FREEDOM AND ORGANIZATION

by

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I shall tentatively define freedom as the capacity to act on the basis of one's own considered judgment. I shall define organization as a requirement to act in relation to mutually understood rules that enable individuals to pursue opportunities subject to limits. Human beings confront the circumstance that organization is necessary to freedom and, at the same time, constitutes a fundamental threat to freedom. A fundamental tension must necessarily exist between freedom and organization. It is incumbent upon human beings to understand some of the conditions that are associated with the necessary tensions between freedom and organization and learn to live with them.

In addressing these issues, I shall turn first to the question of why does the problem of freedom arise; second, why is organization necessary to freedom; third, why is organization a threat to freedom; fourth, can freedom and organization be reconciled; and finally, why must these tensions necessarily remain? My analysis will necessarily be a partial and limited one.

Why Does the Problem of Freedom Arise?

I begin with an assumption that the universe is not fully determined but one that allows for many degrees of variability. Such circumstances permit the development of self-organizing forms of varying degrees of complexity that have potential access to variety in responding to circumstances that affect their survival or well-being. Life is associated with self-organizing capabilities; and all living forms have access to potentials for adaptation in the sense of generating a fit to their environments. The human species, in particular, has greater adaptive potential than any other life form.

The most general form of adaptive potential, in the sense that it occurs in all living organisms, is that which accrues as genetic variations in reproduction. Genetic adaptation is then greatly amplified on the part of those species that are both mobile and have access to a nervous system to receive sensory experiences, organize those sensory experiences as mental images, take account of the effect of experiences upon internal states expressed as feelings, and act in a way that enhances an organism's well-being. Organisms that have access to such capabilities adapt by learning. Learning as a form of adaptation depends upon the discovery of recurrent regularities to which a learning organism can respond with potential variety to enhance well-being. Learned responses can be successfully reiterated in recurrent circumstances within the life span of an individual member of a species.
Access to language, in turn, permits the human species to greatly amplify its potential for learning by being able to transmit learning from one member of the species to another in contemporary or succeeding generations. The development of language systems permits learning to be accrued as knowledge and to be accumulated through succeeding generations. Human beings, thus, have a capability for transmitting acquired characteristics and transforming their conditions of life as knowledge gives rise to increasing adaptive potential.

The problem of freedom arises from the very large adaptive potential that is available to members of the human species. Modes of adaptation probably have been and continue to be interactive so that genetic evolution, learning, and cultural development have their long-term effects upon one another. Long-term success in adaptation through learning has probably had its effect both upon the development of the central nervous system and upon emotional qualities like curiosity, sympathy, and ambition which in turn enhance capabilities for learning.

I have every reason to believe that Hobbes was essentially correct when he concluded that the most fundamental characteristic of the human species was one of the continual striving for something better. This characteristic has some disturbing implications. We cannot expect human beings to leave well enough alone and be satisfied with some modest level of achievement. Rather, we can expect human beings always to test limits. This propensity is, in part, reflected in accelerating efforts to extend the frontiers of knowledge.

The generation of new knowledge, in turn, expands the repertoire of adaptive possibilities. Thus, human beings as a consequence of their capacity to generate new knowledge must necessarily face uncertain futures; new knowledge gives rise to new possibilities that could not have been anticipated in the absence of new increments to knowledge. The primary source of uncertainty in confronting the future resides in the human capabilities for learning. An increasing rate in generating new knowledge yields a more uncertain future. The problem of freedom arises from the human capability for learning and the destabilizing effect that new increments to knowledge has upon the future course of events.

Why is Organization Necessary to Freedom?

If we assume that freedom is the availability of adaptive potential, elements of organization become necessary conditions for the continued development of adaptive potentials. Language is itself a manifestation of organization in a most general sense. Language arises when sounds or signs are used to convey a shared meaning among individuals. Languages are grounded, in part, upon shared conventions; and the acquisition and transmission of language depends upon a shared community of experience among those who communicate with one another through the symbols of a language. The development of
language and basic rudiments of social organization must have accompanied one another in the long processes of human genetic and cultural evolution.

Elements of social organization are, thus, necessary conditions for communication to occur within and across generations. Organization gives individual members of the human species the capacity to draw upon the capabilities of others and expand the opportunities that are available to any individual. We build upon the achievement of others; and this potential accrues as a function of organization.

We can further conjecture that an increase in potential variety that accrues as a function of learning would impose substantial limits upon human beings to establish stable expectations about one another's conduct. All learning depends upon the existence of constraint and the potential for acting with variety in relation to constraint. There would come a point among creatures capable of high levels of learning where each individual would be capable of responding with sufficient variety in relation to each other individual that opportunities for establishing reliable expectations would no longer exist.

If human beings are to take advantage of each other's capabilities and pursue opportunities for joint advantage through teamwork, it becomes necessary to establish a basis for creating stable expectations about their relationships with one another. Language becomes the vehicle for doing so. Words are used to specify constraints in the way that human beings relate to one another. The general structure of organization in human societies is a word-ordered relationship that depends upon making words effective in establishing stable and predictable expectations among human beings.

Thomas Hobbes's parable of man in a state of nature can be construed as an effort to explore, as a mental experiment, the consequences that would flow from the complete absence of rule-ordered relationships in human society. There would be no standards of propriety, no dominion either over oneself or things, "no mine and thine distinct; but only that to be every man's that he can get: and for so long as he can keep it" (Hobbes, 1960: 83). In a world plagued with scarcity, Hobbes anticipates such conditions would yield a state of war where every individual is at war with every other individual for failure to establish stable expectations. The consequences then would be:

no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short (Hobbes, 1960: 82).

I know of no more compelling demonstration of the failure to realize freedom in the absence of organization. Creatures that are motivated to seek their own good are confronted with the circumstance
that their interaction with others, in the absence of constraints, yields misery instead. Organization is the condition for seeking a way out of the puzzle that unconstrained freedom yields for creatures who seek their own good and continually strive for something better.

**Why is Organization a Threat to Freedom?**

Unconstrained freedom would foreclose potentials for development that are associated with human civilization. To realize those potentials, human beings are required to build constraints into their relationships so that each acts in a way that takes account of the interests of others. Language is used to order relationships with reference to commonly understood norms or standards that foreclose some possibilities and permit other possibilities in the way that human beings relate to one another.

Relatively simple rules of the road, for example, enable automobile drivers who have a shared knowledge about such rules to develop stable expectations about how other drivers will behave in specifiable circumstances. Each can relate to the other in predictable ways in navigating an automobile through traffic where large numbers of drivers interact with one another in streams of traffic that flow in highly predictable ways. So long as choices are made subject to the constraints inherent in a commonly understood set of rules, stable expectations can exist about how others will act; and each driver can proceed toward his or her particular destination while others do so too.

The technology of using language to order relationships with one another creates serious difficulties for human beings. Language is a human artifact. Rules for ordering human relationships are not self-formulating, self-applying, or self-enforcing. The development and maintenance of rule-ordered relationships depend critically upon the use of human agents who exercise special prerogatives in the formulation, application, and enforcement of rules in human societies. These agents are expected to exercise prerogatives of rulership where rules are applied, enforced, and revised in relation to those who use rules in ordering their relationships with one another. Rules necessarily imply rulers and ruled.

Two basic characteristics necessarily follow from the rule-ruler-ruled relationship. One is a fundamental inequality between rulers and ruled in human societies. The other is a necessary recourse to sanctions in maintaining rule-ordered relationships. Both of these characteristics combine to pose a serious threat to freedom in any society.

Rule-ordered relationships create an opportunity for individuals to derive a joint advantage on the part of all who share in a community of rule-ordered relationships. Once such an advantage accrues to a community of individuals, any one individual may take advantage of that opportunity by acting at variance with rules so as
to gain an added advantage for oneself without a reciprocal obligation to extend a comparable advantage to others. One can gain an immediate advantage by violating a rule of the road when others act in conformity to those rules. But, if everyone acts in a similar way to gain an advantage through the violation of rules, the maintenance of rule-ordered relationships will erode to a point where everyone is disadvantaged.

Rules that authorize and limit actions must necessarily be accompanied by other rules that are concerned with the application, enforcement, and alteration of rules in ordering human relationships. A right is meaningful only if it can be given force and effect in governing human relationships. Authorized relationships (authority to act) depend upon authoritative relationships (authority to apply, enforce, and alter rules pertaining to authorized relationships) in a general structure of authority relationships.

The capacity to enforce rules depends upon the availability of sanctions to impose deprivations upon those who violate rules or cause injuries to others by acting at variance with rules. The capacity to impose punishment for the violation of rules implies that those who exercise the prerogatives of rulership may have lawful recourse to coercive capabilities to impose deprivations upon others. The capacity to do good -- to gain the benefit of rule-ordered relationships -- in human societies necessarily depends upon capabilities to impose evils upon others. The rule-ruler-ruled relationship necessarily implies that the human condition is a Faustian bargain. To take advantage of the accrued learning that is available to human beings, it becomes necessary to rely upon potential deprivations to give negative reinforcement to those forms of behavior that are to be excluded from the realm of permissible behavior.

Organization in a most general sense depends upon rules in ordering human relationships. This relationship implies a fundamental inequality between those who function as rulers in relation to those who are ruled. This inequality is reinforced by the lawful prerogative of rulers to use instruments of coercion to enforce and maintain rule-ordered relationships. These conditions create extraordinary opportunities for those who exercise the prerogatives of rulership to dominate the allocation of values in human societies and to use their prerogatives to exploit others. The prerogatives of rulership become a threat to freedom when organization provides unequal opportunities for some to exploit and oppress others.

Can Freedom and Organization Be Reconciled?

In exploring the problem of how freedom and organization might be reconciled, I shall draw first upon arguments advanced by Thomas Hobbes to show his method for resolving the dilemma of organization. I shall then show how Hobbes's argument can be extended to apply to modern democracies and derive solutions that are at variance with Hobbes's resolution. The potential for reconciling freedom and
organization can be indicated; but the realization of that potential is always problematical.

Hobbes's formulation of the rule-ruler-ruled relationship is based upon a presumption that the prerogatives of rulership have the essential characteristics of a monopoly. Aggregates of individuals can become a community only by reference to a common system of rules. A common system of rules can exist only by reference to a common source. Human societies, thus, depend upon a single, ultimate source of authority that has the last say in the governance of society.

Those who exercise the ultimate monopoly of authority to govern are, in Hobbes's formulation, the source of law and cannot themselves be held accountable to law. The maintenance of rule-ordered relationships is inalienable with those who exercise the prerogatives of rulership. The unity of a commonwealth derives from the unitary exercise of sovereign prerogative. Authority cannot be divided because there must be someone who has the last say. The inequality between rulers and ruled (sovereigns and subjects) is absolute given the unitary (monopoly) nature of political authority. The state, defined as a monopoly of the legitimate exercise of force, rules over society.

In advancing his theory of sovereignty, Hobbes is careful to recognize that an exercise of absolute authority is not an arbitrary exercise of authority. This is made clear in his warning about the natural punishments that occur as a consequence of the improper exercise of authority:

There is no action of man in this life, that is not the beginning of so long a chain of consequences, as no human providence is high enough, to give a man a prospect to the end. And in this chain, there are linked together both pleasing and unpleasing events; in such manner, as he that will do anything for his pleasure, must engage himself to suffer all of the pains annexed to it; and these pains, are the natural punishments of those actions, which are the beginning of more harm than good. And hereby it comes to pass, that intemperance is naturally punished by diseases, rashness, by mischances; injustices, with the violence of enemies; pride, with ruin; cowardice, with oppression; negligent government of princes, with rebellion; and rebellion, with slaughter. For seeing punishments are consequent to the breach of laws; natural punishment must be naturally consequent to the breach of the laws of nature; and therefore follow them as their natural, not arbitrary effects (Hobbes, 1960: 240-241).

A proper exercise of absolute authority depends critically upon an enlightenment that provides an awareness of the consequences that are likely to flow from actions. In his analysis, Hobbes propounds a method of inquiry that serves as a basis for proper exercise of sovereign prerogative. A potential for reconciling freedom and organization exists if this method of inquiry can be extended to apply to citizens in a democratic society.
In his Introduction to *Leviathan*, Hobbes states the basic presuppositions that guide his method of inquiry. Commonwealths are conceived as artifacts. As artifacts, commonwealths have the special characteristic that human beings are both the matter that compromise commonwealths and the artificers (artisans) who design and create commonwealths. As a consequence, a knowledge of human nature is essential to those who would understand the conditions relevant to the constitution of commonwealths so as to avoid the pathologies that contribute to their failure.

Hobbes provides the reader with a "key" that can be used to understand human nature before embarking upon his analysis in Part I, *Of Man*. That key is to "read thyself." This is possible because of a basic "similitude of thoughts and passions of one man to the thoughts and passions of another" (Hobbes, 1960: 6). Therefore, it follows that:

> whosoever looketh into himself, and considereth what he doth, when he does think, opine, reason, hope, fear, etc., and upon what grounds; he shall thereby read and know what are the thoughts and passions of all other men upon the like occasions (Hobbes, 1960: 6).

Hobbes warns, however, that this basic similitude of thoughts and passions does not extend to the particular objects of thoughts and passions. Human beings cannot know what are the specific objects of others' thoughts and feelings. These pertain more to each person's discrete education and experience. We can, however, come to a deeper understanding of how others think and feel in particular types of circumstances (i.e., "upon the like occasions"). A basic similitude of thoughts and passions enables human beings to pursue a reflective inquiry about the human condition through the circumstance of sharing a similar genetic endowment. This circumstance permits generalizations that potentially have universal applicability to human beings. Hobbes, however, warns that this is a difficult task, "harder than to learn any language or science," but political inquiry "admittheth of no other demonstration" (Hobbes, 1960: 6).

Interpersonal comparisons about human subjective experience can be made by human beings aided by this method of reflective inquiry and the use of language to communicate with each other about similar experiences. The terms in a language of discourse about human subjective experience can have meaning only to the extent that the realm of discourse is grounded in an underlying similitude of thoughts and passions that is characteristic of mankind. These interpersonal comparisons cannot be extended to a point of knowing what are the objects of the thoughts and passions of others, but human beings can hope to make knowledgeable comparisons about how others think and feel.

Hobbes's own presentation in *Leviathan* is based upon an application of this method of introspective inquiry to an understanding of the type of calculations that human beings face in the constitution of commonwealths. His first 12 chapters are
critically concerned with specifying a basic structure of how human thoughts and passions enter into calculations about human choice. Reason, the expression of thought in words, is used to calculate the consequences associated with alternative possibilities. Choice occurs in the weighing of alternatives by reference to internal feelings expressed as preferences and aversions.

In pursuing his analysis, Hobbes explores the implications that would follow if human beings were to exist without any semblance of political order. Hobbes's parable of man in a state of nature can be viewed as a proof that unconstrained exercise of freedom in the pursuit of one's good is an insufficient basis for human societies. He then sets himself the task of specifying the necessary and sufficient conditions for the creation of stable, long-lasting commonwealths.

Hobbes proceeds to specify some 19 rules that would enable human beings to order their relationships with one another so that they might realize a state of peace as an alternative to war. In the concluding remarks to Chapter 15, after having specified his basic rules as "laws of nature," Hobbes returns to methodological considerations when he asks how the meaning of these laws of nature are to be understood apart from their logical derivation. He does not want their meaning to turn upon a "too subtle" form of deductive inference. Hobbes is himself concerned about the abuses of language that enter into human discourse. He is thus offering the reader a clue to an understanding of the meaning of terms used in his laws of nature that refer to standards of oughtness.

His response is to suggest that each of his laws of nature can be understood in light of the golden rule: "Do not that to another, which, thou wouldst not have done to thyself" (Hobbes, 1960: 103). The golden rule implies a method of normative inquiry: it will "sheweth him" (Hobbes, 1960: 103). This method can be used to understand the meaning of the laws of nature:

he has no more to do in learning the laws of nature, but, when weighing the actions of other men with his own to put them in the other part of the balance, and his own in their place, that his own passions, and self-love, may add nothing to the weight; and then there is none of these laws of nature that will not appear unto him very reasonable (Hobbes, 1960: 103).

The golden rule has at least two interesting qualities that deserve mention. First, it presupposes a basic similitude of thoughts and passions that is characteristic of all mankind. This implies a fundamental underlying equality and universality of basic characteristics that apply to all members of the species. Second, the golden rule, which is often viewed as a fundamental moral precept, is itself largely devoid of moral content. Instead, it implies a method of normative inquiry that can be used to derive criteria of choice and standards of judgment. The only prescriptive connotation of the golden rule is that one ought to act in conformity with the implied
method of normative inquiry (i.e., one ought to act as the method "sheweth him").

The method of normative inquiry that Hobbes derives from the golden rule involves several levels of calculations. His first stipulation of "read thyself" is fundamental to understanding others at a level where one is concerned with how others think and feel. Given this level of understanding, he then suggests that rules, norms, and evaluative standards that are intended to apply to human social relationships can be understood first by taking the perspective of others, second by discounting one's own passions and self-love so as to add no weight to the scale, and, thus, third by aspiring to impartiality. A combination of introspection, taking the perspective of others, discounting partialities, and aspiring to impartiality provides the key for making interpersonal comparisons about standards of value that apply to human social relationships. The method of normative inquiry inherent in the golden rule, apart from the prescriptive injunction applied to action, is potentially accessible to anyone who wishes to understand the criteria of choice and standards of judgment that are used among human communities to order their relationships with one another.

In further concluding comments to that same chapter, Hobbes argues that his laws of nature are "immutable and eternal" (Hobbes, 1960: 104) because they reflect a basic distinction that is fundamental in human nature. Some conditions engender threat, offense, and hostility in human relationships. Other conditions engender reciprocity, collaboration, and mutually productive relationships among human beings. Human beings in their relationships with one another manifest basic step-wise transformations in the presence of threat or goodwill not unlike the step-wise transformations that occur among water molecules at zero degrees centigrade and at 100 degrees centigrade. Threat, offense, and hostility engender war; goodwill, reciprocity, and mutually productive relationships engender peace. Lawful relationships among human beings can occur only when conditions conducive to aggression and violence are constrained and conditions conducive to goodwill and reciprocity are facilitated. Hobbes's reference to the "immutable and eternal" indicates reference to a further criterion pertaining to universality. Normative inquiry strives toward universality rather than expedient accommodation.

The setting of normative standards that are appropriate to a system of rule-ordered relationships can be conceptualized as being grounded in a basic similitude of thoughts and passions that is characteristic of all mankind. The method of inquiry inherent in the golden rule permits human beings, as fallible creatures, to engage in a process of inquiry to establish normative standards for human communities that can be used to order human relationships in relation to rules of law that aspire to universality. The grounds for proper governance of human affairs lies in coming to a proper understanding of the basic similitude of thoughts and passions that is characteristic of all mankind:
He that is to govern a whole nation, must read in himself, not this or that particular man but all mankind (Hobbes, 1960: 6).

In exploring the factors that tend to the weakness and failure of commonwealths, Hobbes suggests another type of analysis where one is concerned with the fitness of laws "to square their actions by" (Hobbes, 1960: 210). Rules as enforceable laws are used to order human actions, but the consequences that follow may be different than the intentions of those who interact with one another in a given situation. Hobbes is careful to observe that the failures that give rise to internal disorders in a commonwealth arises not from the fault of men "as they are the matter but as they are the makers and orderers of them" (Hobbes, 1960: 210). The failure of commonwealths is not to be attributed to evil men, but to the way rules order relationships to yield perverse effects. The essential problems lie in the weakness or failure of institutions rather than in the nature of men.

The design of human institutions requires recourse to a knowledge of how rules affect actions and how actions have consequences for good or for evil in human relationships. Such knowledge may be of a counterintuitive nature where the intention of actors is not sufficient to account for the consequences that follow. Hobbes's analysis of man in a state of nature has counterintuitive implications. Men seek their own good, but realize misery instead. A proper understanding of the architecture of rule-ordered relationships is essential to the governance of human societies.

Laws are not arbitrary. They are grounded both in proper methods of normative and positive inquiry. Normative inquiry permits human beings to know the meaning of standards of oughtness and to participate in processes of standard setting and standard using as the necessary foundation for ordering their relationships with one another. Positive inquiry enables human beings to discover counterintuitive relationships between rules, the choice of strategy in interdependent circumstances, and the consequences that follow. Both methods of inquiry are necessary to human governance.

Hobbes's emphasis is upon the knowledge required by those who exercise sovereign prerogatives for the governance of society. The burden of subjects is obedience to law, because law in any going society, for Hobbes, provides the measure of what is proper and just. To reconcile freedom with organization requires special attention to the circumstance where people can be said to rule. This requires consideration of that particular form of government where, for Hobbes, an assembly of citizens exercises the prerogatives of sovereignty in a society. In such circumstances, citizens are expected to know the grounds for setting, using, and holding one another accountable to the basic normative standards that pertain to distinctions between right and wrong, just and unjust, true and false, etc. Citizens in a democracy are also required to cope with problems of institutional weakness and failure and make decisions that correct rather than exacerbate perverse relationships among human beings.
Hobbes's formulation of the basic characteristics of a democracy is seriously wanting. Rule by an assembly of all citizens requires that citizens establish basic rules that apply to the conduct of government in a democratic society. Citizens can assume responsibility in the governance of society only so long as there is a general understanding and agreement about the terms and conditions for doing so. Rules establishing qualifications for participation, setting the time and place of meetings, establishing procedures for conducting the business of an assembly, providing for specialized offices to discharge particular responsibilities in the conduct of government, and for taking decisions by some form of voting are a part of the shared understanding that must exist if people are to exercise responsibility for their own governance.

Rules that apply to the conduct of government in a democratic society can be distinguished from those rules that apply to the ordinary exigencies of life in a society. It is this that distinguishes a constitution from ordinary law. A constitution is that set of rules that applies to the conduct of government in contrast to ordinary law that applies to other exigencies of life.

Once these distinctions are made and citizens are assumed to share in the exercise of sovereign prerogatives through processes of constitutional decision making and in maintaining the limits of constitutional law in relation to those who exercise particular prerogatives of government, Hobbes's formulations no longer apply to government as being essentially a monopoly with some single center of ultimate authority in human societies. Instead, Montesquieu, as qualified by early American formulations, conceptualized an alternative method where democratic republics by confederating might maintain concurrent structures of government that apply to multiple communities of interest where all exercise of authority is subject to limits.

The viability of such arrangements turn critically upon citizens having access to methods of normative inquiry for setting standards that provide the foundation for human community, for using such standards in governance of their affairs both as individuals and as members of collectivities, and in holding those who exercise specialized prerogatives of government accountable for their discharge of public trusts. In addition, citizens would be expected to have a sufficient understanding of the counterintuitive character of rule-ordered relationships so as to cope with basic problems of institutional weakness and institutional failure that arise at the constitutional level.

The place of informed citizenship in a democratic society can be indicated by the way that James Madison conceptualized the fundamental principle of organization in a democratic republic:

In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place to oblige it to control itself, A dependence on
the people is, no doubt the primary control on the
government; but experience has taught mankind the necessity
of auxiliary precautions.

This policy of supplying by opposite and rival interests,
the defect of better motives, might be traced through the
whole system of human affairs, private as well as public.
We see it particularly displayed in all of the subordinate
distributions of power, where the constant aim is to divide
and arrange the several offices in such a manner that each
may be a check upon the other -- that the private interest
of every individual may be a sentinel over the public
rights. These inventions of prudence cannot be less
requisite to the distribution of the supreme powers of the

Use of a principle of opposite and rival interests where the
several offices exercising the "supreme powers of the state" are
arranged "in such a manner as that each may be a check upon the other"
might be viewed as either creating the conditions for stalemate and
deadlock or creating opportunities for different interests in a
society to war upon one another. Madison, by contrast, is making a
counterintuitive presumption that opposite and rival interests can be
used in the governance of human societies to facilitate due
deliberation about problems giving rise to conflict and contribute to
a search for mutually productive ways of resolving conflict. Conflict
provides the occasion for inquiries that lead to conflict resolution.
Freedom and organization are potentially reconcilable where processes
of governance rely upon methods of inquiry to resolve conflicts by
establishing or reestablishing mutually productive communities of
relationships.

Short of this condition, we can be confident that the
prerogatives of government are available for some to exploit others.
The basic conditions of inequality in the rule-ruler-ruled
relationship and the lawful use of coercion to impose deprivations
upon others means that organization always poses a threat to freedom.
Yet, freedom cannot exist without organization.

Why Must Tensions Between Freedom and Organization
Remain a Necessary Part of the Human Condition?

The conditions that give rise to the basic tension between
freedom and organization are grounded in basic attributes of human
nature. So long as human beings persist in striving for something
better, we can anticipate that tensions will always exist between
freedom and organization. Freedom gains expression in each
individual's quest for something better. Organization is a way of
developing stable expectations about how to relate others as a
necessary condition for doing better. But, the rule-ruler-ruled
relationship inherent in organization necessarily implies that radical
inequalities exist in all human societies. These conditions can be
somewhat ameliorated in democratic societies where those who exercise special prerogatives of rulership are themselves subject to enforceable rules of constitutional law. Maintaining the limits of constitutional rule depends upon citizens knowing the standards for holding officials accountable for their discharge of a public trust and being willing to bear the costs of enforcing those limits.

A corollary of the proposition that human beings continually strive for something better is that human beings persist in testing limits in their relationships with one another. This condition means that conflict is an inevitable part of the human condition. So long as processes of governance entail methods of inquiry that use conflict to clarify the interdependence of interests in a more general community of interests, there are possibilities of reconciling freedom and organization. But, this possibility is always problematical among fallible human beings who cannot know what the future holds. The human capacity to learn, to generate new knowledge, necessarily means that they face uncertain futures. That uncertainty can be reduced by using rules and norms to order relationships among human beings. But, the specter of the rule-ruler-ruled relationships remains to plague people in all societies. The human condition is at best a tenuous one.
This paper was written while I was in Germany at the Center for Interdisciplinary Research, Bielefeld University, where I did not have easy access to my regular library facilities. As a result, I shall make only the briefest reference to bibliographical sources.

The first two sections of this paper draw heavily upon conceptions and arguments about adaptation in W. R. Ashby's Design for a Brain and his Introduction to Cybernetics. The relationship of language to cultural adaptation and development draws especially upon Pierre Tielhard de Chardin's The Phenomenon of Man, Julian Huxley's "Evolution: Cultural and Biological" in Knowledge, Morality, and Destiny, V. F. Turchin's The Phenomenon of Science, and a variety of other works on cultural evolution.


The fourth section draws primarily upon Hobbes. The method of normative inquiry indicated in Hobbes could have been substantially elaborated by reference to Hume's treatment of moral philosophy as a science of human nature and to Adam Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments. References to The Federalist are to the Modern Library edition.