exercising them, as in becoming a builder by building; instrumentalists by playing instruments. Similarly, we become just by performing just acts, temperate by performing temperate acts; brave by performing brave ones. This view, he believes, is supported by what happens in a city-state. Legislators make their citizens good by habituation (1103<sup>b</sup>–5).

Aristotle's view of virtue as the product of habituation and the role of reason as a restraint upon irrational passions are further illustrated in his view that a government based upon the rule of law is the best approximation to justice. "Therefore he who bids the law rule may be deemed to bid God and Reason alone rule, but he who bids man rule adds an element of the beast, for desire is a wild beast, and passion perverts the minds of rulers even when they are the best of men. The law is reason unaffected by desire" (1287<sup>a</sup>–30). A central feature of Aristotle's ethics is the concept of prudence or practical wisdom. Scientific knowledge is demonstrative, the judgments having to do with first principles and universals. Prudential judgment is concerned with the variables and particulars that are distinctive to the sphere of human conduct. This is why people who do not possess theoretical knowledge may not be more effective in action than those who do possess it (1141<sup>b</sup>–20).

Because of the centrality of the concept of practical judgment versus scientific theory, and the role of habituation in shaping of human virtue, it is plausible to believe that Aristotle's ethical-political theory, if it is to be consistent with hermeneutical interpretation, must be disjoined from his naturalism. But such a contention betrays an essential integrative unity of Aristotle's ethical-political theory with

his theory of perception which, as indicated above, is an effort to avoid both a mind-body dualism as well as a reductive materialism. What this entails can be appropriately characterized as a "second nature" distinctive to human capacities differentiated from other forms of organic life. Human beings share with animal life affection and feelings; nutrition and growth. But it was seen that what is distinctive to human development is a "noetic" capacity embracing language, symbols, culture; a cognizance that human virtues, if rooted in potentialities of nature, are developed by habituation; the role of reason and the administration of justice as the restraint upon irrational passions. Aristotle realizes that a practical judgment is essential to establishing criteria of distributive justice; finding a mean between excesses and deficiency in exercise of virtues; reconciling conflicting claims of power as birth, wealth, education, the multitude (1281<sup>a</sup>-10-30). But it is clear Aristotle perceives a conjunction of practical and theoretical reason as directive to a *telos* of nature as an end of what something is for; the soul as form of a living body; the identification of form and essence. It is here, again, we come back to the problematic of Aristotelian naturalism as a no-longer-credible metaphysical biology. But it was noted that the Putnam-Nussbaum interpretation provides a defense of *De Anima* within an internal realism consistent with what they believe is Wittgenstein's "natural history of Man." It was also noted that Putnam believes that what is meant by an internal realism can be characterized as an "Aristotelian realism without Aristotle's metaphysics. This involves the contention that the fact that scientific inquiry can no longer lay claim to an external, objective reality is not prohibitive to a "common sense realism"; as warranted assertability for "better or worse versions of reality."<sup>14</sup> Such a contention, he believes, entails the indispensable role of images and metaphors that artists use to restructure our world.<sup>15</sup> Putnam believes that such a contention can be extended to

ethical inquiry. What Putnam provides on this point can be seen as a synthesis of Kantian and Aristotelian implications. Putnam is fully cognizant of what is unsatisfactory in Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason*: the categorical imperatives of a *noumenal* reason disjoined from the world of *phenomena*. But he notes that Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* is consistent with an internal realism: the rejection of a "nature in itself" apart from our conceptual schemes. Putnam wonders, in fact, if Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason* cannot be seen as the beginning of internal realism in moral philosophy, for what it involves, he believes, are "moral images" of the world, and not simply the formal categories of an autonomous reason. Kant's moral philosophy, he believes, embodies a rethinking of values he derived from Rousseau, particularly the value of equality; a view that all human beings are equal no matter how unequal in talents, achievements, social contribution.<sup>16</sup> It is Putnam's contention that if moral images are within and not outside our conceptual schemes, what this entails involves an affirmation consistent with Wittgenstein's view that if none of our explanations are *permanently* fated to be "bedrocks," I am able to say "this is where my spade is turned now." While none of my moral pictures are final, or exhaustively correct, I am able to say, for example, that a loyal human being is better than one disloyal; a person capable of *philia*, or a sense of community, is better than one who is not capable of such a virtue.<sup>17</sup>

Putnam acknowledges what he is defending as an internal realism has similarities to the neo-Kantian formulation of Habermas in which a criteria of justification within a "community of inquirers" is in regard to a statement that can withstand tests and criticism. But Putman argues that the version of an internal realism he is defending is also a departure from the neo-Kantian position of Habermas in the direction of a more Aristotelian implication as a "rich and multifaceted idea of the good." The more Aristotelian

implication of Putnam's internal realism also springs from what he believes to be its difference from a "preference function utilitarianism" in which happiness is to be determined by peoples' preferences *as they are now*. While a preference utilitarianism embraces a concept of free choice, it provides no resource for defending the values that require a "thick image of human nature."<sup>18</sup>

Putnam is well aware of the charge that in defending a convergence between scientific and moral inquiry, he is committing to the so-called "naturalistic fallacy" of deriving normative evaluation from scientific description. But Putnam challenges the common assumption of an intrinsic opposition between scientific and moral inquiry. This is not to deny what Aristotle, himself, perceived to be the fact that moral inquiry does not proceed by the same rigor as scientific inquiries: his view is that we must be satisfied with a broad outline of the truth; arguing from what is "for the most part so from premises which are for the most part true," and be content to draw conclusions similarly qualified (1094<sup>b</sup>-20). But Putnam contends that this difference does not mean ethics is therefore unscientific, and that moral statements are nothing more than "projections of feelings that have no objective properties." In Putnam's view, all humans have, to some extent, a sense of justice in which we come to see similarities between injuries to others and injuries to ourselves; between benefits to others and benefits to ourselves. "In these perceptions we are doing something more sophisticated than the projection theory. For we are acknowledging the role of argument in shaping moral attitudes." Putnam recognizes that talk of having an idea of the good is usually seen as "unscientific." But a belief that there is such a thing as justice is not a belief in ghosts.

Justice is not something anyone proposes to *add* to objects recognized by physics as eighteenth-century chemists proposed to

add "plogiston" to the list of objects recognized by chemical theory. Ethics does not *conflict with* physics as the term "unscientific" suggests; it is simply that "just" and "good" and the sense of justice are concepts in a discourse which is not *reducible* to physical discourse. As we have just seen, *other* kinds of essential discourse are not reducible to physical discourse and are not, for that reason, illegitimate. Talk of justice, like talk of "reference," can be *non* scientific without being *unscientific*.<sup>19</sup>

In Putnam's view, scientific inquiry, no less than moral inquiry, involves the construction of "world pictures" that satisfy certain criteria of rational acceptability. The procedures by which we decide upon the acceptability of a scientific theory have to do with whether such theories, as a whole, exhibit certain "virtues." What we are trying to do is to construct a representation of the world that has the characteristics of being "instrumentally efficacious, coherent, comprehensive and simple."<sup>20</sup>

What is true at the level of talk about physical objects, Putnam believes, is also true at the level of description of interpersonal relations and situations. This would be true, for example, in descriptions of other people as "considerate or inconsiderate." Such judgments may, of course, be expressed in the language of praise and blame, but they may be also used to describe and also to explain and predict.<sup>21</sup>

What Putnam is arguing is that if values such as "goodness" or "kindness" are a "bit suspect from a narrowly scientific point of view," there is a comparable guilt in scientific criteria of "coherence" or "simplicity" which have the same problem. For such terms are not reducible to physical nature or governed by "syntactically precise rules." Rather than abandoning the concepts that do not fit with a narrow instrumental concept of rationality, we should recognize that our images of theoretical intelligence, as Plato and Aristotle saw, is simply *part* of our ideal of "total human flourishing."<sup>22</sup>

What is significant in the internal realism of Putnam, as outlined above, is what it provides as a framework for defining the integral connection of Aristotelian naturalism with his ethical-political theory but without recourse to an untenable metaphysical realism. The keynote of this contention is that while moral inquiry cannot escape embodiment within our conceptual scheme, there are particular values and *moral pictures* of these values that (if not final or infallible) can be defended by criteria of “warranted assertability” beyond simply an accord with particular cultural norms and pertaining to a “thick image of human nature.”

What is unsatisfactory in this contention, however, is a lack of clarification of substantive content in regard to the meaning of a “thick image of human nature.” It is here that Martha Nussbaum provides an extension of an internal realism as a basis for a neo-Aristotelian approach to an “international development ethics.” What Nussbaum finds distressing is that “highly intelligent people, deeply committed to the goal of women and men in developing countries; people who think of themselves as progressive and feminist and anti-racist, are taking up positions that converge with the positions of reaction, oppression and sexism. Under the banner of their radical and politically correct anti-essentialism, march ancient religious taboos, the luxury of the pampered husband, ill health, ignorance and death.”<sup>23</sup>

Nussbaum is fully cognizant of the fact that any attempt to establish a cross-cultural concept of a human good cannot lay claim to a metaphysical realism, and she is fully in agreement with Putnam on this point. But in her view:

When we get rid of the hope of transcendental grounding for our evaluative judgments—about the human being as about anything else—we are not left with the abyss. We have everything that we always had all along: the exchange of reasons and ar-

guments by human beings within history, in which, for reasons that are historical and human but not the worse for that, we hold some things to be good and others bad, some arguments to be sound and others not sound.<sup>24</sup>

Nussbaum attempts to defend a substantive content, for a human good that can have a “cross cultural commonality” can be seen as an effort to draw out the implication of Aristotle’s political theory that the best life is one that is in accord with virtues of temperance, justice, and prudence, and that the best form of a state is one where there can be fulfillment of external good, goods of the body and goods of the soul (1323<sup>a</sup>–25). Nussbaum is convinced that it is possible to identify certain features of a common humanity that she believes can be seen as an implication of an Aristotelian essentialism. This would include *bodily needs* in regard to food, shelter; *sexual desire*; *mobility*; *cognitive capacities*, such as perceiving, imagining, thinking; *practical reason* necessary to managing and planning of lives, and answering questions of how one should live; *early infant development* that is a common structure of early life; and the need for *affiliation with other human beings* that is expressive of Aristotle’s view that human beings are naturally social animals.<sup>25</sup> Nussbaum also believes that an Aristotelian concept of well being and flourishing is convergent with Rousseau as a basic sentiment and compassion in regard to the suffering and pain of others; the cognizance of a common humanity in which one believes that one’s own possibilities are similar to those of the suffering.<sup>26</sup>

Nussbaum believes that the Aristotelian concept of human functioning provides a corrective to several inadequacies in utilitarianism. One defect of utilitarianism is that the consideration of desires and subjective preferences is not a reliable indication of what persons may really need to make a flourishing life. The poor and deprived, for example, frequently adjust expectations and aspirations to a



lower level of life that they have known. The criteria of utility can thus often support the *status quo*, and oppose radical changes. A second difficulty is that even if we are able to develop a sophisticated view of human preference, such a view assumes a "commensurability of values," and that for any two distinct ends we can establish a "trade off in purely quantitative terms." But, from an Aristotelian standpoint, this neglects the fact that human functions show a plurality of distinct items each of which must be represented in a fully human life. A third objection is that the ascendancy of monetary value in regard to human functions fails to recognize that money is only a tool to human functioning and has a value in human life only as it serves these functionings. "Money is not always better, and, in general the right amount is what makes functioning best." Finally, utilitarianism neglects the "inalienability of certain elements of the self," the commitment simply to a criterion of "aggregative satisfaction" in which one person's satisfaction can be purchased at the price of another's misery; where huge inequalities can be tolerated for the sake of a larger total or average sum.<sup>27</sup>

But if Nussbaum believes an Aristotelian essentialism is opposed to a radical skepticism or cultural relativism, it is not, for that reason, insensitive to cultural variation, or the principle of individual autonomy. Nussbaum emphasizes that her view of human functions constitutes a "thick vague" conception of human forms of life, precisely in order to account for historical, cultural differences. While this view identifies general components of what is fundamental to human life, it allows for "multiple specification of each of the components." Fear, death, the love of play, friendship, and affiliation, for example, are always manifested in a specific historical experience. What she is arguing is simply that there are areas of common humanity that are a sufficient overlap as a basis for general conversation on common problems and prospects. An Aristotelian essen-

tialism thus endorses a “plural specification” in which a “determinant concept of the good at a higher level of generality leaves a great deal of latitude for citizens to experience each of the components more concretely and with much variety in accordance with local traditions and individual tastes.” Nussbaum also argues that an Aristotelian essentialism is not insensitive to the principle of individual autonomy in regard to choices about the “good life.” The list of capacities, she emphasizes, is designed to leave necessary resources and conditions for enabling individuals to make choices; government is not directed to coercing citizens to act in certain ways, but only to provide conditions necessary for acting in such ways. A person with plenty of food can choose to fast. A person with access to subsidized university education can do something else instead. But what is basic to the Aristotelian claim is that a comprehensive concern with human flourishing is a better way of promoting choice than the liberal concern for spontaneity alone, “which may tolerate situations in which individuals may be cut off from a fuller human use of their faculties.”<sup>28</sup>

As seen above, Nussbaum is persuasive in arguing that an Aristotelian approach to the substantive context of human well being can be defended without recourse to an untenable metaphysics. But it is necessary to confront an obvious objection: she is ignoring features of Aristotle’s political theory that are conspicuously alien to the egalitarian-liberative features of her concept of an international development ethics. Aristotle’s *Politics* commences with what might seem to be consistent with such a contention: his view, for example, that man is by nature a political animal, having the gift of speech that is the basis for moral evaluation; his view is that the state comes into existence, originating in bare needs of life, and continuing in existence for the sake of the good life. But that these statements are immediately followed by the contention that some

should rule and others be ruled is a thing not only necessary but expedient. From the hour of their birth, some are marked out for subjection, others for rule: he who by nature is not his own, but rather is by nature a slave. Aristotle also contends that the male is by nature superior and female inferior, and the one rules and the other is ruled. "This principle or necessity extends to all mankind" (1254<sup>b</sup>-15). Aristotle further contends that a state best governed not only excludes slaves and women from citizen participation, but also those who are mechanics and tradesmen. "For such a life is ignoble and inimical to virtue" (1329<sup>a</sup>-1). In light of these features of Aristotle's naturalism, it is thus understandable that Wallach wonders how Nussbaum can find it congenial to her egalitarian context of an international development ethic.<sup>29</sup> But, as noted in the introduction to this discussion, Wallach is missing the logic of a hermeneutical interpretation by which we are able to perceive a meaning of a classical text independent of the intention of the author. What Nussbaum perceives to be the contemporary relevance of Aristotle's ethics is what it entails as a view of the capacities and functions essential to human well being and flourishing. But she is fully cognizant of the objection that such a concept may be given a "prejudiced application." What this entails, she contends, is a self-deceptive strategy that separates others from one's own species. Such a self deception has a contemporary illustration in the use of the concept of "person" as opposed to the concept of "human being" in judicial criteria. In Massachusetts in 1932, women were declared ineligible for jury service, although the law stated that every person qualified to vote is eligible.

It is perfectly clear that statutes worded in terms of "human being" would have been far more difficult to evade in this manner. With "person," the defender of equality is on uncertain ground, ground that the opponent can at any moment shift un-

der her feet. With “human being,” on the other hand, it is always open to her to say to opponent: Look at these beings: you cannot fail to grant that they use their sense, that they think about the future, that they engage in ethical conversation; that they have needs and vulnerabilities similar to your own. Grant that they are human, and you grant that they have needs for flourishing that exert a moral pull on anyone who should deny them.<sup>30</sup>

What is central to Nussbaum’s contention, then, is that the fact that Aristotle can be accused of an obviously prejudiced application of his general ideal of human nature in the Greek historical context does not mean we cannot find in this ideal a source of inspiration in viewing contemporary problems. What this entails, as previously noted, is the process of hermeneutical interpretation by which we are able to perceive a meaning for us in a classical text that we can differentiate from the intentions of an author dwelling within a historical horizon of the past alien to our present day self understanding, and where we are able to appropriate this meaning in a way that is directive to social and political changes necessary to the advancement of equality and social justice of the modern world.

It would be important to emphasize that if the above Putnam-Nussbaum collaboration is an effort to establish a basis for a neo-Aristotelian political theory, they are viewing this possibility in compatibility with a reconstructive liberalism that can be seen as an effort to salvage an authentic achievement of the Enlightenment from the distortions in the instrumental-utilitarian tradition of classical liberalism. It was seen that Putnam believes that a Kantian ideal of freedom and equality can be sustained in the framework of a pragmatic realism: For Putnam believes that what Kant is providing is a *moral image of the world* that entails as a “thick image” of human nature having an Aristotelian implication. Such an implication is thus in op-

position to a "preference utilitarianism," in which happiness is determined by where one is now in which a concept of free choice does not provide a resource for the defining of values that come from a "thick image of human nature." What Nussbaum finds objectionable in utilitarianism is how people in situations of poverty and deprivation can frequently be conditioned to low expectations, that become a justification for the *status quo*; the fact that utilitarianism is frequently simply a monetary view of human functions; or where it becomes a "trade off" in which one person's satisfaction comes at the price of another's misery.<sup>31</sup> But if Nussbaum believes a corrective to utilitarianism requires a more Aristotelian view of human good, she emphasizes a concept of liberal pluralism, allowing for multiple specifications, where each component of well being is consistent with local tradition and individual tastes.

What Nussbaum provides as a basis for reconstructive liberalism can be effectively clarified in the context of constructive dialogue with John Rawls' theory of justice. A central component of Rawls' theory is the concept of citizens as "free and equal," having two moral powers: a capacity for a sense of justice, and a concept of the good. Justice as fairness is conceived of as a choice from an "original position" under a "veil of ignorance" in regard to historical-cultural contingencies that are a source of competitive advantage. There are two principles of justice necessary to the realization of the values of liberty and equality: a) each person is to have an equal claim to basic liberties; b) social and economic inequalities are attached to positions and offices open to all under conditions of equality of opportunity and are to be for the benefit of the least advantaged members of society. Also central to Rawls' contention is that the concept of justice differs from comprehensive moral, metaphysical, and religious views in which agreement is not possible in the pluralism of modernity. Justice is a political concept pertaining to the basic

structure of a constitutional policy within the political institution and the public traditions of their interpretation.<sup>32</sup>

In her outline of what she sees to be an Aristotelian approach to an international development ethics, Nussbaum emphasizes several points of contrast with Rawls' concept of justice. Rawls' concept of justice, she points out, entails a "thin concept of the good," in contrast to what she believes is needed for a more Aristotelian view of the overall scope and content of human life.<sup>33</sup> What she also finds unsatisfactory is Rawls' view of wealth and income as good *in their own right* that does not consider their role in promoting human functioning. Rawls also neglects consideration of variations such as pregnant versus non-pregnant woman, children versus adults. External emphasis upon possessions alone neglects other aspects of work such as the structure of labor relations, class, and gender relations. We thus need to make primary goods not a list of resources, but a list of basic capabilities of persons.<sup>34</sup>

Yet it is possible to perceive in Rawls' theory of justice a significant point of convergence with the more neo-Aristotelian formulation of Nussbaum. For Nussbaum is fully in accord with Rawls' view that moral evaluation cannot be grounded upon a metaphysical realism, but rather on the reasoned argument of human beings within history.<sup>35</sup> Nussbaum also notes her convergence with Rawls in regard to his concept of "two moral powers" that is analogous to her own emphasis upon practical reason and sociality.<sup>36</sup> It should also be noted that Rawls, in his most recent work: *Political Liberalism*, comments that his view of primary goods can be seen in their role in relation to human functions. This appears in his responses to Amartya Sen, who shares Nussbaum's neo-Aristotelian formulation. Rawls comments that he agrees that citizens do have essential minimal capacities (moral, intellectual, and physical) to be cooperative members of society. He agrees with Sen that basic capacities are of first importance and that

use of primary goods is always to be assessed in light of assumptions about such capacities. An index of such goods can be made more specific at the constitutional and legislative stages and interpreted even more specifically at the judicial stage. Such an index can thus be defined in concrete case of what are to be counted as citizen needs.<sup>37</sup>

Where the contrast between Rawls and Nussbaum is most apparent is simply in the fact that Rawls, unlike Nussbaum, believes that principles of justice must be restricted to what is persuasive within a tradition of Western democracy without considering the question of an application to other cultures. But Nussbaum believes that a concept of functions and capacities essential to human well being can be defined in terms of a cross-cultural commonality. But it should be noted that what Rawls believes to be the agreement of parties from an "original position" is not the radical choice of Nietzschean, or Existentialist, implication. For parties from the original position are moved by their preference for primary goods, rooted in their higher order interest in developing and exercising their moral powers. The process of moral evaluation, Rawls believes, must proceed by the method of "reflective equilibrium": a stage that is reached after a person has weighed proposed conceptions and has either revised his judgment in accord with one of them, or held fast to his initial conviction.<sup>38</sup> The concept of "reflective equilibrium," it can be argued, is congruent with the Putnam-Nussbaum defense of an internal or pragmatic realism; Putnam's view that the end of the possibility of a metaphysical realism is not prohibitive to warranted assertability for a *better-or-worse* version of social reality beyond a cultural relativism; Nussbaum's emphasis upon the exercise of reason in argumentation as to whether some things are good or bad and some things are sound and others not sound. Rawls is, of course, skeptical as to whether his view of justice can apply to other cultures, as well as to any possibility of "natural"

moral principles.<sup>39</sup> But it is significant that in his early work, *A Theory of Justice*, Rawls shows a convergence with a concept of “natural sentiments” that, as noted above, Nussbaum believes to be what Greek classical tradition has in common with Rousseau. Rawls comments that principles of justice in a well ordered society are suited to psychological principles known to persons from the original position in a tradition of moral learning illustrated by Rousseau, Kant and, more recently, by Piaget. This entails a concept of “natural sentiments” that are the product of the child’s relation to parents, and the later development in associated living that gives rise to ties of love and trust; the ties of friendship and fellow feeling that emerge from the later context of associative life. It is this development that provides the basis for the desire to act upon principles of justice, and how we come to appreciate the ideal of social cooperation. Rawls contends, in fact, that natural attitudes are a normal part of human life, and that “the moral sentiments are continuous with these attitudes in the sense that the love of mankind and the desire to uphold the common good include the principles of truth and justice as necessary to defining their object.”<sup>40</sup> Rawls also believes that the general moral psychology of justice as fairness can be characterized as an *Aristotelian principle* in which capacities brought about by “psychological and biological naturalism pertain to considered judgments and values; the ends and activities that have a major place in rational plans.”<sup>41</sup>

The concept of “natural sentiments” that Rawls elaborates in his earlier writings has dropped out of his more recent writings. As noted above, Rawls now contends that a political concept of justice has to do with fundamental ideas within a political culture of a democratic society: the political institutions of a constitutional regime and public traditions of their interpretation. Rawls apparently now believes that a concept of “natural sentiments” is not com-



patible with this contention—although he has provided no clarification on this point. But it is a major contention of this study that a historical-hermeneutical interpretation, as an emphasis upon the role of tradition and social practices in shaping individual identity and selfhood, need not be disjoined from human beings in the world as a “historicized nature.” Such a contention, it can also be argued, can be consistent with Rawls’ earlier emphasis upon natural sentiments that are the product of the human learning experience in the child’s relation to parents and later associative life. It will be the intention of the following chapters to show how the concept of a historicized nature can be clarified as a continuity from Aristotelian implications through the contributions of Hume, Dewey, Evolutionary Biology, and Deep Ecology.

## *Chapter 2*

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# Hume: Natural Sentiments

The previous chapter was an attempt to show how the collaborative efforts of Putnam and Nussbaum provide a basis for defense of the contemporary relevance of Aristotelian categories within the framework of an internal or pragmatic realism. But it would be important to emphasize that what this entails can be seen as “standing at the end” of philosophical trends emanating from earlier Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment influences. This study is intended to show that the contemporary relevance of Aristotelian categories needs to be seen as a continuity through an authentic achievement of the Enlightenment heritage that can be salvaged from the distortions in the instrumental-utilitarian tradition of classical liberalism. David Hume’s concept of natural sentiment, it will be argued, represents a leading expression of this possibility. Such a contention may seem dubious or improbable in light of the common association of Hume with a radical skepticism in regard to the role of reason in the determination of moral principles—his view of reason as a “slave to passions.” But it will be shown, first of all, that Hume’s

view of the role of reason is misunderstood as a sanction for an irrational emotivism. For what a critical reason supplies, he believes, is the ascertainment of the facts of a given situation, making distinctions, comparisons, and so on in order to arrive at "calm over violent passion" and the congruence of reason and natural sentiments. It will be shown, secondly, that while Hume believes that the moral approbation of natural sentiments and social virtues is due to perceptions of their "public utility," he emphasizes the meaning of utility as an "interest of humanity" beyond egoism or self love. It will be shown, thirdly, how an Aristotelian implication of Hume's moral theory is further apparent in his rejection of the Hobbesian-Lockean concept of a pre-social state of nature, and his view of the role of human artifice and conventions in establishing principles of justice while emphasizing that the moral approbation of such principles stems from natural sentiments. It will be emphasized, fourthly, that although Hume's political theory provides a corrective to distortions in the philosophical premises of classical liberalism, it is at the same time an expression of an emancipative impetus of early Enlightenment modernity in regard to ideals of civic liberty, religious tolerance, and the resistance of political tyranny. Finally, it will be emphasized that from the historical horizon of our present day understanding, Hume's moral-political theory is beset by serious difficulties, and that it is subject to the critique that it was an ideological support for the power structure of the rising commercial classes in the context of his time. But the importance of Hume's contribution, it will be concluded, is what it represents as an important achievement of the early Enlightenment that was a potentiality for later Enlightenment, post-Enlightenment development towards the clarification of what is essential to a framework for a naturalistic political theory.

Hume's reputation as offering a landmark expression of Enlightenment skepticism is readily apparent in his contention that perceptions of the human mind resolve themselves into "Impression and Ideas"; the former being the sensations and passive emotions that make their appearance in the soul, the latter being images of these Impressions in thinking and reasoning. All ideas are copies of Impressions, and reason is nothing but a comparison and discovery of "Resemblance, and Contiguity in time and place, and Cause and Effect."<sup>1</sup> Ideas of substance as well as that of a mode are nothing but a collection of ideas united by the imagination. All kinds of reasoning consist of nothing but the comparison discovery of those relations, either constant or inconstant, which two or more objects bear to each other.<sup>2</sup> It is only by experience, Hume believes, that we can infer the existence of one object from that of another. There are no *demonstrative* arguments that can prove that instances of which we have no experience resemble those of which we have had experiences. Experimental science cannot be equated to a demonstrative science in which rules are certain or infallible. All reasoning in regard to cause and effect has to do with probabilities, as derived from customs; and belief is more properly an act of the sensitive, rather than the cognitive, part of our nature. Since nothing is ever present to the mind but its perceptions, all the actions of seeing, hearing, loving, hating, and thinking fall under this denomination. Such perceptions are no less applicable to judgments in which we distinguish good and evil. "Morals excite passions, and produce or prevent actions. Reason, of itself, is utterly impotent in this particular. The rules of morality, therefore, are not conclusions of our reason."<sup>3</sup> Reason, as the discovery of truth or falsehood, consists in the agreement or disagreement either to *real* relations of ideals or to *real* existence of matter of fact.<sup>4</sup> Passions are not susceptible to

any agreement or disagreement; it is impossible that they can be pronounced true or false, contrary or conformable to reason. "We speak not strictly and philosophically when we talk of the combat of passion and of reason. Reason is and ought only to be the slave of the passions and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them."<sup>5</sup> Hume's strong assertion that reason is a "slave to passion" makes it understandable that his ethical theory can be interpreted as a sanction for an irrational emotivism, and it is puzzling that Hume would not have recognized this possibility. For such an interpretation ignores what he goes on to elaborate at some length—the role of reason in the clarification of "calm over violent passions." Hume recognizes that passion can be founded on false supposition where it chooses means insufficient for a designated end. But the moment we perceive this falsehood, our passions then yield to reason. Hume also emphasizes the "calm desires" that, although real passion, produce little emotion, known more by effect than by immediate feelings or sensations. This would be true, for example, in certain instincts such as benevolence, resentment, or kindness to children. When these passions are calm and cause no disorder, they are readily taken as the determination of reason. What we mean by reason are the affections that operate more calmly and cause no disorders or temper.<sup>6</sup>

Besides the "calm passions," there are certain "violent emotions" that occur, for example, when one is injured, or threatened. Men thus often act knowingly against their own interests, but men also counteract a violent passion in the pursuit of their interest.

In general we may observe that both these principles operate on the will; and where they are contrary, that either of them prevails, according to the *general* character of or *present* disposition of the person. What we call strength of mind, implies the prevalence of the calm passions above the violent; tho we may easily

observe, there is no man so constantly possessed of this virtue, as never on any occasion to yield to the sollicitation of passion and desire.<sup>7</sup>

A key point in Hume's moral theory is his emphasis upon the concurrence of *reason* and *sentiment* in almost all moral determination that can be the basis for what is "amiable or odious, praiseworthy or blamable." In order to pave the way for such sentiments, it is the role of reason to make nice distinctions, draw just conclusions, make distant comparisons, ascertain general facts. It is significant that Hume believes his concept of natural sentiment is in accord with a classical tradition. Ancient philosophy, he points out, often affirms that virtue is nothing but conformity to reason, but "in general seems to consider morals as deriving their existence from taste and sentiment." Hume believes that sentiments of conscious worth proceed from a review of man's conduct and character, and includes what Aristotle characterizes as courage, temperance, modesty, prudence, justice, and friendship.<sup>8</sup> As W. D. Falk comments, Hume's law of practical reason bridges the gap between understanding and sensibility by making objective knowledge impinge upon our sensibilities. What this amounts to, Falk believes, is the "deliberation which terminates, as it did for Aristotle, in 'moving the soul.'"<sup>9</sup>

In defending the view that Hume's concept of natural sentiment has a significant continuity with Aristotelian implications, it is necessary to confront what would be controversial in such a contention due to the association of Hume with a tradition of utilitarianism that came from the influence of Hobbes and Locke that carried over into nineteenth century development. Hume's endorsement of utilitarianism is clearly evident in his view that it is the "public utility" of virtues that is the chief circumstance for

which they derive their merit. Since it is the public utility of virtues such as what is honorable, noble, etc., it follows that the end which they have a tendency to promote must be in some way agreeable to us, and take hold of some natural affection. "It must please either from consideration of self interest, or from more generous motives and regards."<sup>10</sup> Hume also acknowledged that various virtues have a utility in regard to self interest and are an advantage to a person, such as temperance, sobriety, patience, etc., having a merit that serves the person who has them. But Hume strongly rejects the view that morality is reducible to self interest. The concept of morality, he contends, requires a sentiment common to all mankind. While a man identifies another as his rival or enemy, he is speaking in the language of self love. But when he speaks of someone as being "vicious," "odious," or "depraved," he is speaking a language he expects his audience to agree with.<sup>11</sup> He must therefore depart from his private sentiments and choose a point of view common to him and others, a universal frame of reference or a principle of humanity. We cannot, then, subscribe to the view that moral sentiments are derivative from self love, and we must adopt a more public affection, recognizing that the interests of society are not indifferent to us.

Usefulness is only a tendency to a certain end; and it is a contradiction in terms that anything please as means to an end, where the end itself nowise affects us. If usefulness therefore be a source of moral sentiment, and if this usefulness be not always considered with a reference to self, it follows that everything which contributes to the happiness of society recommends itself directly to our approbation and good will.<sup>12</sup>

While Hume thus believed the utility resulting from social virtues is the best part of their merit, such merit has reference to an interest of humanity beyond self love:

“When we recognize that even in an animal or plant as being *useful* and *beneficial*, we give it an applause or recommendation suited to its nature.”<sup>13</sup> The same is true of a piece of furniture, vestment, or a house; the advantages of a particular profession; the begetting of children; the achievement of a historian. In all such judgments, we make moral distinctions of what is praiseworthy or blameworthy. When disputes arise, we make a decision in terms of what is the true interest of mankind, and if there are false opinions coming from appearance, we retract our first sentiment and readjust the boundaries of good and evil. “Giving alms to common beggars is naturally praised because it seems to carry relief to the distressed and indigent.” But we see such an action as a weakness, rather than a virtue, if this encourages idleness and debauchery.<sup>14</sup> While tyranny and assassination of usurpers was admired in ancient times, history and experience has convinced us that such practices are no longer models for imitation. Liberality in princes can be regarded as a mark of beneficence, but “when it occurs that the homely bread of the honest and industrious is thereby converted into delicious cakes for the idle and the prodigal, we soon restrict our heedless praise.”<sup>15</sup> Hume concludes that it seems understandable that nothing can bestow more merit upon any creature than the sentiment of benevolence in any eminent degree, and at least part of the merit arises from its tendency to promote the interest of our species and bestow happiness on human society. “The social virtues are never regarded without their beneficial tendencies, nor viewed as barren and unfruitful. The happiness of mankind, the order of society, the harmony of families, the mutual support of friends are always considered as the result of the gentle domination over the breasts of men.”<sup>16</sup>

It would be important to emphasize that if Hume believed that moral virtues derive from natural sentiment,



this belief does not apply to *all* virtues, and that some virtues which produce pleasure and approbation are the result of "human artifice" and convention.<sup>17</sup> This is true of justice and property rights. All moral duties, Hume contends, divide into two kinds. The first are a product of natural instincts, operating independently of obligations in regard either to private or public utility. Such instincts have to do, for example, with the love of children, gratitude to benefactors, pity to the unfortunate. But the second kind of duty is not the product of an original instinct, but is performed from a sense of obligation that results from the necessities of society; the justice that has to do with rights of property, and the observances of promises.<sup>18</sup>

Hume believed that the concept of *state of nature* has entailed a *poetic fiction* of what is "charming and peaceful" as well as the Hobbesian concept of a "state of war and violence."<sup>19</sup> But whether either concept of a state of nature ever existed, such conditions could not be a basis for a state. It is by society that man is able to supply his defects, and by which his infirmities are compensated. In order to form society, it is necessary that man be sensible to the advantages that are impossible in an "uncultivated" state. This is made possible by fact of the natural union between sexes and the concern for offspring; the development of custom and habits that affect the development of children. What is problematic in the circumstances of nature, however, is the presence of *selfishness*. While family ties show the presence of generosity, this affection does not fit men for a larger society. Hume notes that each person loves himself better than any other single person, and his love for others is strongest in regard to close relations and acquaintances. These differences must necessarily produce an opposition of passions and actions that impedes the possibility for social union. The remedy to the partiality of affection thus requires "human artifice." It is the establishment of conventions that gives rise to the consciousness of

a common interest and the need for regulations and rules. It is by such conventions that concepts of justice and injustice arise, as well as property rights and obligations. Relations of justice are thus not natural but moral. "As our first and most natural sentiment of morality is founded on the nature of our passions, and gives preference to ourselves and friends above strangers, it is impossible there can be naturally any such thing as a fixed right of property, while the opposite passions of men impel them in contrary directions and are not restrained by any convention or agreement."<sup>20</sup> Justice arises from the human conventions that are intended to remedy the inconveniences of the state of nature. "Here then is a proposition which I think may be regarded as certain, *that it is only from the selfishness and confined generosity of men, along with the scanty provisions nature has made for his wants that justice derives its origins.*"<sup>21</sup>

In his consideration of the principles of justice that are the product of convention, Hume placed strong emphasis upon rules in regard to the rights of property and the stability of its possession. While the assignment of property to present possessors is natural, its utility extends beyond the first formation of society. It is necessary, then, to establish rules in regard to *Occupation, Prescription, Accession, and Succession*. The problems and difficulties accompanying the establishment of society requires an immediate remedy that warrants annexing property to first possession or to *occupation*. Since the criteria of first possession often entails controversy, doubt and uncertainty, long possession or *prescription* naturally takes place. We also acquire property by *accession* when connected to what is already property, as the fruits of our garden, offspring of cattle, etc. The right to *succession* occurs when possessions are passed on to the close relatives.<sup>22</sup>

Hume also believes that rules of morality require the performance of promises that are not natural. A promise would not be intelligible before human conventions had

established it, and even if it were intelligible, it would not be attended by moral obligations. If we were to follow the natural course of our passion and inclination, we would perform few actions for the advantage of others. Promises are thus conventions of men that create new motives having to do with *symbols* and *signs* that provide security to conduct in particular instances.<sup>23</sup>

Hume's view of principles of justice as being conventional rather than as a product of nature can thus be seen as having some affinity with Burke's view of society as artificial and not natural; his concept of a *prescriptive constitution*, authoritative not only in regard to property, but a historical continuity, the choice of ages, generations, social habits, and customs.

But Hume's political theory departs from Burke at a crucial point. If Hume agrees that principles of justice are a product of convention, rather than nature, he does not agree that it is convention that is finally authoritative in regard to *morality*. Hume acknowledged the moral distinctions that arise from education and precepts may increase or diminish sentiments of approbation or dislike and, in some cases, create new sentiments (as would be evident in superstitious practices and observances). But Hume contends that not *all* moral affections arise from this source. "Had nature made no such distinctions as 'honorable,' 'shameful,' 'odious,' 'noble,' such distinctions never would have had a place in any language, and politicians could never have made them intelligible to any audience." Such virtue thus must have a natural basis, antecedent to education, that can command the affections of man.<sup>24</sup> Justice and injustice, Hume believes, have two different foundations. One is the *interest* men have in realizing that it is impossible to live in society without certain rules. But a second foundation is the *morality* in the observance of these rules which follow naturally; a recognition of their benefit to society and their public utility.<sup>25</sup> Hume's view that prin-

ciples of justice are the product of human conventions, then, is not a departure from his concept of natural sentiments as a basis for moral judgments.

But it is important to emphasize (as previously noted) that Hume's reference to a concept of "public utility" is not a convergence with a Benthamite utilitarianism of self interest and self love, but rather the public affections that take into account the interests of society, a point of view shared in common with others and in the interest of "humanity."

The necessity of justice to the support of society is the SOLE foundation of the virtues; and since no moral excellence is more highly esteemed, we may conclude that this circumstance of usefulness has, in general, the strongest energy and most entire command over our sentiments. It must, therefore, be the source of a considerable part of the merit ascribed to humanity, benevolence, friendship, public spirit, and other social virtues of that stamp; as it is the SOLE source of the moral approbation to fidelity, justice, veracity, integrity, and those other estimable and useful qualities and principles.<sup>26</sup>

While Hume's concept of natural sentiments can be defended as having significant continuity with Aristotelian implication in regard to social virtues and principles of justice, it would be important to emphasize what his political theory represents as a central dynamic of early Enlightenment liberalism: the challenge to both ecclesiastical and political dogmatism; his defense of the right of resistance to political tyranny; his affirmation of freedom of criticism; and civic liberties. In his critique of religious dogmatism, Hume distinguishes between *superstition* and *enthusiasm*. The source of superstition, he believes, is apparent in religions that exploit human weakness, fears, and melancholy, along with ignorance. Because man appears to be unworthy and despicable in his approach to divine

presence, deference is extended to persons supposedly more favored by divinity. "Superstition" is thus favorable to priestly power. "Enthusiasm" is characteristic of religions that reject reason as a fallacious guide, and appeal to a divine being or supernatural authority as the sole source of authority. But enthusiasts, he believes, have been free from the yoke of ecclesiastics, and have expressed greater independence in their devotion, with contempt for forms, ceremonies and tradition (characteristic of Quakers, Independents, and Presbyterians). The violence of this species of religion is apparent in *Anabaptists* in Germany, *Commisars* in France, and *Covenantors* in Scotland, often begetting extreme resolutions, a contempt for common rules of reason, morality, and prudence. But if enthusiasm provokes civil disorder, it exhausts itself and, in time, becomes more calm and serene. Religion characterized by superstition "steals in gradually, rendering man tame and submissive and seems inoffensive." But it facilitates the authority of priests who are the source of persecution and religious wars. "As superstition groans under the domination of priests, enthusiasm is destructive of ecclesiastical power."<sup>27</sup>

Hume's fears about the dangers of ecclesiastical power does not mean that he takes lightly the general principle of obedience to established authority, the titles of original contract, long possession, present possession, succession, and positive law have a strong claim to sovereignty, and can be justly regarded as sacred and inviolate. But Hume had no doubt that in case of enormous tyranny, it is lawful to take up arms even against a supreme power. Nothing is more essential to public interest than the preservation of public liberties in which every part of the constitution must have a right of self defense. It is a gross absurdity, he contends, "to suppose that in any government there is a right without a remedy or to allow that supreme power is shared with the people while yet denying the right of resistance."<sup>28</sup> Hume contends that in all government there is a

perpetual instinctive struggle open or secure between AUTHORITY and LIBERTY, and neither of them can ever absolutely prevail in contest. While a great sacrifice of liberty must necessarily be made in every government, this does not mean the authority of government should be uncontrollable. The essence of free government, he contends, resides in the partition of power and action in terms of "general and equal laws, that are previously known to all members of the government and to all their subjects."<sup>29</sup>

What Hume's political theory exemplifies as an articulation of the legacy of Enlightenment liberalism is also central to his emphasis upon freedom of criticism. Those who employ their pens on political subjects free from party prejudice, he contends, contribute most to public utility. Hume believes that the principle of freedom of press is integral to the distinctive features of the English constitution as an emphasis upon restraints upon the authority of magistrates, and the protection against the exercises of arbitrary power.

The spirit of the people must frequently be roused in order to cure the ambition of the court; and the dread of rousing this spirit must be employed to prevent that ambition. Nothing is so effectual to this purpose as the liberty of the press, by which all the learning, wit and genius of the nation may be employed on the side of freedom, and everyone be animated to its defense. As long, therefore, as the republican part of our government can maintain itself against the monarchical, it will naturally be careful to keep the press open, as of importance to its own preservation.<sup>30</sup>

Hume's articulation of the spirit of Enlightenment liberalism, finally, is evident in his contention that the spread of the arts and sciences is associated with the development of free government. Characteristic of earlier ages of political absolutism, he believes, was the lack of experience and

education that has been essential to the development of modern constitutional government; the knowledge that is sensitive to the need for government based upon general laws, rather than the delegation of authority to inferior magistrates. The advantage of a free state is that it has given rise to LAW. "From law arises security; from security, curiosity; and from curiosity, knowledge." Monarchy, when absolute, is repugnant to law. "Great wisdom and reflection can alone reconcile them. But such a degree of wisdom can never be expected before the greater refinements and improvements of human reason. These refinements require curiosity, security and law. The *first* growth, therefore, of the arts and science can never be expected in despotic government."<sup>31</sup>

It is finally necessary to underscore several difficulties in Hume's contribution to the possibility of a naturalistic political theory. One has already noted the confusion he creates in his insistence on the one hand, that reason is utterly impotent in regard to moral judgment and only a "slave to passion," while at the same time quite obviously assigning reason a constructive role in assessment of fact, making comparisons, drawing just conclusions, etc., in order to arrive at "calm over violent passions" and what, as indicated above as an Aristotelian implication that is the effort to establish the concurrence of reason and sentiment.

A second difficulty is that while Hume may be entitled to contend that certain virtues such as "generosity," "sociability," "humaneness," and "mercy" have a universality in regard to the merits of human nature, there is a wide cultural variation in their meaning and application. What is needed as a modification of Hume's contention is a more *minimal* definition of cross-cultural functions and capacities essential to human well being. Such modification can be provided in what was seen in the previous chapter as Martha Nussbaum's view of international development ethics.

It was seen that Nussbaum is affirmative of a concept of natural sentiment and compassion that she believes is a continuity with a Greek classical heritage through Rousseau. Hume's contribution can be seen as part of this continuity. But what Nussbaum provides is an emphasis upon how natural sentiment must be seen as supplement to a minimal view of functions and capacities essential to human well being that have a cross-cultural validity such as bodily needs, affiliation with others, early infant development, theoretical and practical reason, and relation to external nature. But Nussbaum strongly emphasizes that a view of human functions and capacities pertains to broad guidelines that leave latitude for citizens to specify components in accordance with local tradition and circumstances. Where Hume's moral theory is subject to the modification provided by Nussbaum, it can then be seen as fully congruent with her view of the centrality of human compassion and sentiment in regard to what it is for a human being to flourish and a belief that one's own possibilities are similar to those of a person who is suffering.

A third difficulty in Hume's contribution is in regard to his view of the relation of natural sentiments to the principles of justice that he believes to be the product of "human artifice." It was seen that Hume is fully cognizant that human artifice can often be an expression of the "prejudices of politicians," or even superstition, and it is natural sentiments that are capable of making this distinction. But it is here that a confusion arises. Hume believes natural sentiments have an "instinctive component" that is in contrast to the principles of justice that are a product of human artifice. But it was seen that Hume is not subscribing to the concept of a pre-social "state of nature." Human nature cannot exist without society and what he clearly believes to be the role of parental training and socialization in shaping capacities for human moral evaluation. What needs to be clarified, then, is what natural sentiment entails as a



“historicized nature,” which (while not the dispositions of a supposedly “pre-social state of nature”) pertain to qualities of human character and conduct, along with capacity for critical reason, that can be a basis for the approbation of social virtues that have a claim to universality beyond what is authoritative simply by reference to particular traditions or conventions. A further implication of this contention would also be a corrective to what is unsatisfactory in Hume’s view that principles of justice are *initially* the product of human artifice and, when seen to serve a public utility, are *then* given the moral approbation of natural sentiments. What is required, rather, is how the process of critical reflection that is the product of learning experience and socialization in human growth and development is the key to defining principles of justice as the *end point* or outcome of a confrontation with initially conflicting claims and interests. Such critical reflection would be in accord with what Hume, himself, perceives to be the role of reason in the analysis of facts of a situation, making comparisons, etc., in order to arrive at proper sentiments.

A fourth difficulty in Hume’s concept of natural sentiments is that what he saw to be its political implication remains within the limited horizon of early Enlightenment modernity in regard to social justice and equality. Hume’s political theory was among leading expressions of what was the liberative-emancipative impetus of the early Enlightenment as the break from the slavery, class divisions, and political and ecclesiastical authoritarianism of ancient civilization. It was seen above that Hume believed that natural sentiments are the source of moral approbation for principles of justice pertaining to property rights, the rule of law, and civic liberties. But this is not to deny what, from the standpoint of modern liberalism, are conservative implications not only in the central place given to property rights, but in his view that the well-being of society depends upon “husbandmen” and “manufacturers”; his sym-

pathy for the *principle* of constitutional monarchy.<sup>32</sup> Hume is thus vulnerable to the charge that his concept of natural sentiments became an ideological bulwark for a particular historical contingency of power and political authority that did not envisage the subsequent development of liberalism as recognition of the necessity of state action to remedy abuses of *laissez faire* capitalism, the concern for social justice and equality on behalf of working classes. But what needs to be emphasized, in conclusion, is that this difficulty, along with the others outlined above, does not diminish the importance of Hume's contribution as a landmark achievement of early Enlightenment in the direction of a naturalistic political theory that was a *potenti-ality* for what was to be given fuller realization in the contribution of John Dewey that will be considered in the following chapter.



## Chapter 3

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# Dewey: Naturalistic Humanism

It was the intent of the previous chapter to emphasize the importance of Hume's contribution to the development of a framework for a naturalistic political theory expressive of the liberative-emancipative thrust of the early Enlightenment modernism, but a corrective to distortion in the instrumental-utilitarian tradition of classical liberalism. In the foreword to the 1930 Modern Library edition of his book, *Human Nature and Conduct*, Dewey commented that the volume might be said to be an "essay continuing the tradition of David Hume." While often seen as a writer carrying philosophical skepticism to its limits, Dewey also had a constructive aim, "that a knowledge of human nature provides a map or chart of all human and social subjects, helping us to understand the complexities of the phenomena of politics, economics, religions, beliefs, etc."<sup>1</sup> But it will be the contention of this chapter to argue that, if Dewey's naturalistic humanism can be seen as a continuation of the tradition of Hume, it is a far-reaching advancement beyond what Hume was able to envisage in the context of his time, and a corrective to difficulties in his

contribution noted in the previous chapter. This will be shown in regard to defining the general nature of moral inquiry; the political application to the reconciliation of freedom and equality; and the meaning of public realm in the face of the technological transformation of modernity; and finally how its essential meaning can be sustained in the face of the challenge represented by Richard Rorty's version of a post modern pragmatism.

Dewey's view that his contribution can be seen as carrying out the project of Hume is fully apparent in what it represents as a skepticism towards a classical metaphysics of final cause or perfection, while yet a basis for a naturalism that is a corrective to the distortions in the utilitarian-instrumental tradition of classical liberalism, and having significant continuity with Aristotelian implications. It was seen in the previous chapter that Hume's moral-political theory is misunderstood as a sanction for an irrational emotivism. For what he is arguing, rather, is the role of reason in the ascertainment of facts, drawing comparisons, examining complicated relations, etc., in order to bring about a state of "calm over violent passion," or, a proper congruence of reason and sentiment. What this entails, then, is essentially a pragmatic approach to moral-political theory that is a significant continuity with the contribution of Dewey. Dewey's convergence with Hume is apparent in his view of the "generic traits" of human experience in which the "precarious or the uncertain" must be given the same status as the "assured and complete."<sup>2</sup> The task of a critical moral reflection thus requires the observation of the detailed makeup of a situation, the clarification of what is obscure, in order to arrive at concepts in which it is possible to make a differentiation between a "real versus an apparent good"; the *defacto* versus *dejure*.<sup>3</sup> Such a contention is convergent with Hume's view of the role of reason in establishing "calm over violent passions."

But Dewey provides clarification on what this possibility entails as a product of human growth and development. Dewey emphasizes three levels of behavior and conduct: 1) that which is motivated by biological or "non-moral" impulses; 2) behavior in which the individual accepts the standards of his group without critical reflection; and 3) the conduct in which the individual develops the capacity for critical reflection. What is involved in the process of human growth, Dewey believes, is the process by which man becomes more *rational*, more *social*, and finally more *moral*. While our first impulses are a concern for immediate biological, economic necessities, man gradually develops the capacity for myths; theories of the world, enterprise in commerce and government; a family life raised to a higher level by art and religion. "He does not live by bread alone but builds up gradually a life of reason." A social process enables greater capacity to enter into relations with others, and the development of language is a step towards more complete socialization. Cooperation and association for various purposes enhances the possibility of building a "social self." "Conscious egoism and altruism become possible. The interests of self and others can be raised to the plane of rights and justice."<sup>4</sup>

What is central in moral theory, Dewey contends, is the transition from a "customary" to a "reflective" morality required in the assessment of conflicting claims and obligations. The development of qualities of character and conduct is of key importance in this transition, exemplified in Aristotle's view that "the doer of the moral deed must have a certain state of mind in doing it. First, he must *know* what he is doing; second, he must *choose* it and choose it for itself; and thirdly, the act must be the expression of a formed and stable *character*."<sup>5</sup>

A central component of Dewey's ethical theory is his conviction that "the development of inclusive and enduring aims is the necessary condition for the application of

reflection in conduct; indeed they are two names for the same fact." Dewey acknowledges that habits and impulses have consequences. But this is not sufficient to what is required as foresight of consequences that are a conscious adaptation and direction of purpose and action. Essential in "ends in view" is the union of desire and thought; a recognition of the difference between the desire as an immediate want or appetite versus a desire seen as a long-run view where thought brings into view more remote consequences: "In one case, original impulse dictates the thought of the object; in the other case, this original impulse is transformed into a different desire because of objects which thought holds up to view." Dewey believed this to be consistent with an Aristotelian view of pleasure as differentiated from happiness or well being as what he called *Eudamonia*. What is distinctive to happiness is not simply what is merely agreeable and gratifying, but what has reference to a stable condition; not what transiently happens to us, but upon the "standing disposition of the self."<sup>6</sup>

Dewey's view of a reflective morality is also convergent with an Aristotelian concept of practical or prudential judgment by which general theoretical principles are related to historical contingencies and variabilities of human conduct. The role of principles in moral conduct, he emphasized, is what they provide as a tool for analysis of a situation, and their role in deliberation in particular cases. "But there is a danger in adherence to principles in moral conduct that magnifies the 'letter of morality at express of its spirit,' a legalistic view of conduct that 'deprives moral conduct of freedom and spontaneity.'"<sup>7</sup>

Where Dewey's view of moral inquiry is closest to Hume is in his acknowledgment that there is some truth in the view that a component of moral judgment is emotional rather than intellectual, having a basis in a general psychological disposition. It is this component that war-

rants a view that the essence of moral judgment has to do with feelings of resentment, repugnance, affection. "Thus the reasonable act and the generous act lie close together." A person entirely lacking in sympathetic response might have a keen, calculating intellect, but he would have no spontaneous sense of the claims of others for satisfaction of their desires. "A person of narrow sympathy is of necessity a person of confined outlook upon the scheme of human good. The only truly *general* thought is the *generous* thought. It is sympathy which carries thought out beyond the self and extends its scope until it approaches the universal at its limit." Sympathy, Dewey believes, is an animating mold of moral judgment, and "it is the tool *par excellence*, for resolving complex situations. . . . Through sympathy the cold calculation of utilitarianism and the formal law of Kant are transported into vital and moving realities."<sup>8</sup> Such a contention, he believed, is consistent with the Aristotelian identification of virtue with a "proportional mean" that is an indication of grace, rhythm, harmony as dominant traits of good conduct. "As Aristotle pointed out, only the good man is a good judge of what is truly good; it takes a fine and well grounded character to react immediately with the right approval and condemnations."<sup>9</sup>

Dewey's view of the nature of moral theory is also convergent with Hume's rejection of a pre-social state of nature and the centrality of parental training and socialization in the development of social virtues. What is of central significance in Dewey's naturalistic humanism is the emphasis upon a biological-cultural interaction in the understanding of moral development. While biological operations and structures are not *sufficient*, they are *necessary* in the understanding of this development. Dewey speaks of a logic of inquiry as "naturalistic": the continuity of lower (less complex) and higher (more com-



plex) activities forms. But such a contention is fully a recognition that the environment in which humans live is cultural. According to Dewey, man is (as Aristotle believed) a *social animal* that involves problems that have no precedent at the organic, biological level; a view of human beings in an environment that is culturally transmitted; the centrality of language by which institutions and acquired habits are transmitted.<sup>10</sup>

But if Dewey's naturalistic humanism is convergent with Hume as a cognizance of the role of human socialization and culture in moral development, he provides a corrective to several difficulties in Hume's view of the relation of natural sentiments to principles of justice. It was seen in the previous chapter that Hume believes that principles of justice are the product of "human artifice." Yet he realizes that such principles can often be simply the "prejudices of politicians," and even "superstitions." It is thus natural sentiments that are the basis for making this adjudication. It was seen that for Hume, principles of justice are *initially* the product of human artifice, and when seen as having a public utility, are *then* given the approbation of moral sentiments. What gives natural sentiments this capacity is that they embody a more direct or "instinctive" quality. Yet Hume, it was seen, regards the concept of a pre-social state of nature as a romantic fiction; there can be no human nature without a process of socialization, parental training, learning experience. What Hume does not clarify is how natural sentiments, if not derived from a pre-social state of nature, can be seen as an expression of a "historicized" or "second nature" that is emergent from the process of learning, experience, socialization, and habituation. Dewey is in accord with Hume on the quality of moral evaluations that pertains to emotions and feelings rather simply intellect: the "unity of reason and the generous action." But Dewey provides the clarification of how such feelings and sentiments are a *component* within the larger context of the

development of a critical reflection as the capacity for language, sociality, and habituation as the product of biological-cultural interaction; the development of qualities of character and conduct; the capacity for having "ends in view" in which immediately given desires are transformed into different desires by objects that thought holds up to view. What is also puzzling here is why Hume would not believe that the *initial* decision in regard to principles of justice would not be integral to his view of the role of reason in realizing "calm over violent passions," the ascertaining of facts, making distinctions, examining relations, etc. It is this clarification that is provided by Dewey in his emphasis upon the process of critical reflection as the confrontation with initially problematic situations involving conflicting claims and interests in regard to questions of justice in order to arrive at *consequences* that can be a differentiation between *real* versus *apparent* good beyond what is authoritative simply by reference to particular customs and conventions, and how such conflicting claims can be settled by reference to the widest possible contribution to the interests of all, or at least the great majority.

Dewey's view of moral development provides a supplement to Hume, finally, in his view of the importance of selfhood. Selfhood or character, he contends, is not a "mere means for attaining ends, but is an agency for accomplishing consequences." Such a contention is consistent with Aristotle's view that the "goodness of a good man shines through his deeds." The unity of self and action underlies all judgments that are distinctively moral in character: "It is the key to understanding the nature of *motives* and *motivations*."<sup>11</sup> The unity of self and action, Dewey believes, is bound up with the relation of egoism versus altruism: a recognition that both self-love and altruism are acquired dispositions. An animal that cares for its young does so without thinking of their good, or aiming consciously at

their welfare, and the *human* mother (in many instances) “just loves, as we say, to care for her offspring.” There is, in other words, a “natural response to a situation that lacks any moral quality in terms of an idea of *any* end or good.” But an adult, if observing an action of a child independently of their aim or motive, is showing a disregard or regard for others in their *result*. But a conscious moral evaluation emerges when an adult approves or disapproves of the act of a child, and where the child becomes conscious of himself and other beings affected by good and evil. “Selfishness and unselfishness in a genuinely moral sense thus finally emerge instead of being native motives.”<sup>12</sup> What is at stake here, then, is the “kind of self” being developed and formed, how this is related to one’s own self and the self of others. “The good or badness of *consequences* is the main thing to consider, and these consequences are of the same nature whether they concern *myself* or *yourself*. The kind of object the self wants and chooses is the important thing; the *locus* of residence of these ends, whether in you or me, cannot of itself make a difference in their moral quality.”<sup>13</sup>

Selfhood, Dewey contends, is integral to association and intercourse. “Interest in the social whole and where one is a member necessarily carries with it an interest in one’s own self.”<sup>14</sup> There can be no effective social interest without intelligent regard for one’s own well being and development. Dewey points out, for example, that charity can be lauded, but too often it is an excuse for a law in which a superior class affirms its merit by “doing things gratuitously for an inferior class.” Charity can, in fact be a “sop to one’s own conscience” that covers up brutal exploitation. Deliberate benevolence can also be used as a means of keeping others dependent, as in the case of certain forms of parental authority.

What is needed, then, is recognition of an *intelligent* regard for the welfare of others that realizes the need for

growing freedom and maturity and self realization as an ethical ideal. The ethical problem of selfhood, Dewey believes, culminates in the ideal of "responsibility and freedom," for freedom is connected with the possibility of growth. "In other words, freedom in its practical and moral sense is connected with the possibility of learning, modification of character, just as is responsibility." All voluntary action is a remaking of self, since it creates new desire, instigates new modes of endeavor, brings to light new conditions which institute new ends. "Our personal identity is founded in the thread of continuous development which binds together these changes. In the strictest sense it is impossible for the self to stand still; it is *becoming* and *becoming* for the better or worse. It is in the quality of *becoming* that virtue resides. We set up this and that end to be reached, but *the end* is growth itself."<sup>15</sup>

It should be emphasized, finally, that the unifying thread of Dewey's naturalistic humanism is a view of moral development that grows naturally out of the very condition of humanity. Desire belongs to the nature of man, but as the power of thought develops, he looks ahead, developing purposes, plans, "ends-in-view," having to do with a concept of the good. Man lives naturally in society, in cooperation, competition, involving demands and expectations that give rise to concepts of rights, obligations, law, duty. "The fundamental conceptions of morals are, therefore, neither arbitrary nor artificial, they are not imposed upon human nature from without, but develop out of its own operations and needs."<sup>16</sup>

It was seen in the previous chapter that although Hume's political theory was expressive of the central features of early Enlightenment modernity in regard to civic liberties, religious tolerance, and parliamentary government, it was also an identification with power structures or a rising commercial class that did not envision the ideal

of equality and social justice that was to come with later historical development of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is here that the naturalistic humanism of Dewey can be seen as an advancement beyond what Hume was able to envisage within the context of this time. Dewey was fully affirmative of what was constructive in the early Enlightenment impetus to individual freedom and property rights that was a break from the class system of feudalism. But by the nineteenth century, he points out, the political and economic changes championed by the newly emerging industrial class had been largely accomplished. From that time on, these ideals of freedom and property rights become an ideological support for vested interests of *laissez faire* capitalism.<sup>17</sup> What this development indicates, he believed, is the need for rethinking the relation of freedom and authority; the break from the concept of “negative freedom” in classical economic theory towards a concept of “positive freedom” that was contributed by Thomas Hill Greene; a freedom that is an emphasis upon the role of the state in establishing conditions necessary for this possibility, including policies such as full employment, education, health, and welfare necessary for the protection of workers from exploitation. Liberty, Dewey pointed out, is always a social question having to do with the distribution of power—legal and political. It follows from this that movements to bring about changes in the distribution of power are expressive of the demand for a more balanced relation between equality and liberty.<sup>18</sup>

In Dewey’s view, the reconciliation of freedom and equality will require radical change in the structure of capitalism including socialist ownership of the means of production. It was for this reason that he refused to support the moderate reformism of the New Deal, viewing the National Industrial Recovery Act, for example, as a rule of experts “loading the dice in favor of the existing system of control of industry, with a few sops thrown to labor.”<sup>19</sup>

Dewey was convinced that there can be no "halfway house for America." It is not possible to achieve a decent standard of living by any other means than those policies which the British Labor party and Social Democrat parties of Europe are committed to: the socialization of all natural resources and natural monopolies, ground rent and basic industries.<sup>20</sup>

It was Dewey's conviction, then, that the possibilities for human growth and development or a "positive freedom" can be possible only through the application of a critical intelligence to the social injustice and inequalities of American society that will require a radical change in the structure of American capitalism or what he called a "renascent liberalism."<sup>21</sup> Here it is necessary to confront several of the more serious objections leveled against this contention. A long standing objection, given most influential articulation by Reinhold Niebuhr, is that Dewey's writings are an expression of the Utopian illusion of Enlightenment rationalism that does not confront the realities of egoism and power in intergroup relations that are an obstacle to the role of scientific intelligence as a force for social change and reform. In Niebuhr's view, relations between groups are determined more by considerations of balance of power, rather than a rational or moral evaluation.<sup>22</sup>

In defense of Dewey against such a critique, it would be important to emphasize (as previously noted) that Dewey's naturalistic humanism is not an adherence to the Enlightenment concept of the "natural innocence of man," and that human evils are due simply to cultural, environmental circumstances. His naturalism, it was seen, is fully cognizant of the "generic traits" of human existence as an admixture of what is uncertain and precarious with the assured and complete. But it was Dewey's conviction that historical experience does not warrant the conservative pessimism that egoism and/or power are prohibitive to the possibility of historical change through the application

of critical intelligence. Such conservative pessimism, he believed, is well illustrated in Aristotle's view that slavery is rooted in human nature, as well as in the "Aristotles of today" who speak of the inevitability of war, or present economic institutions. Dewey did not deny that such dispositions as "pugnacity and fear" are resident in human nature, but so are "piety and sympathy." The crucial question is how these tendencies interreact. Social institutions, he pointed out, are functions of a multitude of social forces such as the depersonalized methods of modern warfare, as well as economic institutions such as the paying of interest and structures of land ownership. It is either ignorance or fantasy, Dewey contended, to assume that existing relations of production in the United States at the present time have their roots in some supposed "unchangeable feature of human nature."<sup>23</sup> Dewey believed in fact that views about the constitution of human nature are often, in fact, the reflection of social movements in which current tendencies are "read back into human nature and then used to explain the things from which they are deduced. This is illustrated, he believes, in Hobbes' view that the sources of discord, making life of mankind "nasty and brutish," are the very motive others, at another time, saw as "beneficent, social effects." The point is not who may be right, but that both sides are guilty of the same fallacy in failing to recognize that impulses are neither socially maleficent or beneficent, but depend upon social consequences actually produced. Such consequences depend on the conditions under which such impulses operate, and with which they interact; conditions that are set by tradition and customs. Dewey points out further that, if human nature is unchangeable, education is doomed. "For the very meaning of education is modification of human nature in formation of those new ways of thinking, of feeling, of desire and of believing that are foreign to "raw human nature." Dewey points out that the inheritance of almost every con-

ceivable kind of social existence at some time and place in history is evidence of the "plasticity of human nature." This does not prove all social systems are of equal value, but it does show that the answer to what is desirable or not requires a consideration of what consequences there would be if certain proposals were adopted. "When our science of human nature and human relations are anything like what has developed as are our science of physical nature, their chief concern will be with the problem of how human nature is most effectively modified. The question will not be whether it is capable of change, but *how* it is to be changed under given conditions."<sup>24</sup>

Dewey also responded effectively to the objection that his emphasis upon a scientific approach to social problems lacks a cognizance of the role of interest-group bargaining in politics, and the problems of political action in reconciling conflicts between rival groups and interests. Dewey's response to this critique is to argue that, of course, there are conflicting interests, otherwise there would be no social problem. The task of critical reflection is thus determining how conflicting claims can be settled in the interest of the widest possible contribution to the interest of all or to at least the great majority. "The method of democracy insofar as it is that of organized intelligence is to bring these conflicts out in the open where their special claims can be seen and appraised, where they can be discussed and judged in the light of more inclusive interests than are represented by neither of them separately."<sup>25</sup>

What would remain as a serious objection to Dewey, however, is simply that what is no longer warranted in his conviction that social ownership of the means of production is a necessary approach to the reconciliation of freedom and equality. Historical development since his time, it can be argued, has decisively discredited such a contention. This would be evident not only in the collapse of the totalitarian socialism of the Soviet Union, and Eastern Eu-



rope, but also in the declining influence of the European democratic socialist parties that Dewey saw as a model for America. The striking economic growth of American capitalism in the past several decades also provides reinforcement for the case that the general structure for welfare capitalism that was a product of both the Progressive Era and New Deal has been largely vindicated as a framework for the realization of democratic ideals of freedom and social justice. But a powerful challenge to this contention is provided in a recent study by the Milton Eisenhower Foundation. According to this study, for example, there is a real unemployment rate of 15 percent in inner city neighborhoods. From 1977 to 1988, the incomes of the richest 1 percent increased by 120 percent while incomes of the poorest fifth decreased by 10 percent. The top 1 percent of Americans has more wealth than the bottom 90 percent. During the 1980s, child poverty increased by 20 percent. Since the time of the Kerner Commission report in 1968, the United States has had the most rapid growth in wage inequality in the world, with racial minorities suffering disproportionately. A constructive approach to resolving these inequities, the Report contends, will require such policies as the extension of Head Start programs, job training programs, public jobs to supplement inadequacies in private job provision, and urban school reform.<sup>26</sup> The Eisenhower report is not calling for radical change in the structure of capitalism that Dewey thought necessary, but it does vindicate Dewey's conviction that the moderate reformism of the New Deal cannot be adequate to the achievement of the ideal of an actual or positive freedom which, as previously noted, was a central feature of his view of human moral development. If Dewey was mistaken or misguided in his view that the ideal of positive freedom will require socialist ownership of the means of production, its basic meaning can nonetheless be sustained in the contention that what *will* be required is a greater

subordination of the competitive market to social priorities. Dewey can, of course, be faulted for unwillingness to recognize that New Deal reformism was at least the best practicable possibility in the context of his time, and consistent with the meaning of a pragmatic approach to the problem of reconciling conflicting claims and interests. But this is to miss Dewey's emphasis upon what a pragmatic inquiry requires as a view of the relation of the "ideal to the real" in moral inquiry. In classical philosophy, Dewey points out, the ideal realm is a "haven in which man finds rest from the storms of life," an "asylum in which he takes refuge from the trouble of existence with the calm assurance that it alone is supremely real. When the belief that knowledge is active and operative takes hold of men, the ideal realm is no longer aloof and separate; it is rather a collection of imaginative possibilities that stimulate men to new efforts and realizations." But such a contention is fully integral to Dewey's naturalistic humanism in which the ideal realm is a "platform from which to scrutinize natural events, addressed to actual possibilities capable of being realized in the concrete natural world."<sup>27</sup>

A third feature of Dewey's naturalistic humanism that is an advancement beyond Hume is what he provides as a clarification of the meaning of the public realm, and what he believes to be its "eclipse" in the face of technological transformations of modernity. Dewey's definition of the public realm is integral to what has been previously indicated as the human capacities that are the product of organism-environment interaction in human growth and development. Dewey emphasizes that the origin of the state is not simply derived from psychological states, so-called "instincts," or physiological manifestations such as "barking of dogs, song of birds." Dewey points out that natural tendencies do not generate language: "The cry of a baby can doubtless be described in organic terms, but

the wail becomes a noun or verb only by its consequences in responsible behavior of others. This depends on nurture and care, which are themselves dependent upon tradition, customs and social patterns."<sup>28</sup> Such a contention is a recognition that the introduction of a moral *ought* is not, then, something apart from social relations; morals *are* social.<sup>29</sup>

Dewey's view of the state and the public realm is fully congruent with his general concept of pragmatic inquiry as a view of human action which is the product of organism-environment interaction directed to the consideration of consequences. Such consequences are of two kinds: those that affect a person directly engaged in transactions, and those that affect others beyond those immediately concerned. "In this distinction we find the germ of the distinction between the private and the public. When indirect consequences are recognized, and there is the effort to regulate them, something having the traits of the state comes into existence."<sup>30</sup>

It would be important to emphasize Dewey's view of the state and public realms as a continuity with but a break from Aristotelian implications. Dewey's view of the state is fully congruent with Aristotle's view that the state comes into existence, originating in the bare needs of life and continuing in existence for the sake of the good life (1252<sup>b</sup>-15-30); his view of man as a "political animal," endowed with the gift of speech that is the basis for setting forth the just and unjust (1253<sup>a</sup>-10-15). But Dewey is rejecting an organic ideal of the state that is part of a tradition influenced by Aristotle, as well as Hegelian idealism, in which the state is at the top as a consummation and culmination of other institutions. Dewey strongly emphasizes a pluralist concept of the state, a pluralism of groups "good, bad and indifferent." Such a view does not prescribe any limit on state action, and it does not indicate any particular polity of public actions. There is no more an inherent sanctity in a church, trade union, business corporation or family than

there is in the state. Their value is to be determined by consequences, that vary with concrete conditions. Their scope is something to be "critically and experimentally determined."<sup>31</sup>

It is Dewey's conviction that the crisis of the modern state has been due to the development of a concept of the individual isolated from association that has been a distortion of democracy; the ascendancy of mechanical forces and impersonal organization. In Dewey's view, the "Great Society" created by steam and electricity may be a society, but it is not a community. "The invasion of the community by the new and relatively impersonal and mechanical modes of combined behavior is the outstanding fact of modern life."<sup>32</sup> The consequence of this development has been the "eclipse of the public," the decline of "face to face" communal life where the town meeting was the medium for dealing with roads, schools, and community problems. The modern state, he contended, has brought about the ascendancy of a "standardization favorable to mediocrity" where voting is of little consequence. Political action is a cloak for big business. "Electoral representatives are no longer responsible to the electorate. General questions of central importance have become technical matters that cannot be settled by majority decision and where concern for public issues is distracted by the ascendancy of mass media amusement."<sup>33</sup>

A critical question for Dewey, finally, is what are the conditions that will enable a closer approximation to the status of the "Great Community." An older theory emphasized the intelligence needed to pursue self-interest, to engage in political affairs, general suffrage, frequent election to insure responsible public officials. The basis for this theory was the ideal of the "omnicompetent individual," competent to frame policies, and achieve results. But experience has shown this to be an illusion. Knowledge is, in fact, the function of association and community, de-

pending on tradition and the role of habits acquired under the influence of cultural institutions. The failure to realize this fact explains why the revolutionary changes expected from democratic machinery was, in fact, only the transfer of power from one class to another. Changes take place and are cumulative in character, but there is a marked lag in corresponding changes in ideas and desires. While there has been an enormous increase in knowledge possessed by mankind, this probably does not equal the errors, half truths, and misrepresentations that have occurred at the same time. Also, much of the increase in knowledge in the area of science has been a specialized inquiry involving technological applications that have revolutionized conditions of associated life, but which are not understood by the general public. Thus the prime condition of a democratically organized public does not exist. But some of the conditions that must be fulfilled can be indicated in respect to consequences. One is the importance of free inquiry and the result of its conclusions; there can be no public without full publicity in respect to consequences that concern it. But it is an illusion that such freedom is now available because of the elimination of legal restrictions. True "positive freedom" is an act which involves methods and instruments for control of conditions. But this possibility has been thwarted by institutional structures that control the means of publicity, advertising, and propaganda, and the emotional habits and intellectual attitudes that create conditions that facilitate exploitation of sentiments and opinions. Such institutional structures create a reverence for existing institutions, promoting a "social pathology" that leads to withdrawal from reality and the unwillingness to think things through; an "intimidation of dissent." The backwardness of social knowledge, Dewey believed, is accentuated by the professional specialization that does not touch upon human concerns. The application of physical science is "to human concerns rather than *in* them." Rather

than a means for common understanding and communication which is the precondition for a genuine public, science has contributed to an industrial revolution that played a part in the enslavement of human beings in factories, grinding poverty, and the exploitation of nature. "In consequence, man has suffered the impact of an enormously enlarged control of physical energies without any corresponding ability to control himself and his own affairs."<sup>34</sup>

But Dewey cautions that the remedy to the failures of a democratic public is not the resort to belief in rule by "expert intellectuals" or the revival of the Platonic notion that "philosophers should become kings." The strongest argument for democratic popular voting, majority rule, etc., is that to some extent these developments *do* involve a consultation and discussion which uncovers needs and troubles. Dewey refers to Alexis de Tocqueville's observation that popular government forces a recognition that there are common interests, even though the recognition of what they are is confused, and that discussion and publicity can bring about greater clarification: "The man who wears the shoe knows best that it pinches and where it pinches even if the expert shoemaker is the best judge of how the trouble is to be remedied."<sup>35</sup> Popular government has at least created a public spirit, even if its success in informing that spirit has not been great. No government by experts in which the masses did not have a chance to inform experts can ever be anything but an oligarchy, managed for the interests of the few. The essential task, then, is the improvement of the methods and conditions of debate and discussion. For Dewey this is, in fact, the "problem of the public." It is not a necessity that the many should have the expertise required for the framing and the execution of policy, but the ability to judge on the bearing of the knowledge supplied by others on common concerns. Dewey believes that the key to this possibility re-

sides in the renewal of "face-to-face interaction of local communities." There is nothing "intrinsic in forces that have produced the uniform, standardized mobility and remoteness of human relations that is fatally prohibitive to the renewal of community." Uniformity and standardization can, in fact, provide an underlying differentiation and liberation of individual potentialities, and mobility may supply means of encouraging local life by keeping individual interactions flexible and preventing stagnation. "Organization, seen as a means to ends, could thus reinforce individuality, providing it the resources beyond its unaided reach."<sup>36</sup>

Whatever the future, Dewey is convinced that unless communal life can be restored, the public cannot find its basic identity. "Signs, symbols, language" are means of communication by which fraternally shared experiences are "ushered in and sustained." But the actuality of a true republic requires the give and take of face-to-face relationships. "We live, as Emerson said, in the lab of an immense intelligence. But this intelligence is dormant and its communications are broken, inarticulate and faint until it possesses the local community as its medium."<sup>37</sup>

What is finally of key importance in the contemporary relevance of Dewey's naturalistic humanism appears in the context of developments in philosophical analysis of recent decades that have been a reaction against the tradition of logical positivism that had largely discredited Dewey's contribution in the post-World War II era. It was previously noted that while logical positivism was a serious misrepresentation of Hume's concept of natural sentiments, it was understandable that it could be seen as a derivation from his view that reason is impotent in regard to moral issues, and that it is and ought to be only a "slave to passion." Richard Rorty has been a leading figure in the renewal of Dewey's pragmatism in the context of what he

believes to be the contemporary reaction against the tradition of logical positivism (the dichotomies of analytic versus synthetic; theory versus observation; fact versus value). But Rorty also faults Dewey for being contradictory in wanting to break from all forms of foundationalism while yet wishing to sustain a naturalistic philosophy that (as has been indicated) entails significant points of continuity with Aristotelian implications. What we can celebrate as an indebtedness to the heritage of Dewey's pragmatism, he contends, can be sustained only if it is restricted to the contention that there is "nothing deep down inside us except what we have put there ourselves, no criterion that we have created in the course of creating a practice; no standard of rationality that is not an appeal to such criterion; no rigorous argumentation that is not an obedience to our own conventions."<sup>38</sup> In Rorty's view, the central values of American liberalism (free and open conversation, consent of the governed, sensitivity to human suffering) require no criteria of justification beyond the fact of their embodiment within a particular North American historical contingency. Rorty acknowledges that when traditional social practices and institutions have collapsed, we feel the need for something that stands beyond history and institutions. But he believes that we should resist this appeal. For all we have are the moral obligations that can be described as "we intentions," the explanatory notion of what it is to be "one of us." Examples of this, he believes, are the Danes and Italians who came to the aid of the Jews not primarily because of the attitude that they were "fellow human beings" but because they were "fellow Milanese, Jutlanders, or fellow members of the same union, profession or fellow parents of small children." The same is true of attitudes of contemporary American liberals towards the misery of blacks in the inner cities. "Do we say that these people must be helped because they are "fellow human beings?" We may, but it is



much more persuasive, morally as well as politically, to describe them as our “fellow Americans”—to insist that it is “outrageous that an American should live without hope.” The point of these examples is that our sense of solidarity is strongest when those with whom solidarity is expressed are thought of as “one of us,” where “us” means something smaller and more local than the human race. This is why “because she is a human being” is an unconvincing explanation of a generous action. There is such a thing as moral progress, Rorty concedes, which is the general direction of greater human solidarity. But that solidarity is not thought of as a recognition of a “core self,” the “human essence,” in all human beings. Rather it is thought of as the “ability to see more and more traditional differences (of tribe, religion, race, customs and the like) as unimportant when compared with respect to pain and humiliation—the ability to think of people widely different from ourselves in the range of “us.”<sup>39</sup> Rorty also responds to the charge that since he believes that normative judgments are rooted in the consensus of a specific community, he is unable to recognize the human dignity of someone who is not part of a shared community. How do we recognize the “dignity of a child found wandering in the woods, a remnant of a slaughtered nation whose temples have been razed and whose books have been burned?” Rorty’s response is that it is part of the tradition of “our community” that the stranger from whom all dignity has been stripped is to be taken in, to be “re clothed with dignity.” This Jewish and Christian element in our tradition, he acknowledges, is “gratefully invoked by freedom loving atheists like myself.”<sup>40</sup>

The basic objection to Rorty’s view of a “post-modern liberalism” is simply that it is not convincing that at least certain of the values he believes it embodies need no criteria of justification beyond the “we intentions” of a north American (or European) historical contingency. It would

be evident that Rorty is, in fact, making a claim of universality about human beings when he speaks of "sensitivity to pain and humiliation," and when he expresses his own "gratitude" for belonging to a tradition having a Christian-Judaic component in which the stranger "stripped of human dignity can be taken in and re clothed with dignity." Rorty can also be challenged on his contention that the motives of those who went to the rescue of Jews were nothing more than that they were "fellow Milanese," "Jutlanders," members of a similar profession, etc. As Norman Geras points out, actual interviews with Danes and Italians show that their motives *were in fact* an appeal to criteria such as a "common humanity," the "children of God," or persecuted human beings, rather than simply "fellow Jutlanders or Milanese."<sup>41</sup> The objection to Rorty's post-modern version of pragmatism is not to deny the validity of his contention that in light of philosophical developments of modernity, it is no longer possible to appeal to a metaphysical foundationalism, but that it is necessary to establish *some* criteria that can be a claim of universality in regard to at least minimal principles of justice and that such criteria are necessary in adjudicating between rival traditions and social practices.

It is here that Rorty's contention becomes paradoxical. Rorty, on the one hand, is defending a "post-modern liberalism" in which the democratic values of consent, free inquiry, sensitivity to pain and humiliation need no justification beyond their embodiment within a North American historical contingency. Yet, in a recent book, Rorty is critical of a postmodern "cultural left" that specializes in a "politics of difference, identity or recognition."

What the postmodern cultural left lacks, he believes, was provided by the "old left" as exemplified by Dewey and Emerson. While they were not subscribing to a philosophy of fixed ends and purposes, they gave expression to a broader vision of human betterment, and a concern for the

radical changes in American capitalism necessary to the realization of social justice and equality.<sup>42</sup> But what Rorty is unwilling to concede is that if Dewey's view of social justice is a corrective to the postmodern cultural left, it is because it provides a basis for recognition that within a democratic polity that is a respect for pluralism and difference, there can be a cognizance of a common good in regard to principles of justice beyond the inadequacies of an untenable metaphysics as well as a cultural relativism. Several features of Dewey's naturalistic humanism, as previously outlined, provide a basis for this possibility. It should be emphasized that if Dewey is defending the concept of a naturalistic humanism, he is not endorsing a view of moral ideals that are reducible to biological drives or dispositions. A key feature of Dewey's naturalism, it has been seen, is the emphasis upon human *capacities* that are the outcome of organism-environment interaction in human growth and development: sociality, language, habituation, qualities of character and conduct, and critical reflection. Dewey's naturalism, in this respect, exemplifies the concept of a "second nature" or a "historized nature" which (as noted in the introduction to this study) provides a corrective to the inadequacies of seventeenth century objectivism. Dewey's naturalistic humanism, as an emphasis upon capacities that are the product of biological-cultural interaction, invites a constructive comparison with the neo-Aristotelian formulation of Nussbaum that was considered in Chapter 1. This embodies the view of human functions and capacities (bodily needs, affiliation with others, theoretical and practical reason, early infant development, etc.) that are essential to human well being and flourishing, and that can be defended in terms of a cross-cultural commonality. But it would be important to emphasize how Dewey's naturalism is a modification of Nussbaum's contention. For if Dewey can agree with Nussbaum upon general capacities that are essential to human well being, a key component of his naturalism is the emphasis upon the "ge-

neric traits of human experience" as an admixture of the assured and complete with the uncertain and precarious; his emphasis upon problematic features of human existence in which dispositions of sociality and cooperation are in conflict with egoism and self-interest; where there are conflicting views regarding rights, duties, and obligations. Central to Dewey's concept of a naturalistic humanism, it has been seen, is the role of critical reflection and analysis of problematic situations in order to arrive at consequences that can differentiate a real from an apparent good beyond what is given simply as class interest, convention, or routine. Also central to Dewey's view of moral development is the rejection of any final terminus or end, but rather a concept of positive freedom or self actualization that must be seen as a process of continuous growth and *becoming*. Such a contention is integral to what was previously indicated as the relation of the "ideal to the real" in moral development. This entails the emphasis upon the role of the ideals that are the product of an imaginative vision, providing a platform from which to view existing reality and as a stimulus to creative innovation. But essential to Dewey's naturalistic humanism is that the ideal realm is not to be seen as a refuge, or escape, from the problematic feature of human experience, but rather what can be grasped by an imaginative vision that encompasses actual *potentialities* of human nature. It is this conviction that is apparent in Dewey's view of the meaning of American democracy:

With the founding of American democracy, the claims of democracy were inherently one with the demands of justice and equal morality. We cannot well use their vocabulary. Changes in knowledge have outlawed the significance of the words they commonly used. But in spite of the unsuitability of their language for present use, what they asserted was that self-governing institutions are the means by which human nature can secure its fullest realization in the greatest number of persons.<sup>43</sup>



## Chapter 4

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# Evolutionary Biology

The past several decades have given rise to the concept of a Darwinian political theory that is also Aristotelian and Humean: an agreement with Aristotle that “human beings are by nature social and political animals”; an agreement with Hume that “human beings are by nature endowed with a moral sense”; and an agreement with Charles Darwin that “human society and morality are rooted in human biology.”<sup>1</sup>

Such an interpretation of Darwinian theory of evolution may seem anomalous, in view of its past association with an essentially Hobbesian concept of a pre-social state of nature as a condition of conflict and competition, where man is at war with others in seeking to gratify his desires to keep what he has, and to preserve his reputation. The nineteenth century “Social Darwinism” of Herbert Spencer was an influential application of Darwin’s concept of struggle for existence and “survival of the fittest” to the *laissez faire* “rugged individualism” of American capitalism.<sup>2</sup> But the more recent interpretations of Darwinian theory are an indication that past interpretations have been a

distortion or perversion of his theory. It will be the intent of this chapter to defend this contention, but also to emphasize what remains controversial and problematic in how well the evidence of evolutionary biology can provide a framework for a naturalistic political theory. It will be shown, first of all, that Darwin's work *The Descent of Man* does provide a significant compatibility with Aristotelian and Humeian implication in regard to natural moral sensibilities related to human sociability, habituation, and sympathy for the welfare of others. It will be shown, secondly, how biologist Ernst Mayr provides a framework for showing that, although Darwin's theory is a break from the Aristotelian concept of final cause and perfection, there is a significant continuity as a naturalism avoiding both the inadequacy of a Cartesian dualism, as well as the mechanistic determinism of the physical sciences. This involves the concept of a historically evolved genetic program (a *telenomic* process) laid down in the DNA of the genotype (a closed program) that incorporates additional information (an open program) acquired through learning and cultural conditioning. What is distinctive in ethical behavior, he believes, is a result of the learning experiences of infancy and youth. The political implications of evolutionary biology, it will be shown, thirdly, has been given most influential articulation by Roger Masters. What Masters believes it indicates are a balancing of cooperative with competitive behavior in human evolution, the basis for a "new naturalism" as respect for human individuality, and the duties of virtues entailed by social obligation and concern for human justice. It will then be emphasized that Masters' view of the political implications of evolutionary biology are expressive of what is both a range of consensus and a sharp disagreement in the current discussion and debate. While Masters represents a widely shared consensus upon human behavior as a product of genetic-cultural interactions, he subscribes to a concept of "genetic altru-

ism" that biologists such as R. C. Lewontin do not believe can be substantiated. It is their belief that a neo-Darwinian interpretation must be restricted to a concept of *interactionism* without settling the question of what might be specifically genetic versus what is cultural.

It will be finally argued that a mediating position is provided by Ernst Mayr's version of "neo-Darwinian synthesis" in which a genetic causation is evident in forms of animal behavior (the closed program of the genotype), but that human ethical evaluation is a product of cultural and learning experience (the open program of the phenotype).

But it will then be shown how a collaborative relationship of Mayr's neo-Darwinian synthesis with John Dewey's theory of human moral development is a significant advancement of what is essential to defining the components of a naturalistic political theory.

It is understandable that the concept of "survival of the fittest" in Darwin's work *The Origin of Species*, should be seen as consistent with a Hobbesian view of human evolution.<sup>3</sup> But this would be to overlook the meaning Darwin gives to the process of natural fitness in his work the *Descent of Man*. For central to this work is a concept of natural moral sensibility "summed up in that short but imperious word *ought*, so full of high significance. It is the most noble of all the attributes of man, leading him without a moment's hesitation to risk his life for that of a fellow creature; or after due deliberation, impelled simply by the deep feeling of right or duty, to sacrifice it in some great cause."<sup>4</sup> It is Darwin's view that any animal, once "endowed with a marked social instinct" would inevitably acquire a moral sense or conscience, as soon as its intellectual powers had become well enough developed, or nearly as well developed as in man. This contention, he believed, entails four key points. One is that social instincts lead an animal to take pleasure in the society of its fellows, having a certain



amount of sympathy for them, and disposed to perform services for them. A second point is that where our mental faculties have become highly developed, this development gives rise to images of past action and motives that become a basis for feelings of dissatisfaction in regard to results of an "unsatisfied instinct." Thirdly, after the power of language develops, individuals become influenced by the common opinion of a community as to how an individual ought to act for the public good, and this becomes a guide for action. Darwin concludes, lastly, that habits will ultimately play an important role in guiding human conduct, for social instincts are strengthened by habits, and provide a basis for obedience to the good of the community.<sup>5</sup>

It is Darwin's emphasis upon habituation in the development of moral sensibility that needs to be underscored in showing the convergence with Aristotle and Hume. It was seen in Chapter 2 that for Aristotle, moral virtues are engendered in us neither by nor contrary to nature; we are constituted by nature to receive them, but their full development is due to habit. It was seen in the previous chapter that it is the view of Hume that not every kind of virtue is natural. Some virtues, in relation to justice and rights of property, are a product of human "artifice" or convention. "It is in vain that we find anything like an uncultivated nature, and the virtue of justice would never have arisen among rude and savage men."<sup>6</sup> Darwin comments that it is impossible to decide whether certain social institutions acquired through natural selection are the result of other instincts and faculties (such as sympathy, reason, experience, and a tendency to imitation) or simply the result of long continued habit.<sup>7</sup>

While it is Darwin's contention that the social instincts of man are similar to animals' and that differences are only of degree, he recognized the importance of a difference in the fact that man may regret that he has followed one im-

pulse rather than another. The reason for this is that man cannot avoid reflecting on past images, such as vengeance satisfied or danger avoided at the cost of other men in conflict with the instinct of sympathy to his fellows that is still active in his mind. "Man thus prompted, will through long habit acquire such perfect self command, that his desires and passion will at last instantly yield to his social sympathies, and there will no longer be a struggle between them." It is also possible that the habit of self command, like other habits, can be inherited. "The imperious word *ought* seems merely to imply the consciousness of the existence of a persistent instinct, either innate or partly acquired, serving him as a guide, though liable to be disobeyed."<sup>8</sup>

Darwin is convinced that, in looking to future generations, we have no reason to fear that social instincts will grow weaker, and that virtuous habits will grow strong, fixed, perhaps, by inheritance.<sup>9</sup> Social qualities such as sympathy, fidelity, and courage, he believes, are acquired through natural selection, aided by inherited habit. But Darwin believes that another and even more powerful stimulus to social virtues is the praise and blame of our fellow man. Primitive man, even at very remote periods, would have approved of conduct which appealed to them as contributing to a general good and would have "reprobated that which appeared evil." With increased experience and reason, man is able to perceive the more remote consequence of his action, and the self regarding virtues as temperance and charity (in earlier times disregarded) would become more highly regarded. "Ultimately a highly complex sentiment, having its first origin 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, confirmed by instruction and habit, all combined, constituted our moral sense or conscience."<sup>10</sup>

What needs to be emphasized, finally, is the congruence of Darwinian theory with Aristotelian-Humean implications in his conviction that natural moral sensibility is directed to a common good, rather than simply utilitarian self-interest. Darwin notes that "philosophers of the derivative schools of morals" have assumed that the foundation of morality lies in a form of "selfishness," or the "Greatest Happiness Principle." But, in Darwin's view, social instincts are developed rather for the general good of the community.

The term general good may be defined as the means by which the greatest possible number of individuals can be regarded in full vigor and health, with all their faculties perfect, under the conditions to which they are exposed. As the social instincts both of man and lower animals have no doubt been developed by the same steps, it would be advisable, if found practicable, to use the same definition in both cases, and to take as the test of morality, the general good or welfare of the community rather than the general happiness.<sup>11</sup>

Darwin goes on to note that no doubt the welfare and happiness of the individuals will coincide. "A contented, happy tribe will flourish better than one that is discontented and unhappy." During an early period of the history of man, he notes, the expressed wishes of the community naturally influenced the conduct of each member. The wish of each member for the "greatest happiness principle" was an important "secondary guide"; while social instincts (including sympathy) served as the "primary guide." Darwin fully recognized the persistence of conflict between the judgment of the common good in opposition to particular customs and superstitions such as "the horror felt by a Hindu who breaks his caste, or the shame of a Mahometan woman who shows her face." But Darwin be-

lieved that despite many sources of doubt, man can readily come to distinguish between "higher and lower moral rules": the higher based on social instincts related to the welfare of others supported by approbation of our fellow man and by reason; the lower relating to baser instincts having their origin in public opinion. But as man advances in civilization and as smaller tribes unite in large community, "Simple reason would tell each individual that he ought to extend his social instincts and sympathies to all members of the same nation though personally unknown to him." Where this point is reached, "there is only an artificial barrier to prevent his sympathies extending to men of all nations and races." The highest stage in moral civilization, Darwin believed, is reached when we recognize we ought to control our thoughts, and he quotes Marcus Aurelius: "Such as are thy habitual thoughts, such also will be the character of thy mind; for the soul is dyed by the thoughts."<sup>12</sup>

Darwin concludes that the social instincts acquired by man, as well as by lower animals, are for the good of the community based upon the wish to aid his fellow man, and by some feeling of sympathy. As man becomes more capable of tracing the remote consequences of his actions, and where he acquires the capacity to reject "baneful customs and superstitions," the more he becomes capable of concern for the happiness of his fellow man." Darwin concludes, in fact, that the social instincts (that are the principles of man's moral constitution), with the aid of intellectual powers and the force of habit can lead to the Golden Rule. "'As ye who would that men should do to you, do ye to them likewise'; and this lied at the foundation of morality."<sup>13</sup>

It was the intent above to show that although Darwin's theory of human evolution represents a major break from

an Aristotelian metaphysics of final cause and perfection, there is, nonetheless, a significant continuity with Aristotelian naturalism as a view of the centrality of human capacities for language, sociality, moral sensibility, and habituation. A further significant continuity with Aristotle's naturalism stems from what Darwinian theory of evolution represents as a break from the mechanistic reductionism of the physical sciences. This is a central point in Ernst Mayr's interpretation of the contemporary relevance of Darwinian theory of evolution. Darwin's theory, he points out, is clearly a break from a classical metaphysical teleology in which the world is either seen to be guided by the hand of a creator or by "secondary causes"; that is, by laws that were guiding the course of events toward some ultimate goal.<sup>14</sup>

Central to Darwin's theory is also the concept of evolution as a common descent, gradualism, the multiplication of species; the concept of natural selection as the preservation of favored variations, and the rejection of those that are injurious. But Mayr also points out that Darwin is rejecting a causal process of nature elaborated in the physics of Galileo, Descartes, and Newton: their belief in a rigid determinism, prediction, and causality. The biological sciences, Mayr believes, must be differentiated from the physical sciences. For biological science is opposed both to an *explanatory reductionism* in which phenomena and processes at higher hierarchical levels are explained in terms of actions and interactions at the lower level; as well as a *theoretical* reduction in which laws formulated in biology are seen to be special cases of theory and laws in the physical sciences. Living systems, he points out, have more complex organization with the capacity to respond to stimuli, to grow, differentiate, and replicate. Biological organisms also have a "feedback mechanism" unlike inanimate systems. Systems at each hierarchical level act as wholes, and their characteristics cannot be deduced from knowl-

edge of the constituents.<sup>15</sup> What is unique in organisms is a mechanism for “sharing historically acquired information” for which there is no “counterpart in the inanimate world except in man-made machines.” What is characteristic of living systems, Mayr contends, is the capacity to respond to stimuli, grow, differentiate, and replicate. Biological systems also are distinctive in that they are “open systems,” an elaborate feedback mechanism unknown to inanimate systems. What is further distinctive of organic life are hierarchical levels:

The complexity of living systems exists at every hierarchical level from the nucleus to the cell to any organic system (kidneys, liver, brain) to the individual, to the species, to the ecosystem, the society. The hierarchical structure within an individual organism arises from the fact that the entities of one level are compounded into new entities at the next higher level—cells into tissue, tissue into organs, and organs into functional systems.<sup>16</sup>

Systems at each hierarchical level act as wholes, and their characteristics cannot be deduced from components taken separately, or in other combinations. All systems have a historically evolved genetic program coded in the DNA of the nucleus. Nothing comparable exists in the inanimate world, except in “man-made machines.” The organism is characterized by a duality of *genotype* (a closed program) handed down from generation to generation, and interacting with the environment, controlling the production of a *phenotype* as the visible organism we encounter and study.<sup>17</sup> Mayr points out that the goal-directed behaviors of an organism can be characterized as “teleonomic,” having to do with goal direction such as migration, food getting, or courtship. This teleonomic process is one which owes its goal direction to a program entirely laid down in the DNA of the genotype (as a closed program) constituted in such a way that it can incorporate additional informa-

tion (an "open program") acquired through learning and other experience.<sup>18</sup>

Mayr believes the evolutionary biology is a departure from Aristotle's metaphysics of final cause and perfection. But he believes Aristotle's naturalism contains a feature similar to the teleonomic feature of evolutionary biology. Although Aristotle used the term "eidos" for his form-giving principle, it is misunderstood that he had something in mind similar to Plato. For Aristotle's naturalism is wholly different from Platonism in that the source of a living organism cannot be described as mere matter (as a house, as a pile of bricks and mortar). "Just as the blueprint used by the builder determines the form of the house, so does the *eidos* (in the Aristotelian definition) give the form to the developing organism, and this *eidos* reflects the terminal telos of the full grown individual."<sup>19</sup>

What is of key importance in Mayr's view of Darwinian theory of evolution centers upon the question of human ethical evaluation. Mayr points out that Darwinian theory clearly entails a genetic determinism in regard to goal-directed processes of animal behavior such as the migration of birds, courtship rituals, the defense against predators. Such goal-directed behaviors, as noted above, are guided by a "program" laid down in the DNA of the genotype (a closed program) but capable of incorporating additional information (an open program) acquired through learning, conditioning, or other experience. A genetic determinism is also clearly evident in the Darwinian concept of "natural selection" as a view of beneficial variations that are preserved and injurious ones that are eliminated.<sup>20</sup> But Mayr does not believe that a Darwinian theory requires the view that ethical behavior is genetically determined. This is not to deny the possibility of an "inclusive fitness" altruism in human species such as the instinctive love of a mother for her children; the different

stance we adopt towards strangers as compared with our own group. But Mayr contends that human ethics goes beyond the inclusive fitness altruism of our primate ancestors. For what is distinctive in ethical behavior is the capacity for conscious choice: "The altruistic behaviors of a Mother bee is not based on choice; it is instinctive, not ethical." What is distinctive in human ethics is the capacity to anticipate the consequences of our action; the ability to choose between alternative courses of action. "The shift from an instinctive altruism based on inclusive fitness to an ethics based on decision making was perhaps the most important step in humanization."<sup>21</sup> Mayr believes that the growth of the hominid group from the extended family to a larger more open society had an important implication for ethical behavior. In order for this enlargement to occur, the altruism associated with close relatives had to be extended to nonrelatives beyond the range of "inclusive fitness." Mayr does not believe that it has been demonstrated that there are definite genes controlling the character traits of high ethical value. What we have, rather, are *tendencies* and *capacities* for adopting ethical behavior. But the larger portion of moral values of moral beings are acquired in interaction with other members of cultural groups. Mayr believes this to be demonstrated by the sharp differences in the kinds of morality among different ethnic groups; the breakdown of morality under certain political regimes; ruthless policies towards minorities; the warping of a child's character when deprived of adequate parenting. Mayr believes that since many of our ethical norms are culturally derived rather than biologically, how we acquire such norms has been best illuminated in the finds of child psychologists such as Kohlberg and Waddington.<sup>22</sup>

Mayr's view of the general implications of the Darwinian theory of evolution would command wide consensus



as the differentiation of biological theory from the reductionism of the physical sciences; the concept of a genetic program conceived in the DNA of the genotype (a closed program) versus the phenotype (an open program) that encompasses learning experiences, and cultural influences. But it is Mayr's view that the case for the belief that ethical evaluation can be viewed as a product of a genetic inheritance is more controversial. Roger Masters has been a leading exponent of the political implications of evolutionary biology, which he believes can be sustained in the framework of a genetic-cultural interaction. Distinctive in Masters' contention is his attempt to incorporate the perspective of neuroscience.

Research in the central nervous system has established three principles: 1) the "modular brain" as a parallel processing system; 2) the essential role of emotion in learning and memory; and 3) individual difference in neuronal structures as well as cognitive processing. Masters believes that such knowledge provides evidence of nonverbal behavior such as the leader-follower relations in which facial displays reveal both happiness, reassurance, as well as anger or threat.<sup>23</sup>

Masters also believes that neuroscience is a challenge to the "tabula rasa" theory of Locke "according to which conditioning and experience engrave sensory impressions and association on a blank slate." What we now know is that the central nervous system is "parallel distributive processing systems." Cognitive neuroscience, he contends, challenges the mind-body dualism of human consciousness. For preconscious information, processing "occurs in parallel as different sensory modalities and feature detectors respond to the environment." Language, he contends, is a specialized human capacity, based on a distributed set of specialized modules in the cortex." Masters thus believes that contemporary biological research challenges the Lockean contention that social norms and basic ideas on

which perception rest are “mere conventions.” Rather, social norms and individual perceptions are partly innate and partly learned, and interaction between inborn and acquired factors is more open to an Aristotelian understanding of human nature.<sup>24</sup>

The evidence of evolutionary biology, Masters further contends, challenges the radical distinction between human learning and animal instincts: the increasing evidence of “unintended consequences of cultural practices in the human gene pool.” Masters believes that just as learning is a means by which an organism gains information about its environment, so genetic endowment can be understood as a means of conveying information to succeeding members of the species. Society can be understood as a system of “communicative behavior.” Speech is the primary mode of transmitting culture. This is a recognition that if social behavior of insects is genetically determined, most social behavior of man is culturally determined, and that what is unique to human social behavior are the symbols that have many of the functional attributes of genes. Human language and symbols can generate forms of human bonding, reciprocity between trading partners, displays of anger, threat or aggression, categories of flight, evasion, and social submission. A culture can thus be described as a “symbol pool”; the “distribution of verbal and cultural symbols shared by a population.” “Human behavior is the product of the integration, within the brain and central nervous system of each individual, of phylogenetically selected information transmitted by the genes, historically selected information transmitted by language and cultural symbols, and individually learned information during the life cycle.”<sup>25</sup>

Masters believes that the basis for a naturalistic political theory can be formulated as a “neo-Darwinian synthesis.” This embodies the contention that our behavior is both innate and acquired; selfish and cooperative; and that human

dispositions such as altruism, empathy, aggressiveness, and criminality are influenced both by heredity as well as by the individual's environment. Political philosophy can be understood as a response to the problems created by the "ambiguity of cooperation and competition" that is natural to humans. What is central to society, both animal and human, is what can be understood as a system of communicative behavior. But what is unique to human society is the capacity for language that can be repeated, modified, and even created without reference to immediate sensory stimulation. It is for this reason that human behavior, in contrast to animal behavior, has a greater "plasticity" and "variability." Such a contention is an emphasis upon interaction between genetic and environmental factors, in which the human individual phenotype is distinguished from the sum of the genes (or genotype). While the phenotype is the expression of a genotypical potentiality, it is also the expression of a cultural and social reality in which each individual lives. Politics, Masters believes, can be defined as "behavior that simultaneously partakes of the attributes of bonding, dominance and submission. . . . Political behavior, properly so called, comprises actions in which the rivalry for and perpetuation of social dominance and loyalty impinges on the legal or customary rules governing a group." Political science, he contends, lies at the "intersection of ethnology and anthropology—or, more broadly, at the point where the natural and social sciences meet."<sup>26</sup>

A central theme in Masters' view of the political implications of evolutionary biology is that both human competition as well as cooperative-altruistic dispositions are partly innate and partly learned. It is this feature of human evolution, he believes, that serves to explain the origins of the state. A key dynamic in human evolution is an "inclusive fitness" as a measure of reproductive success that includes both individual and close kin. A logic of "cost

benefit" calculation of inclusive fitness helps to explain cooperation and helping behavior in face-to-face society, small bands of extended kin, and even in the formation of tribal society. The rise of the state and bureaucratic structures of power, Masters believes, is due to the element of coercion necessary for sociality in large groups of nonkin; the coordination needed in the socioeconomic cooperation and creation of collective benefits; the selective benefits for bureaucracy and their kin. The fall of bureaucracies is due to rigidity and mistakes in applying procedural rules, the development of nepotism that impedes the possibility of "individual freedom of choice and mobility that citizens of Western industrial society take for granted." Masters believes that a naturalistic perspective provides a scientific foundation for the study of social behavior and makes it possible to "restore a concept of natural philosophy to its traditional place at the center of political philosophy."<sup>27</sup>

According to Masters, there are three factors that can be seen as a basis for a "new naturalism." One is the essential equality of all human beings that springs from the fact that the phenotype is the vehicle by which genes replicate themselves. Questions of rights are intrinsic to the survival of the species. While evolutionary principles teach us to expect despotism and selfishness, it also teaches us that such behavior is "naturally balanced by social cooperation without which we could not have evolved and cannot now survive." A second principle follows from the first: a recognition that if an evolutionary principle leads us to expect selfish behavior, it also leads us to recognize its dangers; a willingness to balance selfish needs by cooperation, as well as a hope for reciprocity. "A natural foundation for justice cannot, then, enjoin obedience in all circumstances without contradicting the common humanity of rulers and ruled that is its first principle." A third principle is that a concept of natural justice recognizes that no single political system can be considered perfectly natural in all socio-

economic conditions. It is for this reason we are able to believe that constitutional democracies come closer than other regimes in providing the means for challenging authority, guaranteeing respect for different opinions, and “where virtue and a willingness to contribute to the common good requires that we exhibit loyalty to a community that provides collective benefits to us.”<sup>28</sup>

Masters believes that a naturalistic political theory derived from the evidence of evolutionary biology can be defended against two common objections. One is that it entails a version of the “naturalistic fallacy” of deriving *ought* from *is*. Masters’ response to this criticism is what he sees to be the validity of an Aristotelian contention. “When a physician advises a patient to have an operation for appendicitis, the patient is not likely to complain that it is a logical fallacy to derive the value of the operation from the fact of the disease. Although the appendicitis happens in the nature of things; it is not a condition that characterizes the end or purpose of humans as distinct from other natural things.” Masters thus affirms what he believes to be a continuity of Aristotle’s naturalism through Hume’s view that natural sentiments have implications for human value. Hume was well aware of the danger of the “naturalistic fallacy.” But Masters points to Robert McShea’s contention “that Humean naturalists can avoid the naturalistic fallacy, if they limit themselves to the assertion that for a particular intelligent species, certain feelings are predictably aroused by certain facts, and the experience of such feelings is the only basis upon which we can make evaluative judgments.”<sup>29</sup>

Masters also responds effectively to the objection that a naturalistic political theory must necessarily subscribe to “philosophical dogmatism.” From the standpoint of evolutionary biology, no human action can be judged without reference to time and place. “Precisely because each human genotype is of equal importance from an evolutionary

perspective, a naturalistic ethics cannot be dogmatic, intolerant and absolutist." A "new naturalism," Masters contends, like contemporary physics, leads to moral reasoning that is based on "relative objectivity"; truths that depend on time and context are nonetheless true. But Masters also believes that a naturalistic political theory must recognize that no single rule can apply in all cases without prudential modification. "The process of respect of others is necessary, for we can never claim that our own understanding is uniquely privileged. Government under laws, political moderation, and the need for political dialogue are naturally preferable to the tyrannical imposition of one individual's will on the entire community."<sup>30</sup>

Masters' contention that the evidence of evolutionary biology can be a basis for a naturalistic political theory remains subject to a serious objection that although he strongly emphasizes a concept of biological-cultural interaction, he is nonetheless subscribing to an untenable biological reductionism; his view that the "selfishness of the human phenotype is a behavioral strategy of the gene pool and that (in the case of our species at least) such behavior is naturally balanced by social cooperation without which we could not have evolved and cannot now survive."<sup>31</sup> What is problematic in Masters' contention, at this point, is similar to the critical objection that was directed against the sociobiology of Edward Wilson by scientists R. S. Lewontin, Steven Rose, and Leon Kamin. In the view of these scientists, Wilson's concept of genetic determinism (to which Masters also subscribes) is nothing more than an example of an "adaptive story." This amounts to the contention that there are genes that indicate altruistic acts towards strangers, and if these strangers remember the act and reciprocate in the future, then, provided the probabilities are right, the two altruists may gain fitness. Lewontin, Rose, and Kamin see this as nothing but an "ingenious

mental game," providing sociobiologists with a "batter of speculative possibilities that guarantee an explanation for every observation."<sup>32</sup> The relationship between biology and society, they believe, must be restricted to a concept of a "dialectical" explanation as opposed to reductionism, avoiding any assignment of weights for different partial causes. What is necessary, rather, is the view that "parts and wholes codetermine each other."<sup>33</sup> In his book, *Biology and Ideology*, R. C. Lewontin contends that just as there is no organism without an environment, there is no environment without an organism. "They create them. They construct their own environment out of bits and pieces of the physical and biological world, and they do so by their own activities." In viewing the behavior of a bird, for example, we can see that it eats insects part of the year, but switches to nuts when insects are no longer available; flies south in the winter and comes back in the summer; and when it forages for food it tends to stay in the higher branches. "Every word uttered by the ecologist in describing the environment of a bird will be a description of the life activity of the bird. That process of description reflects the fact that the ecologist has learned what the environment of the bird is by watching birds." Lewontin contends that we must thus replace the "adaptivist" view of life with a "constructionist" view. This would emphasize that the environment of the organism is constantly being remade during the life of those living beings. A rational environmental movement, he also contends, must abandon the unfounded commitment to a harmonious and balanced world, and turn to the real question of how people want to live and arrange their lives. We cannot accept a view of sociobiology that human beings have limitations coded in their genes, whether selfish, aggressive, xenophobic, family oriented, etc. "Social organization does not reflect the limitation of individual biological beings, but is their *negation*." This is not to deny that we are natural, material biological objects

developing under the influence of the interaction of genes with the external world; the fact, for example, of our size, and our having a certain nervous system. But it is our consciousness that creates our environment, its history, and the direction of the future.

Our DNA has a powerful influence on our anatomy and physiologies. In particular, it makes possible the complex brain that characterizes human beings. But having made that brain possible, the genes have made possible human nature, a social nature whose limitation and possible shapes we do not know except insofar as we know what human consciousness has already made possible. In Simone de Beauvoir's clever but deep apothegm, a human being is *l'être dont l'être est de n'être pas*, the being whose essence is not having an essence.<sup>34</sup>

From what is indicated above, the current discussion and debate on political implications of evolutionary biology are indicative of both a range of consensus, as well as serious disagreement. What is necessary, finally, is to show how it is possible to arbitrate among several key features in this debate and discussion in order to establish a credible basis for how implications of evolutionary biology can advance the case for a naturalistic political theory.

It was seen that Darwin, himself, although rejecting classical metaphysics of final cause or perfection, believed human evolution reveals significant continuity with Aristotelian implications: his view of a moral sensibility due to human capacities for society, language, and habituation conducive to the general interest of the community. A significant convergence between Mayr and Masters was also noted: Their rejection of the mind-body dualism and mechanistic determinism of seventeenth-century reductionism is also a significant continuity with Aristotelian implication. What is more controversial, however, is whether Darwin is warranted in believing that a natural moral sensibility



is a manifestation of a process of “natural selection.” It was seen that this is a keynote of Masters’ contention: a “cost benefit calculation” explains the balancing of selfish and cooperative behavior. But it is Lewontin’s view that all that is possible is *interactionism*, without being able to specify what is genetic versus what is cultural. Mayr provides an intermediate position that can provide the key to an integrative possibility. It was seen that the keynote of Mayr’s neo-Darwinian synthesis is his emphasis upon the DNA of a genotype (a closed program) that is descriptive of features of animal behavior such as courtship rituals, migration, etc., versus an “open program” that incorporates cultural, learning experiences that are distinctive to human behavior. Mayr speculates that certain features of “inclusive fitness” altruism may be present in human species such as the instinctive love of a mother for her child and the different stance toward strangers as compared with one’s own group. But it was seen that if we have *tendencies* or *capacities* for ethical behavior, the larger portion of moral values are acquired in cultural and learning experience. It is the “vast capacity” of the open program, he believes, that makes ethics possible, and where ethical education is of utmost importance in the ability to anticipate the consequences of one’s actions, to make value judgments, and to choose between alternative courses of action. Where individuals have such a capacity for adopting ethical behavior, Mayr believes, they are able to adopt a second set of ethical norms supplementing and partly replacing the biologically inherited norms based on “inclusive fitness.”<sup>35</sup> But it is important to note that Mayr appears to be acknowledging a genetic component in regard to *capacities* or *tendencies* for ethical evaluation. Mayr also notes that in the process of evolution from primate to humans, it was the increase in brain size that gave rise to speech and the transmission of culture that this provided. We cannot, however, single out any factor that is dominant, and all are inter-

twined.<sup>36</sup> Mayr's neo-Darwinian synthesis can thus be congruent with Lewontin's emphasis simply upon *interactionism*. For Mayr, it was seen, it is learning experience that is crucial to the development of ethical evaluation, and it is here that a basis for a naturalistic political theory can be clarified in a collaborative context of Mayr's neo-Darwinian synthesis and the moral theory of Dewey considered in the previous chapter. Dewey's "naturalistic humanism" is fully convergent with Darwinian implication in its emphasis on a primary postulate of a naturalistic logic of inquiry as a continuity of the lower (less complex) and the higher (more complex) activities or forms, along with the view of human capacities as outcomes of biological-cultural interaction in regard to human sociality, habituation, and the centrality of language. Dewey also affirmed the importance of Darwin's contribution as a break from the classical world of fixed ends and final causes—a shift to a consideration of specific conditions of value and consequences of ideals. "Philosophy becomes a method of locating and interpreting the more serious of the conflicts that occur in life, and a method of projecting ways for dealing with them; a method of moral and political diagnosis and prognosis." In Dewey's view, the evidence of evolutionary biology indicates the tendencies and dispositions we inherit from ancestors that need to be modified, curbed, and restrained. The problem is the *nature* of this modification. What is necessary to life has some relevance to moral living. Self-assertion, for example, has both negative and positive implications in ethical process. Courage, persistence, and patience are forms of self assertion, just as are temperance, chastity, and benevolence. Such motives are the material of all actions, whether good or bad: "They become good when trained in a certain way, just as they become bad when trained in another way."

The keynote of Dewey's theory of moral development, it was seen, is the learning experiences in human growth

and development as the transition from a customary to a critical reflection. What this requires, he believes, are qualities of character and the capacities for formulating "ends in view," in which "original desires are transformed into different desires because of objects which thought holds up to view. It was also seen that central to Dewey's theory of moral development is his view that both selfish and altruistic dispositions are acquired and not original ingredients of our psychological makeup. Yet there is an element of truth in the belief that the essence of moral judgment resides in feelings and emotions rather than intellect: "The reasonable and the generous lie close together. . . . Through sympathy the cold calculation of utility and formal law of Kant are transported into vital and moving reality."

Also central to Dewey's pragmatic approach to moral inquiry is an emphasis upon a problematic human existential situation: the admixture of the uncertain and precarious with the assured and complete. Critical moral inquiry is thus the careful analysis of facts of a given problematic situation; the consideration of rival hypothesis in order to arrive at consequences that have warranted assertability beyond a cultural relativism, or what is seen to be authoritative simply by reference to particular customs and conventions. But Dewey is cognizant of the deficiencies in Hobbesian naturalism in which moral ideals are simply "read off" from biological dispositions or impulses. Dewey believed that the process of crucial reflection, as the concern for consequences can sustain a view of *potentialities* of human nature inherent in the meaning of human self-realization or a "positive freedom." But this entails a strong emphasis that this goal is not to be seen as a final end or terminus, but a *becoming*, and that it is in the quality of becoming that virtue resides. It is Dewey's view that the supreme test of all institutions social, economic, and political is their meaning and purpose in setting free and de-

veloping the capacities of human individuals without respect to race, sex, class, or economic status.

It is in the complementary viewpoints of Mayr and Dewey that one finds what is most promising as the focus for establishing the credibility of a naturalistic political theory. Mayr provides an effective articulation of the developments in evolutionary biology as an emphasis that phenomena and processes of living organisms at higher hierarchical levels are not reducible to components at lower levels. Such a contention is a reinforcement for Dewey's emphasis upon the continuity of lower (less complex) and the higher (more complex) activities and forms that precludes reduction of the higher to the lower. Mayr also provides clarification of the implication of molecular biology not anticipated by Dewey in his time in regard to the concept of a historically evolved genetic program: the genotype as the programmed character in features of animal behavior (a closed program) versus the phenotype as the incorporation of cultural learning experience that is distinctive to human ethical evolution. Mayr does not elaborate upon the ethical-political implication of evolutionary biology, but he complements Dewey in his emphasis upon what is distinctive to human ethical evolution in regard to assessing alternative modes of action: judging alternatives in ethical terms; the freedom to choose what is ethically good. What he also provides is a constructive emphasis on the need for clarification of ethical norms suitable to the context of a global society. Mayr believes that the traditional norms of the Western Christian-Judaic tradition entail the commandments of Old and New Testaments that are no longer adequate. This is due, in part, to their rigidity that does not take account of evolutionary processes and variables; the transition from pastoral, tribal, and primitive condition; an "expanding circle" that requires greater emphasis upon ethical principles appealing to all humanity irrespective of race, language, creed, or station. A sec-

ond great problem is the “egocentricity” that must be balanced by concern for obligations that promote the well being of the community. What this entails, he believes, is also the need for greater emphasis upon a proper balance between human rights and freedom and the welfare of the natural world—the concerns articulated by Aldo Leopold, Rachel Carson, and Garret Hardin.<sup>37</sup> It is there that the implications of evolutionary biology are convergent with contemporary developments in Deep Ecology that will be considered in the following chapter.

## Chapter 5

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# Deep Ecology

The differentiation between a “deep” versus a “shallow” ecology has become a central theme in contemporary environmental ethics, as effectively summed up by Fritjof Capra. The concept of a “shallow” ecology, he points out, has its origin in a mechanistic world view of the seventeenth century influenced by writers such as Descartes, Bacon, and Newton. What came from this development was a view of nature as a dualism of mind and matter. The material universe, including the human organism, was a machine that could, in principle, be understood completely by analyzing it in terms of its smallest parts. Another characteristic of this world view was an obsession with domination and control: “In our society political and economic power is exercised by hierarchically structured corporate elites. Our science and technology are based on the belief that an *understanding* of nature implies *domination* of nature by man.”<sup>1</sup> This has been a threat to both human and non-human nature in developments such as nuclear weapons, toxic substances, and microorganisms—a science and

technology that can be used to control, manipulate, and exploit nature.

A "deep ecology," Capra contends, is expressive of a fundamental paradigm shift in Western society. It rejects the anthropocentric domination of nature.

Deep ecology does not separate humans from the natural environment, nor does it separate anything else from it. It does not see the world as a collection of isolated objects, but rather as a network of phenomena that are fundamentally interconnected and interdependent. Deep ecology recognizes the intrinsic values of all living beings, and views humans as just one particular strand in the web of life.<sup>2</sup>

But if a deep ecology is a paradigm shift from a political theory inspired by seventeenth-century scientific development, there is by no means agreement upon a resource for an alternative formulation. As George Sessions points out, deep ecology can be traced to diverse influences including ecocentric religions such as Taoism and the philosophy of Saint Francis of Assisi, the nature-oriented counterculture movement of the nineteenth century as rooted in Spinoza, and the Zen Buddhism of Alan Watts and Gary Snyder that influenced the counter-culture movement of the 1960s.<sup>3</sup>

What has not been sufficiently recognized, however, is how the principle contentions of deep ecology can be consonant with an Aristotelian naturalism in which it is believed that all forms of organic life, human and nonhuman, have intrinsic value, a *telos* as that for which something is for; the differentiation of *potentiality* from an *actuality*, matter and form (412<sup>b</sup>1–25). Aristotelian naturalism entails, to be sure, an implication that exponents of deep ecology perceive to be a source of Western anthropomorphism a view that the human capacity for speech that is the basis for moral obligation, along with the human capacities for so-

ciality and community, places humans at the apex of a hierarchy or organic life. But it will be the intent of this chapter to show that a human responsibility to nonhuman nature is a logical extension of the human capacities for cooperation, community, and moral obligation. It will also attempt to show that a neo-Aristotelian approach to deep ecology can be defended against critical objections given most influential articulation by Jurgen Habermas. Finally, it will be argued that an Aristotelian concept of practical judgment is well suited to a contemporary context of discussion and debate in regard to political programs and policies necessary to the achievement of deep ecology objectives.

The contention that Aristotelian naturalism can be a framework for a deep ecology is not to argue that this is what Aristotle, himself, explicitly affirms, but rather that it is an emphasis upon the interconnection of all forms of organic life, and that a human respect for a nonhuman nature is a requirement of what is unique to human evolution as the capacities for sociality, community, and moral agency. An Aristotelian naturalism can thus be fully adaptable to the "Land Ethics" of Aldo Leopold who has often been seen as one of the principle sources of inspiration of a deep ecology. Leopold contends that the extension of ethics that has been so far studied by philosophers is actually a process in ecological evolution:

An ethic, ecologically, is a limitation of freedom of action in the struggle for existence. An ethic, philosophically, is a differentiation of social from antisocial conduct. These are two definitions of one thing. The thing has its origin in the tendency of interdependent individuals or groups to evolve modes of cooperations. The ecologist calls this "symbiosis." Politics and economics are advanced symbioses in which the original free-for-all com-



petition has been replaced, in part, by cooperative mechanisms with an ethical content.<sup>4</sup>

Leopold points out that ethics had its origins as a concern for relations between individuals such as the Mosaic Decalogue. A later development was a concern for the relation of individuals to society. The Golden Rule tried to integrate the individual to society; democracy, to integrate social organization to the individual. But there is, as yet, no ethic dealing with man's relation to land, and the animal and plants which grow upon it. "The land ethics is still strictly economic, entailing privileges but not obligations." Leopold's view is that human relation to land is an "evolutionary possibility and an ecological necessity." All ethics so far evolved have been based upon the premise that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts. "His instincts prompt him to compete in his place in the community, but his ethics prompt him to cooperate . . . the land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, water, plants and animals or collectively: the land. . . . In short, a land ethics changes the role of *Homo sapiens* from conqueror of land community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow-members, and also respect for the community as such."<sup>5</sup>

It would be important to emphasize that if an essential component of deep ecology is its respect for a nonhuman nature that is an extension of the meaning of a human community of cooperation, this extension presupposes the intrinsic value of nonhuman nature independent of human interest or concern. Leopold makes this clear:

The "keylog" which must be moved to release the evolutionary process for an ethics is simply this: quit thinking about decent land-use as solely an economic problem. Examine each question in terms of what is ethically and esthetically right, as well as

what is economically expedient. A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.<sup>6</sup>

The more explicitly Aristotelian implication in what a deep ecology entails as a concept of intrinsic value of non-human nature is provided by Holmes-Rolston. This appears in his contention that the "genius" of life is coded in "genetic sets." According to Rolston, an organism is thus a "spontaneous cybernetic system," self maintaining, and having a control center that sustains and reproduces itself on the basis of information necessary to its growth and development.<sup>7</sup> This information, he believes, is an equivalent of what Aristotle called *formal* and *final* cause giving the organism *telos*, end, or purpose. This process is carried by the DNA which is essentially a "linguistic molecule." Rolston contends that the DNA codes the logic of a life carried on not merely at that level, but at the environmental, phenotypical level. What occurs at the level of molecular biology manifests itself via a complicated translation and interaction from genotype to the environmental level.<sup>8</sup> What is of key importance, Rolston believes, is that the genetic set is a "normative set" distinguishing between what *is* and what *ought* to be. This does not mean that the organism is a moral system, for there are no moral agents in nature apart from persons. But the organism is an "axiological system," or an evaluative system, that grows, reproduces, repairs its wounds, and resists death. Rolston believes we can say that the physical state the organism keeps, idealized in the pragmatic form, is a "valued state." For value is present in its achievement. The concept of "*vital*" seems a better word for it than *biological*.<sup>9</sup> Normative organisms, Rolston contends, can thus be seen as having moral significance, having a "*good of its kind*," and promoting their own self realization.<sup>10</sup>

What is central to an environmental ethic, Rolston be-

lieves, is thus a repudiation of an anthropocentric ethic in which nature is seen simply as instrumental to human duties. Intrinsic value in nature can be established at several different dimensions. *Life support* values are indicative in human dependence on water cycles, sunshine, nitrogen, climates, oceans, and genetic materials. *Economic value* results from the human appropriation of natural resources; the human labor that adds to natural law values such as the refinement of crude oil in petroleum engineering. *Recreational value* springs from the enjoyment of wilderness and landscape. *Scientific value* is to be found in the concern for greater understanding of the completeness of the natural environment and the process of natural evolution. *Aesthetic value* is inherent in the education of our perception that enables us to perceive qualities in nature that supplement science. Nature provides *cultural symbolization* values as the Bald Eagle that symbolizes America; the "flowering dogwood" that characterizes Virginia; the "Bighorn Elk" as the state animal of Colorado. *Character building* values can be seen in the way in which wild lands are used by organizations such as the Boy and Girl Scouts, Outward Bound, and church camps. Wild lands provide a place to gain "humility and a sense of proportion." The value of *diversity and unity, stability and spontaneity* can be seen as a part of the values of nature.<sup>11</sup>

Rolston also believes that intrinsic values as noted spring from the injunction that one "ought to follow nature." This injunction has its validity, he believes, in the fact that humans, as "intelligent agents," are not exempt from the laws of nature operating within and upon us. Humans follow nature in an *artifactual sense*, as in the design of a cabin in the woods; a *relative sense*, as in such activities as landscaping, and farming; and a *homeostatic sense* in that we ought not upset the stability of an ecosystem.<sup>12</sup> But Rolston perceives difficulty in believing we can follow nature in an *imitative sense*. Since there are no moral agents in nature,

we cannot imitate nature in regard to human ethics as in the view that one ought to keep promises, or tell the truth. Features of nature, such as struggle, conflict, and predation, cannot be imitated by humans. Yet predation is a central feature of the flowering of an ecosystem. Nature is not a moral agent, and we cannot transfer elements of nature to interhuman conduct. But nature is a place of satisfactory fitness, and we take that as a criterion for some moral judgment: "We endorse a painful good."<sup>13</sup> The fact of predation, Rolston also believes, is not prohibitive to following nature in a "tutorial sense." For while there is struggle in nature, there is also beauty, integrity and stability of nature "within and behind its seeming indifference, ferocity and evil."<sup>14</sup>

If Rolston's emphasis upon intrinsic values of a nonhuman nature is an indication of Aristotle's implication, this is also the case in his emphasis on the distinctive human capacities for culture and moral agency: "Culture is not present in prairie dogs, as they are not moral agents."<sup>15</sup> But it would be here that Rolston, like Leopold, is providing a reconstructive formulation of what is often seen to be an Aristotelian supposition of human dominance over other forms of life. Culture appears in humans. But humans reside upon the Earth as much as in the *polis*. Humans ought to be *cosmopolitan* in the fullest sense of the word, living both in a *cosmos* and in *polis*, a city.<sup>16</sup> Rolston notes that culture is "carried out against nature," and there are dimensions of conflict in which humans gain dominance over nature. But, he believes, there is a "dialectical" truth. The thesis is nature; the antithesis is culture; and the synthesis is culture situated in nature, the two forming a home, a "domicile." The concept of struggle to fitness that sums up "aphoristically" the revision in paradigms that has characterized biology as early Darwinism has matured in evolutionary eco-science. "Something similar needs to characterize a maturing ethics. An ethic of conflict—hu-

mans as the resourceful conquerors of nature—has to become an ethic of complementarity: humans as completing and as appreciatively resident in nature.”<sup>17</sup>

Rolston recognizes that in the emergent *polis* that makes human standards of high value, it is tempting to believe interhuman ethics is primary and to “smile at those concerned with chipmunks and daisies.” But Rolston contends that “as humans seeking an intelligent residence on earth,” we encounter four critical issues: peace, environment, development, and population. All these problems are intertwined, for human desire for maximum development drives population increase, escalates exploitation of the environment, and fuels force of war. An environmental ethics is thus not secondary but foundational. Rolston recognizes that humans are highly endowed with evolutionary achievements. But if humans build their culture, they reside in nature. If it is true man is a “biological Aristocrat,” a distortion can arise if that superior value becomes a “privilege without responsibility.” What it ought to mean is a view that an “ecological truth about humans at the summit oughts, by logic, to point outward and downward directions to bring an inclusive, global view, leading to a sense of aristocratic responsibility for the natural world.” It is not necessary to deny that there is a value superiority with humans, but an environmental ethics says more. “It is not just our capacity to *say* I, to actualize a self, but our capacity to *see others*, to oversee a world that distinguishes humans.” Humans can achieve altruism when they recognize the claims of other humans as well as nonhumans: “fauna, flora, species, ecosystems, landscapes.”<sup>18</sup>

Rolston believes that developing an ethics is “a creative act in an ongoing story whether the ‘writer’ lives in culture or in nature.” This would recognize that plants and animals do not know their histories. Human beings are the primary historical subject; their role is that of “historical overseers” providing a basis for joining science and phi-

losophy, "inviting humans to appreciate the objective stories that lie within and under the earth they inhabit." This requires an overview of the earth, but not a "unity that destroys plurality, or a moral law that forgets history." In Rolston's view, "ethics has a universal intent, but the theory must permit and require the ethics to be lived in the "first person singular." Such a person is not a "solitary Cartesian ego isolated from the world, but a person organic in history." Like Leopold, Rolston believes a land ethics should be an extension of human ethics in which we "endorse its world with our signatures." This would encompass an "emotive ethics," but not, as is usually implied, nothing but emotion. An emotive environmental ethics is one in which individuals live in caring response to their surrounding places and times. "It entails a harmonious reconciliation of mind, reason, and emotion."<sup>19</sup>

If Rolston believes a deep ecology is the expression of a "human residence in nature," he is also aware (as noted above) that "culture is carved out against nature," and that there are dimensions of conflict in which humans gain domination over nature. An important implication, at this point, are the social structures of power and domination that are the source of human domination, and the social change and transformation that will be necessary to the recovery of a complementarity and harmony between human and nonhuman nature. In the "eco-anarchism" of Murray Bookchin, social evolution is the extension of natural evolution into a distinctively human realm in which we bring into being a "second nature" for ourselves. Social life always has a natural dimension, however much we may see society as pitted against nature. The emergence of society has its origin in biological and human socialization, particularly in the human community that surrounds the young in a "system of care." The contribution of social ecology, he believes, is its view that the problem that pits society against nature emerges from within social devel-

opment, and not *between* society and nature. The crisis of modernity, he believes, has been the forms of hierarchical, bureaucratic structures: the authority of the state, class division, and patriarchy that have been the products of a "second nature" that has warped the creative power of humanity. The result of this "second nature" is human degradation, pollution, and the exploitation of the environment.<sup>20</sup> Bookchin's view of revolutionary change is inspired by the utopian anarchist tradition coming from such writers as Pierre Proudhon, Charles Fourier, and Robert Owen in reaction against the technical-instrumental reason of Enlightenment modernism and what they considered to be the redirection of human society along more rational, liberal lines, emphasizing local community, confederation, the self-management of the economy, and a new balance between humanity and nature. This heritage, he believes, was significantly renewed by the New Left of the 1960s: a revolutionary project defined as the abolition of hierarchy, "the reharmonization of a humanity with nature through reharmonization of human with the human; the achievement of an ecological society structured on ecologically sound technologies and face-to-face democratic communities."<sup>21</sup>

While Bookchin's view of deep ecology stems from a utopian-anarchist tradition of political thought, it is important to emphasize what he sees to be the inspiration provided by the classical Athenian *polis*. Bookchin is fully aware that the Athens of the classical era involved slavery, patriarchy, and prejudice against aliens. But, he argues, the classical Athenian *polity*, despite its prejudiced exclusions, provided a distinctive contribution to an ideal of democracy as the competency of citizens to manage public offices, and the public aversion to bureaucracy. It was the Greek *polis* that involved a vision of democratic assemblies as a *way of life* and not simply for the management of society—the *polis* as a "self conscious ethical entity."<sup>22</sup>

What is finally of central significance in Bookchin's contribution to a deep ecology is the Aristotelian meaning that springs from his concept as a "first and second nature" that was noted above. The first nature, he contends, is a "pre-human nature" where the basis for selfhood, consciousness, and freedom appear only in rudimentary forms, such as in the primate world. It is not until we reach full humanity that this potentiality acquires the "second nature" that gives rise to communicative ability and conscious association. It was noted that Bookchin believes a second nature has been the source of distortion leading to class divisions, patriarchy, and bureaucratic structures of power. It is the dimension of a second nature that is a *potentiality* for a radically new "free nature" capable of "self conscious caring, sympathy to pain and suffering." What this entails as a clearly Aristotelian implication is Bookchin's emphasis upon the possibility of an "objectivist ethics," a philosophy of "potentiality and actuality; and what *could* be as well as what *is* given at any moment."<sup>23</sup>

Social ecology advances a message that calls not only for a society free of hierarchy and hierarchical sensibility, but for an ethics that places humanity in the natural world as an agent for rendering evolution—social and natural—fully self conscious and as free as possible in its ability to make evolution as rational as possible in meeting non-human and human needs.<sup>24</sup>

Bookchin is thus a leading exponent of the view that central features of *Deep Ecology* can be formulated within an Aristotelian framework. If such a contention is to be sustained, it is necessary to confront the formidable objection given most influential articulation by Jurgen Habermas. It should be noted that, in an important respect, Habermas is in alliance with deep ecology as a critical reaction to an instrumental-technical reason that exponents of deep ecology see to be the basis for environmental ex-



ploitation and destruction. Habermas is noted for this articulation of a *communicative rationality* in which participants within an intersubjectively shared life world seek to “coordinate their plans of action consistently with the agreement reached at any point being evaluated in terms of the intersubjective recognition of validity claims. These are claims to truth and rightness according to whether the speaker refers to something in the objective world (or a state of affairs), to the legitimately regulated interpersonal relations of a social group, or to the “totality of his own subjective world to which one has developed access.”<sup>25</sup> The validity claims of a discourse ethics, he further contends, have to do with a procedural ethics that differentiates a *structure* of moral judgment from *evaluative* statements of a “good life” that are expressive of a particular cultural heritage.<sup>26</sup> But it should be noted that Habermas is not contending that a discourse ethics is the endorsement of a radical subjectivism or a cultural relativism. A discourse ethics has to do with a procedure of argumentation in which valid norms can be met with the consent of all those affected in their role as participants in practical discourse. For a norm to be valid, the consequences and side effects of the general observance of the practical norm can be acceptable to all. Habermas also contends that a discourse ethics, as an appeal to a procedure of argumentation, can thus lay claim to a universality beyond the intuitions of a particular culture or epoch.<sup>27</sup> But where Habermas departs from deep ecology is in his contention that a discourse ethics cannot be a basis for a “naturalistic ethics.”

Between a discourse ethics and a naturalistic ethics there is a yawning gap, because the principle egalitarian relation of reciprocity built into communicative action—a relation from which the meaning of validity claims and the idea of freedom and equality derive—cannot be carried over into the relation between

humans and nature in any strict sense. In neo-Aristotelian attempts to restore natural law, the rather paternalistic relation of "caring for" is given prominent place; and this is not just an accident. "Caring for" is a category that can lay claim to ethical status only in relation to those who can be released into autonomy and responsibility.<sup>28</sup>

Habermas also contends that what is problematic is how a claim to naturalistic ethics can be grounded without recourse to religious or metaphysical claims that are no longer credible.<sup>29</sup>

In defending deep ecology against the objection of Habermas, it is necessary to establish both how a relation of human to nonhuman nature can be formulated as a component of what is essential to human well being, as well as what can be defended as the intrinsic value of nonhuman nature independent of human concern and interest. In regard to the first contention, it can be argued that Habermas, himself, is not fully consistent in his view that a discourse ethics cannot provide access to a nonhuman nature. For if he rejects any possibility for a "naturalistic ethics," he nonetheless admits to the possibility of an *aesthetic-expressive* relation of human to nonhuman nature: "The discussion from Kant to Adorno, provides grounds for the thesis that an *expressive attitude* to nature opens up an experience that can be exploited for *artistic production*."<sup>30</sup> What Habermas would insist, however, is that expressively determined forms of interaction do not themselves form structures susceptible to rationalization, but that they are "parasitical" or dependent on innovation in other value spheres. Habermas nonetheless concedes that the communicative practice of everyday life involves an interpenetration of cognitive, moral, and expressive evaluation that are *always already* established.<sup>31</sup> But if it is true that an aesthetic-expressive rationality is an interpenetration with the cognitive, normative components of a discourse ethics,

it is difficult to see how he can insist that there is a “yawning gap” between a discourse ethics and naturalistic ethics.

It is also difficult to see why what Habermas believes to be general features of a discourse ethics cannot be sustained as a view of general capacities or functions essential to human well being and functioning beyond simply a *procedure* of argumentation. It is here that a defense of deep ecology can be effectively sustained within a neo-Aristotelian approach to an international development ethics articulated by Martha Nussbaum. This would include *bodily needs* (food, shelter, sexual desire, mobility); *cognitive capacities* (perceiving, imagining, thinking); *early infant development*; the *practical reason* necessary to managing life and answering questions about how one should live; *affiliation with other human beings*; and a *relatedness to other species and nature*.<sup>32</sup> It is in her emphasis upon the human relation to species and nature, then, that Nussbaum’s concept of an international development ethics becomes integral to a deep ecology:

Human beings recognize that they are not the only living things in their world, that they are animals living alongside other animals and also alongside plants in a universe, that, as a complex interlocking order, both supports and limits them. We are dependent on that order in countless ways, and we also sense that we owe that order some respect and concern however much we may differ about exactly what we owe, to whom and on what basis. Again, a creature who treated animals exactly like stone and could not be brought to see any difference, would probably be regarded as too strange to be human. So, too, would a creature who did not in any way respond to the beauty and wonder of the natural world.<sup>33</sup>

It should be emphasized that in her approach to a cross-cultural basis for an international development ethics, Nussbaum is seeking to avoid both the inadequacies of a

cultural relativism, as well as a metaphysical realism. What Nussbaum finds disturbing is that highly intelligent people deeply concerned and committed to the good of women and men in developing areas, people who think of themselves as progressive and feminist and anti-racist, are taking up positions that converge with reaction, oppression, and sexism: "Under the banner of their radical and politically correct position of anti-essentialism march ancient religious taboos, the luxury of the pampered husband, ill health, and death."<sup>34</sup>

If Nussbaum is protesting against the danger of cultural relativism, she is not contending that a cross-cultural view of human function and capacities can be defended by recourse to a metaphysical realism. Any such contention, she realizes, has been discredited by contemporary development in philosophy associated with writers such as Quine, Goodman, and Putman. But it is her contention that, "when we get rid of the hope of a transcendental metaphysical grounding for our evaluative judgment—about the human being as about anything else—we are not left with the abyss. We have everything that we always had all along: the exchange of reasons and arguments by human beings within history in which, for reasons that are historical and human but not the worst for that, we hold some things to be good and others bad, some arguments to be sound and others not sound."<sup>35</sup> Nussbaum's contention, in this respect, can be fully congruent with what Habermas believes to be validity claims of a discourse ethics. Where Nussbaum is departing from Habermas, however, is in her conviction that an argumentative discourse should be able to specify an account of the basic functions of human beings in terms of which life is defined. It should be emphasized that Nussbaum is fully cognizant of the fact that any specification of human function that lays claim to a cross-cultural commonality must be sensitive to the problem of diversity and variability. It is for this reason she

characterizes her contention as a “thick vague theory of the good,” admitting to “multiple specifications in accordance with varied local and personal conceptions.” Such a contention is a recognition that constitutive circumstances of life, while broadly shared, are themselves realized in different forms in different societies.<sup>36</sup>

If it is possible to defend a deep ecology as the human sensitivity to a nonhuman nature as a component of what is essential to human well-being and flourishing, such a contention must confront the objection that it remains within the anthropocentric basis in which nonhuman nature has value only as it is instrumental to human needs and priorities. It was seen above that a concept of intrinsic value of nonhuman nature is central to versions of deep ecology articulated by Aldo Leopold and Holmes Rolston. The defense of deep ecology, at this point, must confront the obvious objection that any concept of the intrinsic value of nature entails no longer credible metaphysical presuppositions. Rolston is fully conscious of this implication that the revolutionary developments of modernity as the distinction between secondary qualities that are observer-dependent versus the primary concept of matter that has an empirical basis along with the view that values are not part of nature but come only with human responses to the world. Revolutionary developments in scientific theory, he notes, have even overthrown the objective basis of primary qualities: the Einsteinian view that length, mass, time, and motion are observer dependent; a view of science that is no longer in a position of observer of nature, but part of the interplay between man and nature.<sup>37</sup>

Rolston does not believe revolutionary developments in scientific inquiry have discredited the possibility of intrinsic values of nature. For “unless we are insane, we all believe we know some non-subjective things about the

physical world," if we adhere to the qualification of an "extremely good approximation" or "middle range sense." Such a restriction does not affect the fact that we "know something objectively and factually about hawks, spruce trees, and boulders." Nor is this contention impaired by introducing value judgments, for "the word *value* attaches to life functions as these are known at an theorized for the middle range of experience."<sup>38</sup>

Baird Callicott provides an effective reinforcement of Rolston's view that revolutionary developments in scientific inquiry do not preclude a defense of intrinsic value of nonhuman nature. This resides in his contention that if, from the standpoint of scientific naturalism, the *source* of value is human consciousness, it does not follow that the *locus* of value is consciousness itself: "In other worlds, something may be valuable only because someone values it, but it may also be valued for itself apart from a subjective experience of pleasure, aesthetic satisfaction, etc., it may afford the valuer. A new born infant, for example, is 'valuable' to its parents, for its own sake, as well as for the joy or any other experience it may afford them."<sup>39</sup>

What is particularly significant in Callicott's contribution is the case he makes for believing that a Hume-Darwinian naturalism can be supportive of a deep ecology. It was Hume's contention that as one may have strong natural attachment to one's own interest, there is also a natural sentiment for interests of other beings. Hume thus provides a basis for "moral intuition" that nonhuman species have intrinsic value: "They may not be valuable in themselves, but they may be valued for themselves." Value, to be sure, is humanly conferred, "but not necessarily homocentric." We obviously experience strong self-oriented feelings, but we also have disinterested affections as well, "both in regard to kin, and persons unrelated to us."<sup>40</sup>

Callicott also believes that Darwin provides basis for believing that natural sentiments of kindness and sympathy

have been the product of a process of natural selection in which prolonged parental care is necessary to reproductive success and where these sentiments become extended to a larger group. "Unlike both (Benthamite) and (Kantian) deontological schools of modern moral philosophy, the Humean-Darwinian natural history of morals does not regard egoism as the only genuine and self explanatory value. Selfishness and altruism are equally premature and both are explained by natural selection, self-assertion and aggressiveness are necessary for survival to reproductive age and to reproductive success, but so are cooperatives and love." Callicott is convinced that Leopold's land ethics, as outlined above, carries out the implication of Hume-Darwinian naturalism. For according to Leopold, a land ethics has its beginning in the "tendency of interdependent groups to evolve modes of cooperation." Leopold envisions the land ethics as the "next step is this patter of social ethical-expansion."<sup>41</sup>

Callicott is aware that in his defense of the land ethic of Leopold, he can be accused of committing the "naturalistic fallacy" of deriving "ought from is." But he believes that Humean-Darwinian implication provides a resolution of this problem. Hume, he realizes, has been seen as the origin of the view that we cannot derive "ought from is." Moral judgments are not a matter of fact or "real relations," but feelings of approval or repugnance that spontaneously arise in our reaction to some outrage, such as the subjective feeling that originates with us when we witness a murder. Reason can have an influence on conduct in two ways: either where it excites a passion by informing us of the existence of something that is the proper object of it, or where it discovers the connection of cause and effect so as to afford us the means of exerting any passion. Hume's contention, he believes, can be illustrated in a simple example of a father's admonition to his daughter: "You ought not to smoke cigarettes because it is deleterious to

your health." The daughter, if having taken a freshman course in philosophy, can respond that this is the fallacy of deducing "ought from is." But this fallacy is dissolved, in Hume's own grounds, when a passion, feeling, or sentiment is explicitly included in the argument. The parent can then formulate his admonition as follows: Cigarette smoking is (1) deleterious to health; (2) your health is something toward which as a matter of fact you have a positive attitude; (3) therefore, you ought not smoke cigarettes. By this reasoning, then, we have a legitimate transition from is to ought. "It may not be deduction in the strictest logical sense, but it is a cognitive practical argument, according to Hume's own criteria."<sup>42</sup>

Callicott believes that the same implication applies to the question of an environmental ethics:

[1] The biological sciences including ecology have disclosed (a) that organic nature is systematically integrated; (b) that mankind is a non-privileged member of the organic continuum, and (c) that therefore, environmental abuse threatens human life, health and happiness. [2] We human beings share a common interest in human life, health and happiness. [3] Therefore we ought not to violate the integrity and stability of the natural environment by loading it with hazardous waste or by extirpating species, upon which its vital functions depend, or by any other insults or dislocations.<sup>43</sup>

Callicott's affirmation of the Humean-Darwinian contribution to the defining of intrinsic values of a nonhuman nature can be effectively integrated to a neo-Aristotelian framework that this chapter is intended to support. This possibility springs from Callicott's contention that if a Humean-Darwinian naturalism is cognizant of the human egoism of self interest, it is also an affirmation of human capacity for cooperation. Because of his comment that reason is a "slave to passion," Hume has often been inter-



preted as a more Benthamite utilitarian, or an exponent of an irrational "emotivism." But as W. D. Falk points out, this is to overlook Hume's emphasis upon a critical reflection that is a determinant of "calm over violent passion": its role is to "bridge the gap between understanding and sensibility by making object knowledge available to impinge on our sensibilities." Practical reason is "deliberation which terminates, as it did in Aristotle, in moving the soul."<sup>44</sup>

What Falk indicates, then, is that Hume's naturalism is closer to an Aristotelian implication that is a corrective to the reductive materialism which (as noted in the beginning of this paper) exponents of deep ecology perceive to be a distortion that was a product of the seventeenth-century scientific revolution: the dualism of mind and matter, and the reduction of the human organism to an atomistic sensation that became the basis for the egocentric ethic of *laissez faire* capitalism. What an Aristotelian naturalism provides as a reconstructive orientation has been effectively articulated by Hillary Putnam and Martha Nussbaum. Aristotle, they believe, provides an approach to the mind-body problem that starts from the relation of all types of living beings, plants, animals, and humans, as well as nonliving beings. It provides a "happy alternative to a materialistic reductionism on the one hand and Cartesian dualism on the other," in which we can have "non-reductionism of the explanatory priority of the intentional without losing that sense of the natural and organic unity of the intentional with the constituted matter that is one of the great contributions of Aristotelian realism."<sup>45</sup>

The defense of a deep ecology within a neo-Aristotelian frame is not to deny that what it entails can lend itself to an anthropomorphism in which humans are seen as dominant over other forms of life. But it has been the intent above to argue that a type of neo-Aristotelian formulation provides a basis for a deep ecology as a integrative frame-

work that can overcome the unsatisfactory antagonism of an anthropocentric versus non-anthropocentric approach to defining the relation of human and nonhuman nature; an integrative framework in which a human sensitivity to nonhuman nature (as argued by Nussbaum) would be seen as one of the components of human well being, along with a concept of intrinsic value of nonhuman nature in the terms articulated by Leopold, Rolston, and Callicott.

It is finally necessary to show the significance of a neo-Aristotelian approach to a deep ecology that can confront the critical reaction that its leading exponents are insufficiently cognizant of practical political possibilities in achievement of ecological objectives. In the view of Bryan Norton, for example, Callicott's value theory "does not adequately confront problems of managerial planning and management."<sup>46</sup> Robyn Eckersley faults Bookchin's eco-anarchism as an example of a utopian view of human nature that "conflates people's *potential* nature with their *essential* nature" that can be "reinforced" under the right social institutional circumstances." In Eckersley's view, human behavior is more a function of what is allowed or encouraged by political, social, and economic institutions. The decentralization of political authority will not, then, necessarily lead to social emancipation, and an ecocentric perspective will require a "multilayered" political structure, a disfusion of power "between central and periphery, in order to provide checks and balances in both directions."<sup>47</sup>

It can also be contended that exponents of deep ecology do not sufficiently address the problems of reconciling conflicts between human versus nonhuman priorities, as is particularly evident in conflicts between a concern for political programs to address the alleviation of human poverty versus ecological objectives. This is well illustrated, Will Kymlicke points out, in conflicts between those who

envision the exploitation of the Amazon region for the benefit of Brazil's poor versus those concerned with protecting the Amazon rain forest and the few remaining tribes.<sup>48</sup> The problem of reconciling conflicting priorities is also indicated in what Ramachandra Gura perceives to be the interest of a wealthy elite and a tourist industry for protecting elephants and tigers in India's national parks contrasts with the concern of nearby farmers for protection of their crops and livestock.<sup>49</sup>

It would perhaps be true that exponents of deep ecology have not been sufficiently oriented to pragmatic managerial problems in ecology, or problems of reconciling conflicts in human versus nonhuman priorities. The central components of deep ecology can be formulated within an Aristotelian framework provides the corrective to this difficulty. A central component of Aristotelian ethics is an emphasis upon a practical prudential judgment that must be differentiated from scientific-theoretical knowledge of first principles or universals—a practical judgment unique to legislative and political science (1141<sup>b</sup>-5-20; 1142<sup>a</sup>-5-30). Nussbaum's approach to an international development ethics, as indicated above, provides a paradigm that a political plan, while having a "determinant concept of the good," at a "high level of generality," must provide a great of latitude for "citizens to specify each of the components more concretely and with much variety in accordance with local traditions or individual tastes."<sup>50</sup>

An Aristotelian concept of prudential judgment, it can be contended, is well adaptable to what Robyn Eckersley believes to be the pragmatic orientation of so-called "Green economics" as a framework for avoiding both the inadequacies of bureaucratic state planning and the eco-anarchism of Bookchin. This would provide a more flexible approach to insure that political and economic power is not necessarily concentrated at any one level (top or bottom); a devolution of sovereign authority, legal and fiscal

power.<sup>51</sup> Such an approach would be congenial to Bookchin's emphasis upon local community ownership and control of the means of production, as well as cooperative enterprises and worker self-management. It would also call for a role of environmental intervention in the economy (local, provincial, and national) to "break down excessive concentration or market power to ensure that the market does not compromise ecological integrity and social justice."<sup>52</sup>

But it would be important to emphasize that an Aristotelian practical or prudential judgment has to do with the virtues of citizens and statesmen who are informed by an ideal vision rooted in a perception of the *potentialities* of human nature for the relation of a human to nonhuman nature. For Nussbaum, it was seen, this entails an emphasis upon sensitivity to nonhuman nature that is a component of human well being and flourishing. For Leopold, it is a land ethics that changes the role of *Homo sapiens* from "conquerors of the land community to plain members and citizens of it. It implies respect for his fellow members, and also respect for the community as such." Central to Rolston's version of deep ecology is the concept of humans as "completing and appreciatively resident in nature." The keynote of Bookchin's eco-anarchism is the concept of a "first nature" from which a social "second nature" emerges, opening the way to a radically new free nature in which natural evolution becomes a conscious caring and sympathy to pain and suffering. Such an ideal vision can, of course, be faulted for insufficient cognizance of the motives of egoism or self-interest in opposition to human capacities for sociality, cooperation, and community. But it is significant that if Eckersly is critical of what he perceives to be a Utopian side of Bookchin's eco-anarchism, he believes it provides a service to a political discourse in "releasing imaginative faculties and providing an 'education of desire' that opens the way to aspiration." The Green

movement will ultimately stand or fall on its ability to generate practical attention to an advanced industrial way of life. "To be realized, the aspiration released by utopianism must be critically related to one's knowledge of the present, thereby uniting desire with impulses and leading to informed cultural, social and political engagement." It can be argued that what a neo-Aristotelian framework can provide for a deep ecology can be fully congruent with Eckersley's conclusion that the "Green movement needs idealism *and* pragmatism, creativity *and* critical analysis, grass roots activities *and* institutional support if it is to achieve its long-term aims."<sup>53</sup>

# Conclusion

It has been the intent of this study to establish a basis for a naturalistic political theory that can be seen as a continuity from a tradition of Aristotelian naturalism through the contributions of Hume, Dewey, evolutionary biology, and deep ecology. Yet there are obvious contrasts and variations within these five positions that put into question whether or not an integrative perspective is possible. The intent of this conclusion is to show that the naturalistic humanism of Dewey, viewed in the context of constructive dialogue with other positions, is best designed to achieve such an integration. What this entails needs to be seen, first of all, in relation to the Putnam-Nussbaum defense of Aristotle's theory of perception that they believe provides a corrective to the inadequacies in mind-body dualism and reductive materialism of seventeenth century rationalism, and their view that such a corrective can be formulated within an internal or pragmatic realism. It was seen that Putnam believes Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* can be seen as the beginning of an internal realism; the rejection of *things in themselves* and our projections; the beliefs that are

*within* and not *outside* our conceptual schemes. But it is Putnam's contention that Kant's moral philosophy, in his *Critique of Practical Reason*, can also be seen as the beginning of an internal realism—a rethinking of values he took from Rousseau in regard to freedom and equality. For in Putnam's view, what Kant is providing is not simply "arguments for the third formulation of the categorical imperative, the formal and material principles of morality, etc.," but rather what one might call a "*moral image* of the world"—a picture of how our virtues and ideals hang together with one another and what they have to do with the positions we are in. It was then emphasized that if Putnam believes his defense of an internal realism has a "familial connection" to Kantianism, it is a divergence from Kant that has a more Aristotelian implication as a *thick image* of human nature. It was then shown that Nussbaum fills out the meaning of this contention in her view of what is defensible within a pragmatic realism in regard to capacities and functions that are essential to human well being such as bodily needs, affiliations with others, theoretical and practical reason, etc. It is here that Dewey's naturalistic humanism needs to be seen as a convergence and a corrective to Nussbaum's position. Dewey's general view of human growth and development, self actualization or "positive freedom," can be fully affirmative of Nussbaum's view of the function and capacities essential to human well being. But an important feature of Dewey's naturalistic humanism, it was seen, is an emphasis upon what is immediately given in human experience as an admixture of the "uncertain and precarious" with the "assured and complete," and, thus, for example, a conflict between the human disposition for cooperation or affiliation with others opposes egoism and self interest. What is necessary to a pragmatic realism then, is a role of critical reflection in the diagnosis and analysis of problematic situations, developing hypotheses in regard to possible solutions, in order

to finally arrive at a warranted assertability for consequences in which there can be a reasonable consensus in regard to the well being of a given community.

It was noted in Chapter 3 that while Hume's concept of natural sentiment was an expression of the early Enlightenment break from classical Aristotelian metaphysics, it entails a significant continuity with Aristotelian naturalism: Hume's rejection of the Lockean-Hobbesian concept of a pre-social "state and nature"; his emphasis upon the roles of learning, experience, and sociality in human growth and development; his view that natural sentiments have reference to an interest of humanity beyond egoism and self-love. It was noted that Dewey believed his own contribution could be seen as carrying out Hume's project. But it was emphasized that Dewey provides a corrective to serious confusion in Hume's ethical theory, and that he provides an extension of its implication that is expressive of later Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment historical developments that Hume was not able to envision in the context of his times.

What is of central significance in the contribution of Dewey's naturalistic humanism in regard to contemporary developments in evolutionary biology is what it provides as an effective supplement and extension of implications of the neo-Darwinian synthesis of Ernst Mayr that was considered in Chapter 4. It was noted that Mayr provides a mediation between a concept of the "cost benefit" concept of genetic altruism articulated by Roger Masters versus the more "interactionist" interpretation of Lewontin. It was argued that Mayr provides an intermediate position. An inclusive fitness altruism is evident in the instinctive love of mother for children and in the different stance we take towards strangers as compared with members of our own group. But Mayr does not believe a genetic disposition towards ethical evaluation has been demonstrated. What can be contended is only an innate *capacity* for adopt-



ing ethical norms. If an individual has such capacity, he is able to adopt a second set of ethical norms supplementing and, in part, replicating the biologically inherited norms based on inclusive fitness. Such a contention is thus congruent with the concept of a "historicized" or "second nature" that was outlined in Chapter 1. The importance of Dewey's contribution resides in what he provides that carries out the implication of Mayr's contentions: Dewey's emphasis upon human growth and development that are the products of biological-cultural interaction. A "naturalistic theory of logic," he contends, is the continuity of lower (less complex) and higher (more complex) activities and forms. Such a continuity encompasses the human capacities for sociality, habituation, and the centrality of language by which institutions and acquired habits are transmitted. Dewey's view of human moral development (as previously noted) entails the development of qualities of character and conduct; the process of critical moral reflection in which original desires are transformed into different desires because of objects which thought holds up to view; confrontation with problematic situations in order to arrive at consequences that can differentiate a *real* from an *apparent* good.

It should be emphasized that Dewey is not endorsing the reductive naturalism in the tradition of Hobbes and utilitarianism in which normative ideas are deducible simply from biological drives and dispositions. The significance of particular drives or impulses, he believed, depends upon consequences actually produced taking into account the roles of tradition, custom, laws, and conditions constituted by the environment. Dewey believed this to be consistent with a concept of human nature where the keynote is the human growth and development directive to self realization or a "positive freedom." It was his conviction that the intention of the founding fathers was that self

governing institutions are the means by which human nature can reach its fullest potentiality. While we can no longer subscribe to the vocabulary of the founding fathers, we can nonetheless endorse their view that self-governing institutions are the means by which human nature can secure its fullest realization in the greatest number of persons. It was Dewey's conviction that the role of all institutions (economic, political, and social) is the fullest development of human capacities without regard to differences of race, class, or economic status.

Finally, it is necessary to clarify the contribution of Dewey's naturalistic humanism to contemporary developments in deep ecology. Dewey's naturalistic humanism, it can be contended, exemplifies Aldo Leopold's concept of a "land ethics" as an enlargement of the concept of community to include soil, water, plants, and animals or, collectively, the land. Dewey's view of experience and nature thus entails a significant congruence with the central contention of deep ecology as an opposition to the separation of man and experience from nature. Dewey emphasized experience as being *of* as well as *in* nature: "It is not experience which is experienced by nature—stones, animals, disease, health, temperature, electricity and so on. Things interacting in certain ways *are* experience, they are what is experienced. Linked in certain other ways with other natural objects—the human organism—they are *how* things are experienced as well. Experience reaches down into nature; it has depth." Experience includes *what* "men do suffer, *what* they strive for, love, believe, and endure, and also *how* man acts and is acted upon, the ways in which they do and suffer, desire and enjoy, see, believe, imagine—in short, the process of experiencing." Experience, Dewey contends, also denotes the one who "plants and reaps, who works and rejoices, hopes, fears, plans, invokes magic or chemistry to aid him, who is downcast or triumphant. It

is double barreled in that it recognizes in its primary integrating a division between act and material, subject and object, but contains them both in an unanalyzed totality."<sup>1</sup>

Dewey's view of the relationship of experience and nature enters into his political theory in what he saw to be the role of government as a positive agent in the realization of human freedom. A past tradition of economic individualism undoubtedly promoted invention, initiative, and hastened economic development. But it also encouraged the reckless and extravagant exploitation of nature's resources.

Conservation of not only the public domain, but restoration of worn out land to fertility, the combating of flood and erosion which have reduced vast parts of our national heritage to something like a desert, are the penalties we have to pay for past indignities in the orgy of so called economic liberty. Without abundant stores of natural resources, equal liberty for all is out of the question. Only those already in possession will enjoy it. Not merely a modification but a reversal of our traditional policies of waste and destruction is necessary if genuine freedom of opportunity is to be achieved.<sup>2</sup>

Dewey's emphasis upon environmental policies that are directives to the enhancement of individual freedom is, of course, subject to the common view of exponents of deep ecology that it is an example of the Enlightenment anthropocentrism in which humans are seen to be at the apex of all forms of organic life. But Dewey's naturalistic humanism is fully congruent with the central concept of Holmes-Rolston (noted in the previous chapter) that the fact of what is distinctive to human evolution in regard to the capacity for moral agency and culture needs to be accompanied by a view that the truth of "humans at the summit" requires a global view, a land ethics as the extension of human ethics, humans as "intelligence resident in na-

ture," and the "harmony of human and nonhuman nature." Dewey's convergence with Rolston is clearly apparent in his reproach of education that promotes a study of nature in isolation, rather than as part of a broader ecological system.

The real remedy is to make nature study a study of nature, not of fragments made meaningless through complete removal from the situations in which they are produced and in which they operated. When nature is treated as a whole, like the earth in its relations, its phenomena fall into their natural sympathy and association with human life.<sup>3</sup>

Dewey's convergence with Rolston is further evident in his emphasis upon the role of a "civilized people" as it relates to nature, adapting itself, introducing variegation, searching the world for plants and animals that will flourish under such conditions. "As a consequence, the wilderness blooms as a rose, the civilized man has habits which transform the environment."<sup>4</sup>

It is important to emphasize that if Dewey's naturalism is a cognizance of human harmony of consilience with nature, it is also a cognizance of "what nature entails as an admixture of the uncertain and precarious with assured and complete. . . . The world is a scene of risk; it is uncertain, unstable, uncannily unstable. Its dangers are irregular, inconstant, not to be counted upon as to their time and season. Although persistent, they are sporadic, episodic. . . . Plague, famine, failure of crops, disease, death, defeat in battle, are always just around the corner, and so are abundance, strength, victory, festival and song."<sup>5</sup>

What is essential, then, is a critical inquiry that must confront problematic situations: locating difficulties and evils, formulating plans that can be working hypotheses in dealing with such difficulties, and the envisioning of consequences that can have warranted assertability for a pos-

sible resolution. Dewey's general approach to a critical theory is thus well adapted to current concerns of deep ecology as the reconciliation of conflicting claims and interests: human versus nonhuman priorities, free market versus state planning, and national planning versus local participation and control. What is also distinctive in Dewey's pragmatic inquiry is convergent with Robyn Eckersly's emphasis upon the need for both idealism and realism in formulating deep ecology objections. According to Dewey's view of moral inquiry, the loss of credibility in the classical world of fixed ends and purposes does not mean that men cease to have ideas as expressions of human imagination. Ideas are not a "haven from the storms of life," or a "refuge from the troubles of existence," but imaginative possibilities that can stimulate new efforts and realizations.<sup>6</sup>

The contemporary trends in deep ecology considered in previous chapters are an indication of developments not sufficiently anticipated by Dewey, who was writing in the context of the early part of the century when the concerns of deep ecology were only beginning to enter the mainstream of political theory. But what Dewey provides is an indispensable component of defining the significance of deep ecology within the framework of naturalistic political theory. Dewey's view of experience and nature as the harmony and conscience of human with nonhuman nature provides the bridge to the contemporary concerns of deep ecology. Steven Rockefeller's view of the contemporary importance of Dewey's contribution is then well warranted:

In a postmodern world struggling to create democratic societies and a multicultural global community, Dewey's understanding of the democratic faith continues to be of critical importance. He knew, for example, that without a unifying social faith in moral democracy as a regulative ideal governing all human relations, free elections and free markets are not sufficient to create dem-

ocratic societies. At a time when humanity faces severe environmental problems and must establish a mutually enhancing relation with the larger earth community, Dewey's evolutionary naturalism, piety towards nature, and faith in a scientific approach to the moral evaluating of human behavior have acquired a new relevance.<sup>7</sup>



# Notes

## INTRODUCTION

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## CHAPTER 1—ARISTOTELIAN NATURALISM: CLASSICAL CATEGORIES AND RECONSTRUCTIVE ORIENTATION

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17. Ibid., p. 85.
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### **About the Author**

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