

DEVELOPING A PARADIGM FOR A FREE SOCIETY: THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF MISES, MENGER, AND RAND

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Introduction

Ideas rule the world. Especially important are the philosophical ideas that determine conceptions of the human person in relation to the world in which he lives. Throughout history, the philosophy of individualism has played a critical role in man's progress. Each individual is a discrete being with a unique mind and a distinctive set of abilities, desires, and motivations. Each person is a self-responsible causal agent who has the capacity to pursue his well-being through his intellectual and physical actions. By nature, each person has the right to have the opportunity to develop his potential as a free, individual human being. People are happier when their lives are lived in freedom. When people exercise their freedom they enter the arena of morality as responsible free agents.

America was intentionally created based on the following fundamental philosophical ideas: (1) The material world is an orderly, intelligible, natural domain that is open to men's minds; (2) A man's rational mind is able to attain an objective knowledge of reality that is necessary for the pursuit of his happiness—a man is able to acquire knowledge based on evidence provided by the senses; (3) The good life is one of personal self-actualization—each person should strive to attain his own happiness through his own independent thoughts and efforts; (4) Each man has inalienable natural rights to his own life, liberty, and the pursuit of his own happiness; and (5) A government with limited power is needed in order to secure these rights. The founding fathers thus advocated rights, reason, freedom, individualism, capitalism and the minimal state.

For centuries the philosophy of freedom and individualism has underpinned the political and economic order that characterized the American way of life. Unfortunately, beginning in the 1910s, which saw the creation of the income tax, the Federal Reserve, Prohibition, and the central planning and suspension of fundamental liberties that went on during WW1, American society has become more and more collectivized. Special interest groups have increasingly persuaded the government to grant them special privileges. People form political coalitions in order to be better at obtaining government favors. People implore the government for assistance. As government has become more dominant and has produced programs to meet our needs, it has also corrupted people's values and made them dependent on government. There has been a growing tendency for government to expand and undermine personal freedom and responsibility.

We must restore in America the founders' understanding of government as a necessary evil created solely in order to secure individual rights. In addition, we need to supply to people in the rest of the world a blueprint for market liberalism rooted in philosophical principles based on an analysis of the nature of man and the world. The works of Ludwig von Mises (1881-1973), Carl Menger (1840-1921) and Ayn Rand (1905-1982) go a long way toward providing the ideas required for the construction of a paradigm appropriate for a free society. This paper represents an initial effort to reconcile some of the ideas of these three great thinkers.

Misesian Praxeology

In a 1971 article in *Modern Age*, Murray Rothbard, Ludwig von Mises' student and an eminent scholar in his own right, observed that Mises' work provides us with an economic paradigm grounded in the nature of man and in individual choice. Rothbard explains that Mises' paradigm furnishes economics in a systematic, integrated form that can serve as a correct alternative to the crisis situation that modern economics has engendered. According to Rothbard, it is time for us to adopt this paradigm in all of its facets.¹

Mises' paradigm for our age, as detailed especially in his *Human Action*, grounds economics upon the action axiom which is the fundamental and universal truth that individual men exist and act by making purposive choices among alternatives. Upon this axiom, Mises deduces the entire systematic structure of economic theory. Mises' advocacy of free markets and his opposition to statism stems from his analysis of the nature and consequences of freely acting individuals compared to the nature of government and the consequences brought about by government intervention.

For Mises, economic behavior is a special case of human action. He contends that it is through the analysis of the idea of action that the principles of economics can be deduced. Economic theorems are seen as connected to the foundation of real human purposes. Economics is based on true and evident axioms, arrived at by introspection, concerning the essence of human action. From these axioms, Mises derives logical implications or the truths of economics.

Through the use of abstract economic theorizing, Mises recognizes the nature and operation of human purposefulness and entrepreneurial resourcefulness and identifies the systematic tendencies which influence the market

process. Mises' insight was that economic reasoning has its basis in the understanding of the action axiom. He says that sound deductions from a priori axioms are apodictically true and cannot be empirically tested. Mises developed through deductive reasoning the chains of economic theory based on introspective understanding of what it means to be a rational, purposeful, and acting human being. The method of economics is deductive and its starting point is the concept of action.

According to Mises, all of the categories, theorems, or laws of economics are implied in the action axiom. These include, but are not limited to: subjective value, causality, ends, means, preference, cost, profit and loss, opportunities, scarcity, choice, marginal utility, marginal costs, opportunity cost, time preference, ordinary interest, association, and so on.

Mises maintains that all economic reasoning rests on (1) an understanding of the categories of human action and the meaning of a change taking place in phenomena such as knowledge, values, preferences, means, ends, costs, etc., and (2) the logical deduction of the consequences which would emerge from the accomplishment of some particular action or of the outcome which would arise from a specific action if the circumstances are altered in some specific way.

As an adherent of Kantian epistemology, Mises states that the concept of action is a priori to all experience because it is part of the essential and necessary character of the logical structure of the human mind. Mises agrees with Kant that there is a group of common categories lodged in men's minds through which they grasp that which exists.

Mises extends Kant by adding an important insight. Kantianism has been viewed as a type of idealism due to its failure to connect the mind's categories to the world. Mises further develops Kantian epistemology when he explains that the laws of logic affect both thought and action. He says that we must acknowledge that the human mind is a mind of acting persons and that our mental categories have to be accepted as fundamentally grounded in the category of action. Mises states that when this is realized, the notion of the existence of true synthetic a priori categories and propositions can be accepted as a realistic, rather than as an idealistic, philosophy of knowledge. The mind and physical reality make contact via action. Mises believes that this insight fills in the gap between the mental world and the outside physical world. Mises thus contends that epistemology depends on our reflective knowledge of action.

Mises considers the law of human action to be a law of thought and as a categorical truth prior to all experience. Thinking is a mental action. For Mises, a priori means independent of any particular time or place. Denying the possibility of arriving at laws via induction, Mises argues that evidence for the a priori is based on reflective uni-

versal inner experience.

Unlike Menger, the father of Austrian economics, Mises did not believe the essential defining qualities or essences existed in individual phenomena that made possible their recognition as representatives of that type. If he had held to the notion that there are certain ontological, a priori, and intelligible structures in the world, then he may have considered the law of human action to be a law of reality rather than a law of thought. An a priori in reality would not be the result of any forming or shaping of reality on the part of the experiencing subject. Rather, essences or universals would then be said to be discerned through a person's theoretical efforts.

It is hard to see how Mises could contend that a priori knowledge is gained exclusively through non-inductive means. Perhaps it would have been better if he had said that economic theory is based in part on introspection. He could have argued that sense data alone could not reveal to a person the essential purposefulness of human action. The action axiom could then be depicted as derived from a combination of both external observation and introspection.

Many believe that Mises is on questionable grounds with his extreme aprioristic position with respect to epistemology. However, his praxeology does not inevitably require a neo-Kantian epistemology. It is not inextricably tied to an aprioristic foundation. Other epistemological frameworks may provide a better underpinning for free will and rationality. For example, Misesian praxeology could operate within an Aristotelian, Thomistic, Mengerian or Randian philosophical structure. The concept of action could be formally and inductively derived from perceptual data. Actions would be seen as performed by entities who act in accordance with their nature. Man's distinctive mode of action involves rationality and free will. Men are thus rational beings with free will who have the ability to form their own purposes and aims. Human action also assumes an uncoerced human will and limited knowledge. All of the above can be seen as consistent with Mises' praxeology. Once we arrive at the concept of human action, Mises' deductive logical derivations can come into play.

Even Rothbard recanted his advocacy of Mises' Kantian epistemology when in 1978 he says:

Without delving too deeply into the murky waters of epistemology, I would deny, as an Aristotelian and neo-Thomist, any such alleged "laws of logical structure" that the human mind necessarily imposes on the chaotic structure of reality. Instead, I would call all such laws "laws of reality," which the mind apprehends from investigating and collating the facts of the real world. My view is that the fundamental axiom and subsidiary axioms are derived

from the experience of reality and are therefore in the broadest sense empirical. I would agree with the Aristotelian realist view that its doctrine is radically empirical, far more so than the post-Humean empiricism which is dominant in modern philosophy.²

Murray Rothbard agreed that the action axiom is universally true and self-evident but argued that a person becomes aware of that axiom and its subsidiary axioms through experience in the world. A person begins with concrete human experience and then moves toward reflection. Once a person forms the basic axioms and concepts from experience with the world, he does not need to resort to experience to validate an economic hypothesis. Instead, deductive reasoning from sound basics will validate it.

The later Aristotelian, neo-Thomistic and natural-law-oriented Rothbard refers to laws of reality that the mind apprehends by examining and adducing the facts of the real world. Conception is a way of comprehending real things. It follows that perception and experience are not the products of a synthetic a priori process but rather are apprehensions whose structured unity is due to the nature of reality itself. In opposition to Mises, Rothbard contends that the action axiom and its subsidiary axioms are derived from the experience of reality and are therefore radically empirical. These axioms are based on both external experience and universal inner experience.

Rothbard nevertheless continued to endorse Mises' monumental, integrated, and systematic treatise, *Human Action*, as a complete and true paradigm based on the nature of man and individual choice. Although he disagrees with Mises' epistemology, he does agree that Mises' praxeological economics appropriately begins with, and verbally deduces logical implications from, the fact that individuals act. Rothbard contends that it's time for Mises' paradigm to be embraced if we are to find our way out of the methodological and political problems of the modern world.

Menger's Austrian Aristotelianism

Carl Menger began the modern period of economic thought and provided the foundation for the Austrian School of Economics. In his two books, *Principles of Economics* (1871) and *Investigations into the Method of the Social Sciences With Special Reference to Economics* (1883), Menger destroyed the existing structure of economic science and put it on totally new foundations. He was an Aristotelian immanent realist who argued that there is one reality knowable by rational means and that all things are subject to the laws of cause and effect.

Menger follows Aristotle in saying that all knowledge about the world begins with induction. He reasons that we can actually detect essences in reality through re-

peated observations of phenomena which reveal certain similarities according to which objects would be grouped into types or classes via a process of abstraction. Deductions are made from inductively known facts and premises, are based on reality, and are not the product of a priori mental consequences. Introspection is an ingredient in Menger's epistemology. For example, his epistemology makes use of the internal perspective on human action that people share because of their common humanity.

Menger's rational egoism recognizes that value is grounded in human needs and their satisfaction. Finding a basis for economics in biology, Menger states that man's needs are not arbitrary and must be met if he is to survive and prosper. The satisfaction of human needs is the final cause in Menger's theory and the driving force of all economic activity. Human needs are the beginning and the end of human activity because nothing would take place without the requirements of satisfying them. Menger explains that man is the ultimate cause as well as the ultimate end in the process of want satisfaction.

Menger observes that Aristotle termed the means of life and well-being of men "goods." Like Aristotle, he views goods as the means of life, well-being, and need satisfaction. Self-interested behavior in obtaining goods is economic behavior and is good behavior. The value of a good is a necessary consequence of the knowledge that the maintenance of one's life and well-being depends upon the control and use of that particular good.

He explains that goods have no inherent or intrinsic value in themselves and that value is a judgment made by economizing individuals regarding the importance of specific goods for maintaining their lives and well-being. Value in every case is a function of valuing acts of preference or evaluation of an individual in his own particular context. Human beings must value because they have needs as living, conditional entities.

The value of goods emerges from their relation to a man's needs and is not inherent in the goods themselves. Nor is value merely in a man's mind independent of reality. Menger demonstrates that value results from an interplay between a man's conceptual consciousness, human needs, and the physical ability of goods to meet those needs. Value must be in a man's mind but also must be based in reality. For value to exist, consciousness must recognize a connection between means and an end in reality. A value must be to a particular valuer in his unique and specific context for an end to which the value is a means. A person's life is seen by Menger as the ultimate end of valuation and action. Life requires action and is an end in itself—an end which is not a means to any further end.

What a man needs depends upon the facts of his nature and on the facts of things in reality. Values are not subjective, arbitrary, or intrinsic but are objective when a

person's wants correspond to the objective state of affairs. For value to exist, there must be a connection in reality grasped by consciousness with respect to means and ends which support a particular man's life. Knowledge, in the form of a means—end relationship grasped by reason, is a precondition for value. In this sense, values can be said to be “products” of the mind. Values can only be said to be “subjective” from the perspective that the evaluation of a causal connection with the satisfaction of an end is performed by an individual person's consciousness.

In a larger sense, values as depicted by Menger are not subjective (i.e., arbitrary) nor inherent but are objective. Unfortunately, because the label, objective value theory, had already been attached to the labor theory of value, Menger's new value theory was eventually accorded the mistaken label of subjective value theory. For Menger, a person's judgment of value can be said to have been objectively made when it derives from knowledge based on the facts of reality and on reasoning in accordance with the laws of logic. Menger's value theory is an important component of Austrian economics in general and of Misesian praxeology in particular. In addition, Menger's Aristotelian metaphysics and epistemology are consistent with Mises' action axiom and able to provide a superior foundation for Mises' praxeological economics.

Ayn Rand's Objectivism

Ayn Rand, the best-selling novelist and world-renowned philosopher, has developed a unique philosophical system called Objectivism. Rand bases her metaphysics on the Aristotelian idea that reality is objective and absolute. Epistemologically, the Randian view is that man's mind is competent to achieve objectively valid knowledge of that which exists. Rand's moral theory of self-interest is derived from man's nature as a rational being and end in himself, recognizes man's right to think and act according to his freely chosen principles, and reflects a man's potential to be the best person he can be in the context of his facticity.

Both Aristotle and Menger viewed essences, universals, or concepts as metaphysical and had no compelling explanations of the method to be employed in order to abstract or intuit the essence from the particulars in which it is indivisibly wedded. As immanent realists, both view concepts as essences that are within the concretes of the external world.

For Rand, the essential characteristics of a concept are epistemological rather than metaphysical. She explains that concepts are neither intrinsic abstract entities existing independently of a person's mind nor are they nominal products of a person's consciousness, unrelated to reality. Concepts are epistemologically objective in that they are produced by man's consciousness in accordance with the facts of reality. Concepts are mental integrations of factual data. They are the products of a cognitive

method of classification whose processes must be performed by a human being, but whose content is determined by reality. For Rand, essences are epistemological rather than metaphysical.

Whereas concepts are abstractions (i.e., universals), everything that man apprehends is specific and concrete. Concept formation is based on the recognition of similarity among the existents being conceptualized. Rand explains that an individual perceptually discriminates and distinguishes specific entities from their background and from one another. A person then groups objects according to their similarities regarding each of them as a unit. He then integrates a grouping of units into a single mental entity called a concept. The ability to perceive entities or units is man's distinctive method of cognition and the gateway to the conceptual level of man's consciousness. According to Rand, a concept is a mental integration of two or more units which are isolated according to one or more characteristics and united by a specific definition. A definition is the condensation of a large body of observations.

Whereas a concept is assigned precise identity through the use of a definition, the integration (i.e., the concept) itself is kept in mind by referring to it by a perceptual concrete (i.e., a word). Words transfer concepts into mental entities whenever definitions give them identity. Language makes this type of integration possible.

Concept formation is largely a mathematical process. There is a connection between measurement and conceptualization. Similarity, an implicit form of measurement, is the relationship between two or more existents which possess the same attributes but in different measures or degrees. The mental process of concept formation consists in retaining the characteristics but omitting their measurements. The relevant measurement of a particular attribute must exist in some quantity, but may exist in any quantity. The measurements exist, but they are not specified. A concept is a mental integration of units possessing the same differentiating characteristics with their particular measurements omitted.

Rand contends that, although concepts and definitions are in one's mind, they are not arbitrary because they reflect reality, which is objective. Both consciousness in metaphysics and concepts in epistemology are real and part of ordinary existence—the mind is part of reality.

In order to be objective in one's conceptual endeavors, a human being must fully adhere to reality by applying certain methodological rules based on facts and proper for man's form of cognition. For man, a being with rational consciousness, the appropriate method for conforming to objective reality is reason and logic. In order to survive man needs knowledge and reason in his tool of knowledge.

Rand observes that human knowledge is limited and that

humans are beings of bounded knowledge. It is because of this constraint that it is imperative for a man to identify the cognitive context of his analysis and conclusions. She points out that contextualism does not mean relativism and that context is what makes a properly specified conclusion objective. Certainty is a contextual evaluation.

According to Rand, man has no innate knowledge and, therefore, must determine through thought the goals, actions, and values upon which his life depends. He must discover what will further his own unique and precious individual human life and what will harm it. Refusal to recognize and act according to the facts of reality will result in his destruction. The Randian view is that the senses enable man to perceive reality, that knowledge can only be gained through the senses, and that the senses are able to provide objectively valid knowledge of reality.

For man to survive, he must discern the principles of action necessary to direct him in his relationships with other men and with nature. Man's need for these principles is his need for a code of morality. Men are essentially independent beings with free will; therefore, it is up to each individual to choose his code of values using the standard that is required for the life of a human being. If life as a man is one's purpose, he has the right to live as a rational being. To live, man must think, act, and create the values his life requires.

Rand explains that moral values are not subjective constructs nor intrinsic features of morality, but rather are objective. The good is neither an attribute of things in themselves nor of a person's emotional state, but is an evaluation made of the facts of reality by man's consciousness according to a rational standard of value. When one attributes moral value to something he must address the questions of "to whom" and "for what." If something is a value, it must have a positive relationship to the end of a particular individual's life. Value is a function of the interaction between what is deemed valuable and the person to whom it is valuable. Value is neither totally internal nor completely external but is a function of a specific connection between external objects and an individual's ends.

Rand states that values reflect facts as evaluated by persons with respect to the goal of living. Whether or not a given object is a value is dependent upon its relationship to the end of a person's life. Life's conditionality is the basis of moral value. The thing in question must have certain attributes in order to further an individual's life, and the individual must seek his life, for that object to be valuable. The objectivity of value derives from the fact that particular kinds of action tend to promote human life. A specific object's value is a function of the factual relation between the object and a particular person's life. The valid attribution of value reflects a factual relationship.

The requirements of a man's survival are determined by reality and the good is an aspect of reality that has a positive relationship to a man's life. An object's value thus depends on what the object is and on the way in which it affects a particular person. It follows that a variety of different things can be objectively valuable to different persons.

Rand's theory of objective value is both functional (i.e., directed toward certain ends) and naturalistic. It is naturalistic because values stem from certain facts about the nature of human life. A man's consciousness and elements of the external world must connect in order to judge particular things as valuable.

Of course, from another perspective, it is individuals who are objective (or are not objective) with respect to their judgments regarding value. A value's objectivity also reflects the reality that values are the conclusions of a person's volitional consciousness and that individuals can be mistaken in their judgments and choices. An authentic value must derive both from a life-affirming relationship to a human being and must exist in a correct connection to his consciousness.

Without self-value, no other values are possible. Self-value has to be earned by thinking. Morality, a practical, selfish necessity, requires the use of man's rational faculty and the freedom to act on his judgments. A code of values accepted by rational choice is a code of morality—choice is the foundation of virtue. Happiness is the state of consciousness that results from the achievement of one's values.

Toward an Integrated Framework

A conceptual and moral defense of a political and economic system must be grounded on the best reality-based ethical system that a reasoning individual can discover. A true paradigm or body of theoretical knowledge about reality must address a broad range of issues in metaphysics, epistemology, value theory, ethics, and so on in a systematic fashion. The concern of the system-builder is with truth as an integrated whole. Such a body of knowledge is circumscribed by the nature of facts in reality including their relationships and implications. When constructing a paradigm, it is legitimate to take a selective approach with respect to existing philosophical positions because a paradigm's consistency with reality is all that really matters. It is thus appropriate for us to extract what is true and good from the writings of Mises, Menger, Rand, and others and use those components as a basis for a better integration that allows for a deeper understanding of what would constitute a morally right socioeconomic system. By integrating and synthesizing essential elements of the ideas of the Austrian School of Economics with those from Ayn Rand's philosophy of Objectivism we can come closer to a comprehensive, logically consistent view of the world and a foundation and justification for laissez-faire capitalism.

The Aristotelian perspective is that reality is objective. There is a world of objective reality that exists independent of human beings and that has a determinate nature that is knowable. It follows that natural law is objective because it is inherent in the nature of the entity to which it relates. The content of natural law which derives from the nature of man and the world is accessible to human reason. Principles that supply a systematic level of understanding must be based on the facts of reality. In other words, the principles of a true conceptual framework must connect with reality. The only way to successfully defend principles and propositions is to show that they have a firm base or foundation.

We need to formulate principles explicitly and relate them logically to other principles and to the facts of reality. A systematic, logical understanding is required for cognitive certainty and is valuable in communicating ideas and the reasoning underlying them clearly and precisely.

It is necessary to provide a realistic foundation for a true paradigm for a free society. Therefore, a comprehensive moral defense of individualism and its political implications is founded appropriately on a naturalistic philosophy. An Aristotelian metaphysics such as those supplied by Menger or Rand would be an excellent starting point for a political and economic framework based on the requirements of reality and of man's nature.

Principles such as the laws of identity and noncontradiction underpin the observable fact that there are innumerable distinct types of being in reality. Human beings are a unique class, characterized by the real attributes of reason and free will, that introduce a dimension of value into nature. Human existence represents an ontological realm different from all others. A human being can choose and is thus a moral agent. This moral nature is grounded in the facts of nature. What a thing must be or do depends on the kind of object or entity that it is. The values (and virtues) of life are discovered by means of an understanding of human nature and the nature of the world.

Ayn Rand's conception of universals (or essences) as epistemological is arguably superior to the traditional interpretation given to Aristotle's ideas or universals as being metaphysical. Rand explains that knowledge is acquired by an active, conscious agent through the processes of induction and deduction. In order to deduce from axioms and general statements, we must first have inductive inferences. We can know via the senses, inferences from data supplied by the senses, and introspective understanding. Once it is acknowledged that Mises' action axiom could be derived through an inductive process, it will then be legitimate to follow and adopt his logical arguments that all the core principles and relationships of economics can be deduced from that axiom.

Although Menger speaks of economic value while Rand

is concerned with moral value, their ideas are essentially the same. Both view human life as the ultimate value. Their shared biocentric concept of value contends that every value serves biological needs. Value thus has its roots in the conditional nature of life. Life can perish. Objective values support man's life and originate in a relationship between a man and his survival requirements.

Menger was concerned with the many values the pursuit of which is mainly an economic matter. Because anything that satisfies a human need is a value, that which satisfies a man's material needs for food, shelter, health-care, wealth, production, and so forth, is deemed to be an economic value. People require a certain degree of prosperity with respect to their needs, desires, and wants.

Rand explains that the idea of value enters the world with the phenomenon of life and that the nature of values depends on the type of life in question. Good and bad are objective relational features of living beings. It follows that the human good is connected to human nature which involves life, the source of value, and free will, the element of responsibility. Of course, a human being can choose to pursue or reject life. Moral judgment is concerned with what is volitional. Moral principles are useful only to beings with conceptual consciences who can choose their actions.

Rand explains that men know they have volition through the act of introspection. The fact that people are regularly deciding to think or not to think is directly accessible to each person. Each person can introspectively observe that he can choose to focus his consciousness or not. A person can pay attention or not. The implication of free will is that men can be held morally responsible for their actions.

From Ayn Rand's perspective, every human value is a moral value (including economic value) that is important to the ethical standard of man's life qua man. Rand viewed virtually every human choice as a moral choice involving moral values.

Both Rand and Menger espouse a kind of contextually—relational objectivism in their theories of value. Value is seen as a relational quality dependent on the subject, the object, and the context or situation involved. The subject, object, and the situation that combine them are the antecedents of value.

Some objective values are universal and stem from common human potentialities and characteristics. There are also values that are objective but not universal. Objective values depend on both an individual's humanity and his individuality. A person's individuality is consistent with realism and with an all-embracing coherent explanation of existence. Since individualism is a fundamental feature of the human species, each person is able to employ his unique attributes, talents, and situations in his efforts to do well at living his own individual life. Each

person needs to consider his needs, capacities, the nature of the world, and opportunities it offers for human action.

Values are objective when they are based on the facts that are relevant to him as an individual. A person's moral responsibility, from the perspective of ethical naturalism, is to make the fullest possible development of himself as an individual rational being in the context of the world in which he lives. What a person is, together with what the world is, reveals how he should live his life. A person who chooses to live should use reason to satisfy his needs, choose what goals to pursue, and determine what actions will achieve them.

A person's happiness is tied to human nature and to the characteristics of the individual involved. Happiness relates to a person's success as a rational and unique human being possessing free will. A happy person tends to be a good person who makes real the highest potential of his humanity and individuality. A human being has a moral dimension to his nature in that he has the potential to be good as an element of his self-fulfillment. Ethics is based on the need to concern oneself with living a good human life. Moral goodness involves the choice of each individual in determining what will contribute to his own moral goodness.

Given the nature of man and the world, if we want persons to be able to pursue happiness, peace, and prosperity while living with one another, then we must adopt and respect a social structure that accords to each person a moral space over which he has freedom to act and within which no one else may rightfully interfere. The idea of natural rights defines this moral space. Individuals have basic rights because of what they are. In order to uphold each person's sovereignty, men should create a political and legal system that makes it possible for individuals to properly survive, flourish, pursue happiness, and carry on a virtuous life. It follows that the proper role of government is to protect individuals' natural rights through the use of force, but only in response, and only against those who initiate its use.

An Aristotelian life-centered metaethics supports the natural right to liberty which itself provides a solid foundation for a minimal state. Natural rights are metanormative principles concerned with protecting the self-directedness of individuals, thus ensuring the freedom through which they can pursue their survival and self-perfection.

An integration and combination of selected doctrines from the Austrian School of Economics (as exemplified in the writings of Mises and Menger) and from the Objectivist School can provide a philosophical basis for an appropriate moral and political structure for a free society. A naturalist metaethical perspective provides the foundation for the type of framework that is most supportive and accommodating of the moral nature of hu-

man life.

Our goal is to have a paradigm or system in which the views of reality, knowledge, human nature, value, and society make up an integrated whole. The suggested synthesis of Austrian Economics and Objectivism can provide an excellent foundation for such a paradigm. Of course the paradigm will grow and evolve as scholars engage, question, critique, interpret, and extend its ideas. This systematic approach and/or its components have been studied by many modern-day thinkers.³ This is as it should be because our goal is to have a paradigm that accords with reality. As such, it must be viewed as a vibrant, living systematic framework that aims at the truth.

Notes

1. Murray N. Rothbard, "Ludwig von Mises and the Paradigm for Our Age," *Modern Age*, Fall, 1971, pp. 370-79.
2. Murray N. Rothbard, "Praxeology: The Methodology of Austrian Economics," in Edwin Dolan (ed.), *The Foundations of Modern Austrian Economics*, (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1976), p. 24.
3. A list of individuals whose writings have contributed to the development of a paradigm for a free society includes, but is not limited to, David Boaz, Peter Boettke, Walter Block, Nathaniel Branden, M. Northrup Buechner, Ricardo F. Crespo, Douglas J. Den Uyl, John Egger, David Gordon, Jeffrey M. Herbener, Lester H. Hunt, Steven Horwitz, John Hospers, Edward L. Hudgins, Thomas Hurka, Richard C. B. Johnsson, David Kelley, Richard Kraut, Roderick T. Long, Tibor R. Machan, Uskali Mäki, Eric Mack, Wendy McElroy, David L. Norton, Lindsay Perigo, William H. Peterson, Douglas B. Rasmussen, George Reisman, Lew Rockwell, Joseph Salerno, Richard Salsman, Chris Matthew Sciabarra, Larry J. Sechrest, Barry Smith, Tara Smith, William Thomas, Leland B. Yeager, and Gloria L. Zuñiga.