INTRODUCTION

This discussion is intended to provide a foundation, in word and deed, for American Public Administration Praxis and Praxiology. The words are those of ancient philosophers, and social and political theorists writing within the area of American Public Administration. The deed is the integration of selected works into a cohesive set of assumptions about human being—individually and collectively—within the context of our distinctly American constitutional State. The purpose of this dissertation is to provide a self-conscious, value-laden foundation for American Public Administration Praxiology and Praxis. Public Administrators, and other governmental officials, create and recreate the American State through their daily actions. It remains the duty of all members of the federal government, especially career public servants, to reenact the values of that State on behalf of the public interest, while preserving individual freedoms to the fullest extent.

To begin the deed, Chapter 1 examines the assumptions about reality, about human being, and the values based on the assumptions found in the writings of the ancient philosophers, predominantly western philosophers.
However much we may identify with these assumptions and the various shared values that have given rise to various human institutions, we find ourselves currently in a social, economic and political reality that does not appear to pay much homage to them. Paradoxically, it is those very assumptions and values that gave rise to the United States federal government and the administration of that government at a time in history that also was giving rise to superstition about shared values and a search for value free reality. The absence of discussions of shared assumptions and values in many discussions within public administration is startling. It is ironic that the same reality that produced the American State produced modern analytic science.

Chapter 2 discusses the rise of the modern analytic sciences and their preoccupation with methods and techniques. This was a preoccupation that largely excluded discussions of ontology and epistemology. For a developing American Public Administration, the result was a context that at best supported development of mini-theories about administrative practices that could not rise to the level of praxiology or praxis. It was a context that at worst fragmented human being by recognizing only isolated aspects of being that could be empirically proven. The empirical techniques simply were not up to their task and failed to be able to examine and establish as real central aspects of human being in individuals and in collectives of individuals. Values were detected in order to be revealed and eliminated. Human meanings derived from values followed into the zone of irrelevance. The value laden reality of collectives, including political ones, was especially problematic and needed to be explained in terms that could be considered objective, instead of inter-subjective.
It was not until the twentieth century that American public administrative theorists would seek to fill this void with assumptions and values that resonate with those of the American state. Chapter 3 focuses on those writers in the later twentieth century, who look to the full human potential, individual and collective, also found in the work of ancient philosophy, in order to meet the challenges of a modern analytic world, to fill in the value-laden voids. Their work necessarily was oriented at critiquing modern analytic science that surrounded them. Their expressed assumptions about human being and social reality lead to the conscious development of shared values and constitute the filling of the value void in American Public Administration. Chapter 3 goes on to place the social theoretical discussions within the distinct political context of the American Constitution. Only the Constitution can provide the irrefutable assumptive and valued-laden context for the consideration of all other assumptions and values directed at the development of a praxiology and praxis for American Public Administration.

As such, these works—as integrated together—constitute the formal founding of a foundation for a dynamic American Public Administration Praxiology and Praxis. All of us engaged purposively in the enterprise of American Public Administration are committed daily to contributing to this always developing American State, through our own choice of words and deeds. Some days are better than others, but our shared mission remains constant: our praxis and praxiology must deliver on that mission.
CHAPTER 1
PRAXIS AND PRAXIOLOGY

Introduction

We, as public administrators, at the federal, state and local levels of American government face fundamental conceptual challenges. We face these on behalf of other citizens and residents of our Nation. In a constitutional state, our extended republic, the polity requires we accept these challenges on their greater behalf. Like elected officials, public administrators assume direct responsibility for our constitutional state. Unlike our counterparts in the non-profit or for-profit sectors, a public administrator cannot maintain s/he is simply doing a job on his/her own behalf, just working to support her/himself, or others, in a personal context. Nor can any of us attempt to fall back on a supervisor’s instructions as a complete justification for our actions; the responsibility to uphold the Constitution is ever present as an inherently governmental function. In the federal government, each public administrator takes the oath to uphold the Constitution. We publicly acknowledge that we not only are aware that we are being hired into public service to carry out administrative actions on behalf of others, but also that these actions must be in conformance with the Constitution.
We act, in each public administrative situation, in order to guarantee the American Nation continues to exist, as an extended republic founded by that Constitution and its principles. We act in order to administer a more perfect union between the Individual and the State. We act in order to establish and ensure ongoing justice. We act to insure domestic tranquility, to provide for the common defense of this union, and to promote the general welfare. We act to secure the blessings of liberty for all persons in the United States and, in doing so, accept the challenge of continually balancing the individual liberties with pressing public interests.

How do we as American Public Administrators go about doing this? How does each of us go about individually acting and collectively practicing well? How do we deliver Constitutional governing each time we act? These questions represent the perennial challenges of American Public Administration. They are the central conceptual challenges of any discussion of praxiology, any study of American Public Administration. They are the central conceptual challenges of any discussion of praxis, any discussion regarding how knowledge intentionally can inform individual public administrative actions and collective American Public Administrative practices.

To understand the conceptual basis of praxiology and praxis, this chapter goes back to the seminal writings of the ancient philosophers. Exploring these philosophers’ thoughts and thought processes provides a reliable and rigorous way of understanding the individual and collective aspects of the American Public Administration, and the distinct demands it places on individual thinking and acting, and collective theorizing and practicing.
Examining the historical evolution of thought related to these two concepts may serve to make us consciously aware of differing assumptions about reality and the place of praxis and praxiology in various historical contexts. In this way, the individual can improve individual critical reflexivity, or the ability to reflect back on actions, better understand results, and increase understanding regarding how to improve future action. Aggregated individual actions can employ critical reflexivity to inform collective practicing and practices. Individual and collective awareness that informs actions is crucial to continuing to realize the American State.

**Theorizing and Practicing as Ontological Elements**

Ancient philosophers are invigorating in their asking of the big questions about life and the universe. They remain challenging in their often bigger-than-life cosmological responses. Reading their works exercises our brains. This experience also can expand our awareness of the assumptions we may have accepted about reality without subjecting such assumptions to purposeful, critical examination.

**The Noble Life of Politics**

Aristotle’s writings provide a wonderful place to begin an examination of theory and practice because they include strong notions of a life of politics, a life of honor. As a philosopher and scientist, Aristotle explored ontology and epistemology, and made use of varied methodologies and techniques. His life was dedicated to understanding life and sharing what he learned with others. He sought to explain human beings’ place in the great cosmos, both in a concrete, material here and now, and, more broadly, in the greater sphere of the heavens, where the gods dwelt beyond humans’ concrete time and place.
Aristotle’s epistemology included a rigorous empiricism, well documented experimentation, as well as carefully constructed generalizations. His theory building that extended directly back into the ontological assumptions he made regarding the meaning of life and afterlife. Aristotle’s studies included what today would be distinguished as physical science, social science and humanities. His theories integrated his findings across these areas into his cosmological writings.

First and foremost for my purposes in celebrating the American State, Aristotle established the life of politics as the **noblest manifestation of man’s human element**. Whereas I would not hold this relevant to many forms of modern government, this is particularly relevant to the constitutional form of American federal government. Second, Aristotle established a meaningful distinction between human knowledge and human action giving rise to examinations regarding how knowledge can affect human practices or behaviors. The world does not act on humanity without humanity having recourse to act back upon the world, upon history, upon the future. And, third, Aristotle distinguished between human actions related to **making** versus that regarding **doing** that would become increasingly relevant as civilization gave rise to diverse social, political and economic activities and professional specialization during the medieval ages. Humanity has the need of many kinds of knowledge, some transient in the context of thousands of years of history, some lasting, in the context of basic human values, like Individual freedoms and liberties.¹

¹ This discussion has developed from undergraduate and graduate level coursework in ancient and modern philosophy and the philosophy of science. It draws from a number of course readings and papers over a number of years. Of particular substantive and organizational value in tracing the historical development of theory and practice, as well as an excellent refresher regarding prior readings, was the work of Richard Berstein, *Praxis and Action: Contemporary Philosophies of Human Activity*, (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia, 1971). My summary does not necessarily reflect the same conclusions or interpretations offered by Berstein.
The Path to Honor

To understand the life of politics and honor requires a basic understanding of Aristotle’s cosmology and its three elements that could be found within individual being: the animal, the human and the divine. These distinctions continue to have relevance in modern day equivalents: For example, practical knowledge used by those who do, and theoretical knowledge used by those who think about doing.

On the most basic level of human existence, Aristotle described a life of subsistence as one dominated by the animal nature in man. This life was preoccupied with simple maintenance and the preservation of physical existence. Aristotle observed that such people were so engaged in physical and commercial labors that they had little opportunity to achieve pleasure, to pursue ways of life that could yield pleasure or honor, or to devote to the contemplation of lasting truth. Only when able to achieve a certain economic station in ancient Greece was a man then freed from the all consuming concerns with making a living or with physical survival.

If economically secure, man was able to rise above his animal spirit to concentrate on developing his more human elements. This man could pursue a life of leisure and the seeking of happiness. Or, pursue a life dedicated to politics, with the possibility of attaining honor. Or, a free man could rise above both the life of leisure seeking happiness and that of politics seeking honor, and concentrate energies on developing his divine element through a life dedicated to seeking lasting and, therefore, true knowledge. This emphasis on lasting and true knowledge leads to another critical distinction Aristotle made between types of knowledge—theoria and practica—that also remains quite relevant today.
The life dominated by the divine element and focused on *contemplation or theorizing* yielded knowledge of lasting truths. In contrast, the life dominated by the human element engaged in *doing or making*, and yielded *practica*, or knowledge of the temporal realities of everyday life.

According to Aristotle, the life of *purposive doing* of politics, *informed by ethics*, was the noblest manifestation of the human element. Through the political life, man could exemplify all that was good, noble and virtuous among men. Aristotle held that there were discernable *right desires* within the realm of human affairs. These right desires could be followed to yield right actions. Within the life of politics, these right desires were the subject of Aristotle’s ethics. The honorable life of doing politics was the life of knowing right desires and acting on these. This also reflects Aristotle’s observation that the right knowledge could yield right practices that would make the material, here and now world better. His Ethics sought to educated political beings as to what was right for the many in the State. His writings are particularly relevant given the values contained in the American Constitution. The political life was one of ensuring the state remained good, noble and virtuous for its citizens.

This reflects American Constitutional assumptions and the values based on those assumptions, including individual rights and the place of a federal government within that greater social and economic culture—assumptions and resulting values about governing and those who govern. One cannot govern honorably or with virtue without attending to questions regarding what is right. There is an individual responsibility to act ethically when governing because that is the way the values of the state are protected and upheld and implemented.
This notion of honor is not compatible with a notion of administrative neutrality. Those engaged in governing, in carrying out decisions that affect those on whose behalf American public administrators govern, must engage in the conceptual challenge of deciding what is right. And that notion of ethics must be founded in the Constitutional assumptions and values that were deemed right by the American polity.

Today, some of us engaged in doing American Public Administration may need to stretch conceptually to consider the work of such great thinkers as Aristotle and their works that speak of honor and virtue in politics. Others of us simply will have to make the time. Those same great thinkers assumed being ethical and honorable required purposive study to gain conceptual expertise in ethics, an ethics that moved substantially beyond notions limited to potential financial conflicts of interest.

Zeno’s Linking of Aristotle’s Human and Divine

Later, during the third century B.C., Zeno observed that actually the good or virtuous man did not have to choose between the everyday life of politics and the contemplative life. A virtuous man did not choose between his divine and human elements. To the contrary, for Zeno, to be considered noble, man must acquire reasoned, conjectural knowledge, as well as practical skills and experiences. Man must think about doing, as well as be able to do. For Zeno, eternal and static aspects of everyday historical material life could be detected through the logical study of Nature. Man contemplated Nature in order to obtain a lasting, truthful, practical wisdom and used this wisdom to live the good life.
By the first century B.C., Cicero and others viewed the very purpose of human being to be the attainment of wisdom that would enable man to live in accordance with Nature. The noble and divine life was one of living in harmony with the lasting truths of nature—nature revealed and contained the cosmic truths. This brought the object of contemplation down from the heavens into the natural, material world of mankind. Man learned about lasting truths by observing the immediate world around him and not by contemplating the heavens alone. For Cicero, the prudent man used knowledge to inform practice. Lasting truths within nature, in turn, would inform more technical areas of expertise. Practicing was the test of knowledge, of what worked, what lasted over time. This is a crucial distinction made by Zeno and Cicero. Wisdom derived from the ability to understand what was transient from what was more lasting. Prudence required an application of wisdom to daily living. Practice was the ultimate test of knowledge. Man learned while practicing.

During the first century A.D., Seneca explained that the life of acting and that of thinking, or contemplating and practicing, coincide in the individual as two aspects of human being. There was not a dominance of one element within man that determined one’s life, as Aristotle seemed to imply. Nor were doing and making derivative of the more “human elements” while thinking and theorizing to be considered “divine.” These traits must combine in the individual in order for man to be virtuous. The virtuous man was the informed, proficient man; a man that contemplates and acts, theorizes and practices. The virtuous public administrator then must be able to contemplate and act, theorize and practice. American Public Administration cannot delegate praxiology to the University programs and praxis to the federal employees.
Avicenna and Lasting, Practical Knowledge

During the following centuries, western philosophy grappled with an increasingly expansive and bewildering material world. Philosophy merged with religion to attempt to deal with this reality. Efforts were focused on urging the honorable life as one that worked to transform this reality through charitable works, or escape it completely through contemplation. Both appealed to ancient conceptual frameworks to justify their approaches, but neither of these discussions contributed to greater understanding of praxis or praxiology. It was not until the eleventh century, that Arab physician-philosopher Avicenna, reminiscent of Aristotle, reopened the theory—practice discussion. Avicenna, like Aristotle, posed two types of knowledge: the theoretical and the practical.

For Avicenna, *theoretical* knowledge was knowledge subject to generalization, to being lasting and, in this way, true. Such theoria was not directly relevant to human action. Man pursued theoretical knowledge in order to strengthen his intellectual faculties. The acquiring of theoretical knowledge became a means to this end. *Theoretical* knowledge had a powerful, indirect affect on human action by developing human intelligence. In contrast, *practical* knowledge had a direct and powerful affect on human action. Practical knowledge too was true, but not lasting due to its grounding in changing, everyday reality. The developing of human intelligence becomes both a desirable end in and of itself. Education has a powerful indirect affect on human affairs, and a means of informing actions that, in turn, impact the human and natural realms.

Arab thinkers also grappled with an increasingly complex realm of human activity, with complex and dynamic distinctions and applications of knowledge.
These all held tangible consequences for many aspects of their daily medieval lives. The Arab philosophers were aware of the need to develop skills and experience regarding the practice of medicine, alchemy and navigation. The conceptual difficulty they faced was that these types of necessary actions and the corresponding foundational knowledge did not fit neatly into the pre-given categories of the contemplative or theoretical. In addition, this type of practical knowledge did not fit well with the notion of transience. To provide for lasting and practical knowledge, Arab philosophers, like Greek counterparts Zeno and Cicero, came to characterize some knowledge—medicine, alchemy and navigation—as components of the study of everlasting nature. Knowledge of everlasting nature came to include knowledge of a productive and material nature, or economics, and was placed alongside politics within the realm of human activity.

Hugh of St. Victor’s Logica

Also writing during the twelfth century, Hugh of St. Victor, a world apart from the Arab philosophers, recognized the same need to better differentiate among types of knowledge. Hugh of St. Victor distinguished four equally critical types of knowledge: logica, theoria, practica and mechanica. He eliminated valuing of one type of knowledge over another by proposing they all were equally necessary to different aspects of human existence.

Most fascinating is his description of the logica. The logica included the basic cultural knowledge that was embodied in language and the discursive arts. Because language represented the culturally agreed upon conceptual format, it could not help but bias expression and understanding of knowledge expressed in its terms. As such, logica provided the paradigmatic basis of culture.
This theme is currently the foundation for the Deconstructionists. These concepts remain fundamental to modern day sociological interpretavism as well as to existential phenomenology and critical theory. Individuals learn about their life world through language and come to rely on the various covert assumptions contained in that language format regarding what is important. What is important is that which the language was constructed to express. When one does not have the words, the concepts, the sharing of knowledge to inform shared intentionality is a formidable undertaking. For example, attempts to insert notions of virtue and nobleness into modern day discussions of American Public Administration, much less notions of praxis and praxiology.

*Theoria* then became that type of knowledge that could be expressed in terms of these basic and shared conceptual formats embodied by language. Theoria included mathematics, science and technology. This knowledge was translated from direct observations of nature into logically arranged, or formally reconstructed, explanations. In this way, individual learning was turned into a shared knowledge expressed through agreed upon and understood logic so that it could be shared with others. All theoria was normative given the reliance on the normative foundations of language that resulted from cultural agreement. What had been observed and experienced had to be reconstructed, rearranged and stated such that the explanation followed a logical, systematically organized format. This was needed to ensure that what was learned by one could be shared with another.

*Practica* resurrected the Aristotelian notion of practical knowledge associated with doing and making. Hugh of St. Victor included in practica all the knowledge needed to make something, to produce a product.
Politics and economics were considered practica. Practica could be shown or observed, rather than expressed in theoretical language. The last of Hugh of St. Victor’s four types of knowledge was the *mechanica* or that knowledge that informed the producing of an aesthetic experience for others, including the science of theatrical performance.

**St. Thomas Aquinas and Virtue**

During the thirteenth century, St. Thomas Aquinas reexamined Aristotle’s concept of ethics and the right desire that prompts right action. For Aristotle this was the foundation for his Ethics that lead to honor in politics. For Aquinas, like Aristotle, the end of *human* action was always predetermined by the inherently human desire for happiness. Unlike Aristotle, Aquinas proposed two kinds of desire.

One was a desire for happiness and the other a desire for the right way to achieve happiness. A means and ends view of right action. In this view, the examination of the ends was open to practical reason. Practical judgment was needed to determine the “rightness” of a means for reaching the desired type of happiness. Virtue resulted from knowing and pursuing the means appropriate for attaining the type of happiness sought, not from having attained that happiness itself. One could pursue that happiness associated with earthly pleasures or that happiness associated with contemplation of the absolute, and be considered virtuous. Virtue resulted from the appropriateness of the means and ends relationship and not either one of them alone. This required a conscious and deliberative choice of actions considered in light of the desired ends. Thus, Aquinas attempted to dispose of the notion of any ends/means dichotomy. Aquinas then also anticipated the modern American state and the need for governing to continue to yield the desired constitutional state.
John Duns Scotus and Praxis

Thirteenth century philosopher John Duns Scotus was interested in the deliberate selection of a means commensurate with a desired end. This was the point where human thought and action produced the highest level of human action. Human worth became manifest in the life dedicated to conscious, deliberate and purposeful human practice, or praxis. Praxis was that human activity capable of conforming to prior intellectualization. Praxis could be judged right or wrong in terms of that conformance. To do this, Duns Scotus also distinguished among types of human action. Duns Scotus recognized human practices as those extra-ethical activities, acts of a nonintellectual human faculty, simply habits or behaviors. In contrast, man could focus his intellectual faculties toward the practical realm and use them to inform his actions; in this way, human acting was elevated to the level of praxis. Virtue and morality could be found in the conformance of action to right practical intellectualization; only such praxis could yield virtue.

For Duns Scotus, it was man’s intellectually informed acts, those acts of the will, that brought him closer to ever lasting truth, to morality, to virtue. Knowledge became the means to the informed act; the informed act the means to morality. As theologian, Duns Scotus maintained that living the life of charitable acts was closer to God than the life of more simply contemplating God ever could be. Living the charitable life was one example, although, not the only example, of praxis.

Industrial Capitalism and Virtue

During the mid-sixteenth to mid-seventeenth century, Francis Bacon reinforced the need for the virtuous man.
Like Duns Scotus, Bacon’s virtuous man used knowledge to act. Unlike Duns Scotus, 
Bauer’s virtuous man must do charitable works that improved the world, including the 
human condition. The duty of the virtuous man was to bond with others in an informed 
collective dedicated to serving mankind. Honor came in applying knowledge to achieve 
technological progress that served all mankind. The highest forms of knowledge were 
those that moved humanity toward a higher world order. 

Contemplation was directed toward discerning the lasting nature of human activities— 
truth—within humanity’s unique historical progression toward this better future. 

During the early sixteenth century through the first part of the seventeenth 
centuries, modern astronomy and physics progressed to the point of constructing 
mathematical models of the reality—a universe posed on the basis of empirical 
observations and generalizations. Copernicus, Kepler and Galileo offered their theories 
as lasting truths about nature observable in that everyday world. 

The New World Order 

Rationalization gathered force during the new rational-scientific ages, while 
questions of virtue and honor became subdued. The miraculous inventions of this new 
rational-scientific world order amazed humanity and seemed to hold the promise of 
salvation from the threats of nature and society. Descartes believed in this new age and 
was convinced that the basis for the new science, the mathematical models alone, were 
exclusive in their revelations about universal truths. 

Mathematical models captured and revealed the true nature of human reason 
itself. This constitutes a crucial point for the analytic sciences. There was only one 
unchanging theory would that which explained the true, reliable ways of knowing reality.
This was the theory regarding how we come to know what we know to be true: epistemology. For Cartesians, the study of mathematics was the one study that opened up the interconnected sciences to human reflection. Cartesians used this epistemology to posit an ontology that held what was real and lasting must be that which is expressible in mathematical terms and relationships. All other subjects could not be demonstrated to exist. If they could be demonstrated to exist, they could not be relied upon to last, to be accepted as real. Cartesian rationalism restricted theorizing to being concerned with only those observations that conformed to expression in accepted logical, mathematical, empirical based statements. Because human actions related to economics, politics and ethics were not amenable to mathematical explanation or modeling, they could not be considered areas of knowledge. In contrast, the study of such human activities as medicine, alchemy and navigation could be approached mathematically. These areas of study could be elevated to the status of true knowledge. Only tangible practices that could yield predictable results could be sources of virtuous action. These were the human actions for which knowledge could provide a reliable format for practices that would yield tangible, desired results.

Certainty and Intentionality

In contrast, seventeenth to eighteenth century philosophers Locke, Leibniz, Spinoza and Kant held that ethics and politics did exhibit the same certainty—in theory and practice—as navigation, medicine and alchemy. Immanuel Kant was particularly interested in ethics. His philosophy tried to preserve the status of the modern mathematical science while it raised ethics to an equal level alongside such theory. To accomplish this, Kant distinguished ethical theory from ethical practice.
Observations regarding *ethical practices* yielded a transient type of knowledge, of pseudo knowledge. In contrast, *ethical theory*, like all real knowledge, dealt with the study of what was lasting, reliable and absolute. The principles of ethics were lasting, reliable and absolute; they were not situational.

Kant recognized the arts and productive activities as absolute knowledge because such knowledge could be detected through empirical examination of *human affairs* and expressed in mathematical terms. For Kant, ethics derived from knowledge of *divine affairs*. As such, ethical theory was the only type of absolute knowledge that required man to seek out the divine elements of his own subjective intellect. Ethical theory became the sole category of *practical knowledge*. Ethical practice depended exclusively upon its correspondence with ethical knowledge, apart from knowledge of human actions.

Clearly, the empirical study of ethical practices would not alter ethical theory. Such studies could only record the conformance or nonconformance of an ethical act to the intention of the ethical theory. The empirical study of ethical practice dealt with the appearance of objects gained through the senses, with phenomena, with what Kant terms the “is.” Ethics dealt with the objects reachable only through intellectual intuition, with the “ought.” Man could engage in the empirical study of nature in order to decipher the laws of human nature. These laws could be applied to such activities as medicine, alchemy and navigation. Man could engage his subjective intuitive faculty in order to understand the divine laws, in order to perceive what would constitute ethical action, what “ought” to be done.
If human practices conformed to divined ethical laws, then man could empirically decipher them. The intentionality of a practice must be measured against the moral law and therein would be the determination of ethical content.

A most critical point is that any individual had access only to his/her own intellect to make that judgment. Ethical certainty was achievable for the individual, not in the same way it would be immediately discernable to others via empirical observation. Intentionality then became the primary ethical principle. Within an individual’s mind, intuition determined the right thing to do; the will then guided action conforming it to that intuition. Good will conformed human action to divine law. The moral imperative was to intuit divine law in order to allow the will to spontaneously and freely inform action.

Every individual was capable of morality. Action could realize man’s eternal soul. The real world would be realized through individual moral actions. Morality and virtue appeared as individual responsibility unreachable through transient collective judgments.

Later in the eighteenth century, Fichte equated this search for divine law within man’s intellect with the disparaging and never-ending journey. The finite nature of human thought within the limited individual lifetime would prevent full appreciation of infinite truth. Man’s progression toward a reality that reflected divinity was a limitless journey given the limitations of human nature. Fichte begged the question that Hegel rose to answer.
The Hegelians and Self-Determination

During the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century, George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel celebrated Kant’s establishment of the autonomy of human thought. Hegel celebrated individual reasoning as the link to moral self-determination. However, Hegel rejected the limited, subjective nature of thought proposed by Kant and later held by Fichte. For Hegel, there was no limit to human intellectual capacities—all was knowable. Hegel held the world as comprehensible, as already actualized, if man could only allow himself to comprehend it in its totality. It was up to philosophy to provide the explanation of reality that would be the lead to a universal comprehension of reality by all mankind. Humanity’s consciousness needed be changed. Reality did not.

Hegel’s philosophy then sought a description of reality that fit with its already perfected nature. This necessitated a phenomenology that allowed reason to penetrate the whole of reality without imposing any presuppositions. For Hegel, the distinction between thought and will was critical. Thought was the theoretical state. Will was a specialized type of thought that sought existence in the practical world. Will produced true action. True action was embodied in the attempt to point out the rationality of a seemingly irrational reality. Thought relied upon a grasping of ideals beyond mere appearances. Thought transformed perceptions of objects into rational knowledge. The action of will transformed a seemingly irrational material and social world into a rational reality. Practice existed for the sake of rational thought, not as a result of thought. Practice allowed man to contemplate his external reality. All of life was aimed at the breakthrough of reason that allowed man to grasp rational reality.
All history moved toward that final end; an end that Hegel thought was immanent and to which he contributed the phenomenology that would enable a final breakthrough in human perception.

Hegel perceived himself as the embodiment of the consciousness of the absolute. His purpose for being was to raise human consciousness through his philosophy to the level where the world would realize its ultimate historical moment—the moment when man would perceive the rational world around him—then the spirit could reproduce itself as the lasting reasoned, contemplative state. Hegel proposed an ultimate historical moment that he personally would trigger with his phenomenology. Unlike Kant’s individual and subjective route to absolute knowledge, Hegel proposed a collective philosophy that would reveal the divine absolute toward which man historically had been progressing.

Herder, Schiller, Fichte and others shared Hegel’s hope for a radiant, near future. Yet, they also acknowledged the failures of history. The French Revolution had not produced the promised historical, spiritual transfiguration in everyday reality. Post-revolution France did not seem to be on its way to that radiant here and now, as promised. They proposed the radiant future may indeed come about, but it would come not all at once, but in three historically ordered stages. The first period of history would have been that characterized by a sense of freedom and harmony such as that Rousseau revealed. This would be followed by a second period of disillusionment and alienation much like that being experienced in Europe following the Revolution. Finally, a third period of restoration would occur during which all human interests would be reflected upon and harmonized rationally.
The final restoration of harmony required a cultural, ethical, aesthetic restoration. Once restored, humanity would enact a new state. Hegel realized his responsibility to bring about that final state. He provided the means to that restoration through his phenomenology. He looked to Christian thinkers to provide the translation of Christian symbolism into rational thought. This would bring about the realization of infinite knowledge in the consciousness of all humanity. This knowledge would enable man’s reflective union with the absolute.

Perception versus Reality

Also writing in the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century, Friedrich Richter criticized Hegel’s reliance on Christianity for the final realization of a new world. Hegel’s bliss appeared limited to philosophic thought, to contemplation, as the completion of man’s reflective union with absolute harmony. For Richter, the reality of everyday human being was not changed through Hegelianism, only the perception of it. This ignored the harsh realities and substituted an other-worldliness for an actual final stage in humanity’s historical development. In effect, Richter pointed out that Hegel de facto had eliminated the Christian element of charity directed toward improving the human condition. Richter maintained that the actual world must be changed based on the translation of Christian symbolism into rational thought. Then such symbolism could inform human action and bring about an actual change in the human condition.

Emergence of Reflexive Consciousness

D.F. Strauss, during the nineteenth century, proposed to remedy Richter’s criticism of Hegel by proposing that all Christian symbolism was myth. Actual historical progression was found in man’s victory over nature through doing and making.
Absolute human knowledge, when stripped of unexamined assumptions, could inform actions powerful enough to change the actual material world. Perhaps, at one time, reality had unfolded according to its own patterns, just dragging mankind along with it.

However, Strauss pointed out, the emergence of a reflexive consciousness at this point in history would now transcend the world spirit and take over the future progression toward an absolute harmony. Man was no longer the historical instrument of fate; he became an accomplice in determining that fate. Man could act upon his world and determine the future of humanity in theoretical and practical ways.²

Political Praxis

Accompanying the German philosophers’ realizations was the rise of a political movement that sought political practices consistent with political theory—a political praxis. Cieszkowski provided the agenda for that accomplishment. He explained that having attained absolute knowledge gave mankind an active role in history. At this point in that history, philosophy must now focus on executing history. Philosophy did this by spreading absolute knowledge to the masses so that the desired future could be constructed.

For Bauer, the path to executing the next historical moment came through changing the Christian claim to absolute knowledge. The mission of literary criticism was the exposure of inconsistencies in Christianity. This action would result in a new level of awareness and understanding that would then free mankind from Christianity’s restraints. The purpose of history was not the attainment of reason.

The purpose of history was the attaining of self-consciousness. Only when all mankind shared in self-consciousness could a true and lasting culture be forged.

This concern with the collective consciousness and practice became a critical developmental means to collective salvation through a material and spiritual actualizing of absolute knowledge. This replaced Hegel’s individual salvation through consciousness raising alone. Bauer and others called for both a conceptual and actual rearrangement of material reality. True practice was true critical theory. Practice actualized theory.

Unlike Cieszkowski and Bauer’s concern with realizing a new world through actualizing Christianity, Arnold Ruge viewed Hegel’s political doctrine as too accommodating of the existing Prussian state. Therefore, Ruge tried to purge Hegel’s absolute knowledge of what he perceived as its reactionary nature. Due to this flaw, Hegelian philosophy mistook its own place within a larger developmental political theory. Ruge explained that Hegel had been mistaken when he assumed man could achieve a theoretical perfection that would naturally lead to a social and material perfection. For man to be free, he had to achieve both a theoretical and a social-political material perfection. Ruge explained that once insight had been accomplished, it immediately would reveal the contradiction between theoretical understanding and the historical material social-political reality. Ruge explained that this realization itself then would prompt the taking of practical action to change material reality in order to dissolve the contradiction. With Ruge then came the critical dialectic that prompted action to realize true knowledge.
Moses Hess, another nineteenth century philosopher, maintained that man was in the last stage of a trichotomy. The first stage of innocence had given rise to a second historical stage where theoretical Christianity and an opposing social-political material reality existed. The third, and current, stage in history would accomplish the elimination of this historical tension or contradiction, and accomplish reason, social harmony and political order.

Hess identified the source of this contradiction to be the private ownership of materials that lead to power over others, including despotism in politics, contradicting Christian valuing of life across all stations of life. Hess explained that the existent harsh realities of the material world could not be reconciled with the values of Christianity until private ownership was abolished. Only then would slavery, injustice and all other despotic actions deriving from the material inequity, be destroyed. The Church had fulfilled its historical contribution by protecting the Christian values from this evil material social-political reality. Once the material world was altered—through realization of the need for material equality—then the Church would no longer be necessary. Christian values would be realized, they would be pervasive, and a Christian world would exist in both theory and practice. Correspondingly, the State would only be needed for administration because primary public policy issues would have been resolved. Karl Marx disagreed.

The Material Dialectic Revisited

Marx explained that before Hegelianism could be considered a philosophy capable of transforming the world, its internal contradictions first must be subjected to radical critique.
Hegelianism had to be able to demonstrate through such critique its claim to absolute knowledge—in both the realm of thought and in concrete social-material reality—before it could be considered to be capable of transforming that material reality.

Once purged by critique, Hegelianism could provide concrete context for action. Marx focused attention on the concrete historical moment when true understanding and comprehension would become so universal that the ultimate world would emerge in theory and practice. At this universal, historical point, contemplation and action would merge to transform the material world. Theory would become action.

Critique was necessary to measure individual purposeful action against theoretical social essence or values. Informed individual human reality actualized the collective material reality. Marx explained that Hegel had mistakenly concluded that man’s essence was grounded in thought. Instead, Marx explained, man’s essence was grounded in informed actions. Man’s labor, when purposeful, lead to human making and productivity that embodied what was most noble in man’s nature. The virtuous man would be the purposeful maker. Social, political and economic institutions gave rise to the concept of the state. The State, as idea, did not bring about these particular institutions.

Where Hegel had concluded that the theory or idea resulted in the material social-economic-political particulars, Marx employed his radical critique to correct this misconception in order to establish that philosophy revealed the particulars that gave rise to ideas or theory. According to Marx, Hegel simply and understandably, had inverted the subject/object relationship. Political solutions to human material reality were equivalent in value to theological or speculative solutions: all had to be infused into human action in order to be finally realized.
Philosophy had to both change man’s ideas about the world and the martial, historically grounded world itself. The completion of man in history was dependent the enactment of theory or praxis. At that point in time, philosophy was joined with politics—true and lasting knowledge joined with noble human action and the new world order emerged for all mankind.

As part of his critique, Marx reexamined Rousseau’s explanation regarding the perennial challenge faced by any State. Throughout history, man found himself at once both independent with free will and existing within a society that curtailed that will. Within this explanation was found the perennial challenge faced by each individual being. Each being pursued being an honorable individual and an honorable citizen. Hegel had proposed that the reconciliation of the individual with society would be found in the transcendence of existing society and attainment of thought that revealed the absolute rationality of the world around man. For Hegel, this rational state was waiting to be detected, waiting to be made the subject of human consciousness. For Marx, man must realize absolute knowledge in the material realm. Social and economic interdependence must replace theological and political superstructures. The state must emerge from the transformation of the particular social-political-economic infrastructure based on interdependence and equality. Philosophy had to extend from praxis to theory. Critique of praxis was the means to achieving truth.

More concretely, Marx explained that as philosophy developed and was enacted, history would produce the social group that would act upon the material world to change reality and eventually bring about the material reality of the universal state. Praxis was the concretely rooted, historical-material force. Praxis was a natural historical force.
Actualization of philosophy as right and lasting truth for mankind was dependent upon a reality that forced its way in action toward thought.

Marx’s praxis was extra-philosophical. Man raised his consciousness to be able to detect what was taking place around him—the perennial remaking of the material world. History revealed this natural progression if man would but study it and learn from it and understand how his actions contributed to the inevitable. Man could not change that progression. However, raising consciousness regarding praxis could infuse actions with meaning such that the historical progression could be accelerated and the new egalitarian world realized sooner.

Marx relied on a material ethics to critique human action and humanity’s production of civil structures. Man experienced an alienation from his spiritual nature when he viewed himself the object or result of these structures leading him to the need to view the world around him through religious lens. Man objectified himself when he considered his labor as a mere means to pleasure, when he allowed himself to become the slave to his own need for production.

Drawing from Engel, Marx agreed that social-political evil resulted from the material division of human labor into living and congealed labor or capital. This resulted in a division of man from man: Those who produced divided from those who owned what was produced: The proletariat from the capitalist. The material world had reached a state of alienation for all. Capitalists dominated the laborers—the wealth generated by the many was held by the few. This contradiction was perceived through critique and resolved through action.
Hegel’s phenomenology had revealed that the source of alienation was man’s reification of his own historical progression. Marx built on this knowledge to articulate the four dimensions of alienation. Producers were alienated from their products, the worker alienated from the act of labor, both the laborer and capitalist alienated from harmonic community, and individuals were alienated from one another. Labor or making or producing constituted the praxis of human self-actualization. For man to alienate himself from his own labor was to bring about an alienation of every man from the very process of his own self-actualization. The source of initial alienation was the absence of conscious authorship for humans when they participated in the social-economic-political relationships inherent in human society.

Man could not avoid this historical experience. However, a raising of consciousness about it that revealed mankind’s ability to participate in the acceleration of history could free all men from this alienation and hasten the coming of the new world. Only by consciously realizing these links, could man move toward full actualization of human being. The historical progression was toward full and purposeful human and social actualization, not a restoration of the initial state of human innocence. A restoration of innocence could not fulfill human potential; the material historical journey alone could lead to that. Marx explained that man did not first distinguish the is and the ought of his situation and then out to transform the is into the ought.

This would entail an unnatural separation of knowing and acting. By appreciating the simultaneous and mutual way knowing and acting are related in historical self-actualization, man could appreciate his full being as simultaneously both potentiality and actuality.
Man could realize that he could act purposefully on the social-political-material world. Praxis was the conscious realization of man’s paradoxical nature: man came to know himself as he acted. Theory must be overcome through critique for the sake of praxis. Marx sought to raise individual consciousness in order to trigger a collective realization or consciousness that would enable the proletariat to free all mankind and move toward a better human condition. Whereas consciousness raising was the totality for Hegel’s realization of the already perfect world, consciousness raising was but the initial step for Marx. Praxis would give rise to the full potential of humanity in social relationships and a harmonic community would follow. Marx could then oppose existing social-political-economic institutions as manifestations of the contradictions in the material world that were created and recreated daily by alienated and unfulfilled human beings.

Once freed from objectivity and victimization by history, man would realize authorship and reenact all social particulars that would extend to the concept of the world itself. Critique was embodied in historical progression and could be used to hasten history. The present world order must undergo critique by a conscious humanity in order to give way to a better future. Marx hastened a realization that the world would change because of the materialistic forces set in motion by the historically grounded, material forces produced by an unconscious humanity. All mankind suffered at the point of inevitable revolution. However, praxis could alter the experience of suffering and the degree of revolution needed for the inevitable human progression through that history. The purpose of historically embedded philosophical critique was the changing of human consciousness regarding human reality and potentiality that would result in actual material knowing and acting.
Dialectic materialism—as philosophical thought—would terminate itself through its own transformation of itself from thought to praxis. Through praxis, truth would be proven and established throughout the real world.

**Existentialism**

Existential thought also grappled with Hegel’s critical phenomenology. Hegel had explained that self-consciousness was aimed at man’s grasping he was not an object, but rather the subject, associated with essential thought. For Hegel, when this was realized, man achieved the first stage of human freedom. Freedom manifested itself as stoicism, the first self-conscious mode. This mode was itself the manifestation of the general form of the world spirit during times of universal fear, bondage or conceptual development. The inherent contradiction was that the self increasingly attempted to identify with universal pure thought instead of trying to concretely fulfill the true material historical human potential. Thus, the first stage of human freedom was an experience of the idea of freedom, not an actual living of the free life. This stoic phase would last until the individual realized that without attending to material reality, man would perish. The realization of self-as-subject was the negation of self-as-object. Then, the positive realization of self-conscious thought lead to a negative realization of man’s concrete determinateness. The second stage of self-consciousness then was one of skepticism, a consciousness of negative freedom, eventually leading to extreme unease and alienation from material reality.

For Hegel, this sense of alienation was a precursor to the final historical realization of pure philosophy and its imposition back onto the world.
For Marx, alienation signaled the historical transformation within philosophy as it moved from critical understanding to revolutionary praxis. However, for Soren Kierkegaard during the mid-nineteenth century and Jean Paul Sartre during the twentieth century, alienation was experienced by man as a threatening gap in reality that demanded immediate and acute action. Man did not experience the dialectic of self-consciousness in the realm of pure thought. Instead, man experienced the tension of being a solitary, concrete individual within a historical, concrete social world and being a self-conscious, thinking entity within himself. This was the tragic and inescapable human condition.

Existentialism challenged man to experience fully what it was to be an existing and conscious being within this perennial state of tension. Where philosophers before them had been preoccupied with using philosophy to exemplify the objective nature of knowledge and practice for all mankind, existentialism established the necessity for each individual to experience subjective, concrete, individual being. This individual experience would achieve a synthesis of consciousness and concrete reality that would reveal all of the possibilities inherent in a here and now.

To realize human potential amidst this human condition was to grasp and accept the constant need to assess possibilities and make decisions among them. Each being was destined to become what he chose to become with no external, universal, absolute criteria to guide those choices. No overarching justification existed to support these choices. No unfolding of a human destiny was there to guide decisions. Authentic human being was the experience of continual here-and-nows brimming with existential choices. For Kierkegaard, philosophy revealed this truth to man.
At that point, it was up to each individual to reconcile thought and action with this reality because mankind could not alter that human condition itself.

For Sartre, the human condition also was an unhappy state of consciousness. Sartre sought to achieve a critical understanding of what it meant to be a human being rooted in history and yet full with limitless abstract thought processes. He was concerned with revealing that all choices were equally fated to result in human despair and there was not objective philosophy to which man could appeal. Yet, man still sought self-identity through choice.

For Wittgenstein, existential philosophy had obviously gone-wrong. Kierkegaard, Sartre and other existentialists abandoned man at the point of action, of choice; they left man heading despairingly toward a solitary and meaningless existence, after taking him to a monumental brink of self awareness and authorship. He held that there must be more to be gained from authenticity than a full understanding of the hopeless human condition.

**Theory and Practice as Epistemological Elements**

**Peirce’s Learning and Validation**

Nineteenth-twentieth century philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce side-stepped existentialism and looked to Kant and the earlier medieval thinkers in order to develop his philosophy of pragmaticism. He noted a kinship with Hegel’s absolute idealism, but separated from it at the point where the mind, as a result of raised consciousness, then turned back to the concrete world to impose a newfound idealism upon it.
Peirce was interested in examining the human mind itself and its propensity for pursuing and organizing knowledge. He was fascinated by the ways human beings went about learning and validating what they learned about reality.

For Peirce, human conduct within the material world—how and to what degree that action was directed—was the central philosophical issue. He held that knowledge did not have a fixed foundation as held by Aristotle, Bacon, Hegel and others. Instead, impressions, facts, sense data, universals and a priori truths were not the unchallengeable foundations of lasting knowledge. The intuitive knowledge upon which empiricism and rationalism rested, and their seeming self-authenticating epistemological experiences, could be considered tentatively plausible, but never as absolutely true, until subject to an epistemological examination.

Peirce explained that inquiry was a perpetual, self-correcting process. Knowledge had to be legitimized by epistemological norms and rules. The process of inquiry or contemplation was the critical focus for philosophy, not the resulting knowledge or actions. Once examined and found reliable, then knowledge could be considered to be true, to the extent that the inquiry allowed. That is, practices only existed if there were social rules and norms by which they could be identified and characterized. If a human action was discernable under given circumstances, and actuated by a recognizable motive, it could be considered a habit. If it also was deliberate and self-controlled, then it could be considered a human belief. All phenomena obeyed norms and exhibited habits or action patterns. Rational men had both habits and beliefs. Through belief, man fashioned his future reality. Man acted deliberately and with self-control to create the social reality.
Man the knower and the inquirer was an active agent in a concrete reality and could control the formation of his habits according to the demands of his social situation as well as formulate beliefs and actions that transformed social situations. Conceptions of reality were constantly altered in the self-corrective process of inquiry as what was truth was distinguished from what was false, the real from the unreal. This self-corrective process regulated active conceptions of reality for the social community, which constituted that reality. All human knowledge then derived from concrete human experience.

Experience was normative. Knowledge was never absolute; knowledge was constantly being reappraised through such normative experience. Man was a social creature. Man evaluated experiences as the basis for future self-controlled action. Such reasoning rested on the conception of thought as dialogue, as language. Therefore, all reasoning rested upon the normative foundations of language and its logical norms, reminiscent of Hugh of St. Victor’s logica.

Pierce’s ethics referred to the study of these embedded norms as the preferred basis for human action. Ethics were dependent upon aesthetics that determined what constituted the fine or virtuous in human existence. Logic established hypothetical ground rules for reason. Logic set forth rules so that reasoning could reach its conclusion in belief, in deliberate action. Logic anticipated the end to which reason would be the means in order to give appropriate form to reason. Logic was normative, as both ethics and aesthetics were. The norms of inquiry were themselves the source of authority for knowledge. Aesthetics involved the study of the ultimate justification of the end that determined the content of ethical inquiry.
The philosopher explored the logic of ethics; the scientist operated within the boundaries of the established logic. The philosopher also examined the adequacy of the ultimate goals and purposes that were pursued in moral discourse and scientific inquiry; the philosopher pursued the ultimate justification. Right and wrong in logic and in ethics depended upon a justification of the ultimate ends pursued through society. Humanity had to think and discuss those ends if ethical and aesthetic action was to be considered part of conscious human existence.

The ultimate goal for Peirce was for man to participate in bringing about an ever more reasonable, ethical, aesthetic approach to human action. Reason was never absolute, never completed; reason was always in a state of growth and development. It was man’s ultimate virtue to simply participate in that growth and development and to subsequently grow and develop along with human reason as human nature itself required.

**Dewey’s Categories of Experience**

During the last half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, John Dewey accepted Hegel’s translation of historical philosophical categories into the functional categories of human experience. Hegel had provided a strong sense of the developing, flowing, and dynamic historical processes. The understanding of human existence entailed an understanding of human history as a developmental collective process experienced by individuals. Like Peirce, Dewey moved beyond Hegel to focus on the man’s self-conscious reshaping of worldly process. He sought to reconstruct philosophy to move beyond explanation to become the foundation for enlightened human action or praxis.
Dewey accepted Peirce’s method of inquiry and added to it an awareness of actual, current sociopolitical issues. Where Peirce was concerned with an absolute theory of inquiry, Dewey sought a reconceptualization of philosophy itself. Dewey sought to transform philosophy from a sterile, isolated activity into vital social criticism. Peirce’s community of inquirers would have tangible and critical consequences for social education and reconstruction, for democracy itself as the logical societal end. As vital social criticism with such tangible effects on social reality, philosophy would avoid misshaping and dehumanizing man in his material world and would promote a human vitality and optimism as the foundation for the social world.

Dewey concluded that all human experience had objective and subjective dimensions. Man in his experimental attitude as agent projected meaning onto experience; anticipation was primary and recollection secondary. The primary situations in social reality were those calling for appropriate, self-controlled action. Inquiry had to understand how sensation, perception and knowledge functioned as processes within the complexity, plurality and integrity of human being. Dewey was concerned with the nature and quality of these interactions. Out of the overlapping experiences, both continuities and connections among these processes revealed norms that affected the nature and quality of interactive experience. Dewey sought to realize human intelligence in all phases of life, not just selected situations. This intelligence was accessible by all, not just the educated elite. An experimental situation developed from a problematic one within the broad range of human experience. The problematic situation became the guide for the experimental. Unique qualities set each situation aside from others and every situation had a potential aesthetic quality.
The immediacy of the aesthetic quality was found in experimental situations aimed at self-controlling action and providing a situational remedy to the original problematic situation. Accomplishing the aesthetic quality consummated all human experience. Dewey criticized modern social institutions and practices for failing to realize that quality in the experiences they guided.

Dewey attributed this failure to the prevalence of a means-ends dichotomy. Means and ends referred to different perspectives on the same human experience. The aesthetic quality of all attained ends, intended or unintended, was dependent upon the aesthetic quality of the means. In the social world, institutions purposefully needed to guide the means and the ends. When institutions ignored either means or ends, they risked supporting the spectrum that ran from unexamined conventionality to coercion in a society. Both of these kept man away from fulfilling his true nature as a social being. The potential for altering his social world was necessary in order for man to realize his active self. Dewey suggested that a theoretical judgment systematically could be abstracted from immediate existential situations in order to apply that theory to the fuller range of generalizable situations. In contrast, a practical judgment could not be abstracted for its concrete context. Practical judgment involved awareness of both means and ends in the givenness of a situation and its potentiality. All practical judgments were hypothetical in that they preceded action on the situation itself. Their validation lay in the results.

For Dewey, philosophy must acknowledge both theoretical and practical judgments, or actions, and not make one subservient to the other.
He asserted that the most difficult problems in modern America derived from an artificial separation of theory from practice.

Theory as the Methodological Issue

The Philosophy of Modern Analytic Science

The developing nineteenth century modern world included multiple, simultaneous applications of practical knowledge. Sciences branched into specialized applications. Epistemology gave way to methodology as procedure better ensured certainty and predictability. Production flourished in the modern social settings and economics gave rise to its own commercial aristocracy while traditional politics strained to keep pace with a rapidly developing social reality. For the philosophy of science, this meant painstaking examination of methods and techniques to ensure reliability of the results. This also meant a specialization of the epistemological discussion to the extent that ontology appears forgotten or irrelevant, and epistemology appears to slip most often into discussions of methodology and even farther into the intricate area of technique and technicality.

The modern analytic philosophy of science focused on how to ensure true results at the level of the discrete, individual project. Tracing a project back to epistemological and ontological significance seemingly was overshadowed by the need to move onto the next methodological examination. A world undiscoverable by the modern analytic method was a world unexplored—a world left for a future when analytic science can formulate an adequate methodology and accompanying techniques.
Since its rise in the 1840s, in response to the growing cultural preoccupation with the applied sciences, analytic philosophy was concerned with establishing whether such science did yield true knowledge about the world, and, if so, to what extent could these claims be proven or justified, and just what these justified claims could tell us about our world. This was a turning toward concerns with issues raised by the analytic methods and findings of the developing sciences. This was a de facto narrowing of historical discussions of ontology and epistemology to empirical methods and methodologies.

Significantly, many of the early analytic philosophers were trained as scientists and remained ignorant of traditional philosophy. Seemingly, those who were familiar with the writings of the ancients found little importance in those discussions and their lack of apparent relevance to the dominant methodological issues they faced. In any event, the gap between traditional and modern philosophy developed and grew. Analytic philosophy became preoccupied with logic and the derivation of logical technique and was grounded in the empiricism of Hume and Locke leading to logical positivism and beyond.

Conclusion

This historical discussion of human theory and practice has been characterized in part by the historical philosophical contexts. The backdrops have shifted from being metaphysical and concerned with ontology or the nature of reality and how we can know what is real, to being concerned with defining what constitutes real knowledge and what ways of knowing can produce knowledge or epistemology.
This discussion has shifted as well from ethics or the notion of the good, the noble and the virtuous, to knowledge about the systematic ordering of reason or logic, to discussions about the historical development of philosophy as an area of inquiry or the history of philosophy.

Historically, the discussion of logic became the foundation for a powerful shift away from intuitive philosophy toward modern analytic science. This science promised to replace philosophy with a sounder, more reliable, more relevant theory and practice. However, the promise resulted more in a temporary separation of philosophy away from man and the real world to one characterized by select aspects of man’s being in that world, namely empirical reality void of inter-subjective meanings acquired through history. It would take the recent advances of the philosophers of science like Laudan to incorporate empiricism into other human ways of knowing and return analytic philosophy to a solid foundation that would reestablish its value to modern PA praxis and praxiology.

The beginnings of this foundation are found in the most vital questions these philosophers have posed for modern American PA praxis and praxiology to consider. Primarily from Aristotle comes the question regarding how does a modern American PA theorist or practitioner integrate the need for subsistence, with that for pleasure or happiness, with that for virtue? How can modern PA unite its theorists and practitioners into one generalizable and recognizable human activity? Modern life in America with its middle-class basis seems to require recognition that material reality for most human being is characterized by the need for a blending or a reconciliation of Aristotle’s ontological elements.
For the modern American PA theorists and administrators, the extended republic that is their context requires a political commitment to doing excellence in public service. Simultaneously, material social reality demands job performance that yields subsistence and allows one’s family to move beyond subsistence to a fuller material existence, the pursuit of happiness. Simultaneously, pervasive professionalism requires technical expertise and leadership in order to gain recognition and achieve self-actualization.

Reconciling these elements—in viable PA practices and theories—in such a way that the republic is enhanced, while the PA theorists and practitioners are enhanced, becomes a paramount challenge. These elements must be analyzed and then integrated toward a new purpose; a focus on achieving excellence in only one of these dimensions will only confuse, as well as weaken, the whole.

The notion of virtue in public service must strengthen the extended republic itself the consciously chosen political model. It is this model that guarantees access to liberty and justice within our society, that supports their pursuit by all of the people. To excellence in public service, and tenure and administrative careerism in our educational institutions and in our agencies, must be coupled the notion of public professional expertise and experience. A life of politics cannot be viewed as simply the life of bureaucratically following instructions. At all levels, the professional PA administrator and theorist must have commitment to fulfilling the republic and ensuring its values. The Administrator must be exhibit professionalism committed to delivering those values. And, professional excellence must derive from demonstration of technical competence within the administrative theoretical and practical contexts.
Zeno and Cicero viewed the very purpose of human being as the attainment of wisdom that would enable man to live in accordance with nature by using knowledge to inform practices. In the PA context, this becomes the question as to how can we develop praxiology and praxis in both our American theorists and practitioners? Drawing from Seneca, how can PA better ensure that both PA theorists and practitioners are capable of the life of acting and that of thinking, contemplating and practicing, and ensure these coincide in the individual as two aspects of human being?

The virtuous PA theorist-practitioner is informed, is proficient. The theorist-practitioner contemplates and acts, theorizes and practices. How does modern PA theory and practice bring this about?

Examining Neo-Platonist thought, the question is how can we ensure that American PA theory and practice do not become removed from the American context such that they lose their perceivable relevance to the affairs of state, to the affairs of citizens and other states? PA theory and praxis not firmly rooted in American political reality must remain vulnerable to this fate. Given the multi-disciplinary field of study like PA, remaining ungrounded in one shared and fundamental normative foundation that can appropriately ground political action begs for this fate. The Neo-Platonists’ linking of morality with nonpolitical action focused attention away from discussions of the state and political being toward more general discussions of a social being that was divorced from politics. Their concept of virtue was derived from social philosophy directly, bypassing humanity and its politics. For Neo-Platonists, the life of the citizen defaulted to the highest of the more vulgar existences, holding no moral value.
Such theoria became baffling, pretentious and irrelevant to a humanity struggling to affect an everyday world. A PA theory and practice grounded only in social theory may have the same fate. The question for modern American PA is how can both its theory and practices ensure protection of all religious views? The republic itself has adopted the value of improving the human condition in the United States. On what fundamental value basis do administrative practitioners and theorists rely for the improving of life in the United States?

From Avicenna’s concepts comes the question as to how can American PA improve intellectual capabilities that, in turn, may be used to improve general and technical knowledge and actions? And, how do we recognize truth in the everyday world of PA? Hugh of St. Victor raises one of the most conceptually intriguing questions with his distinction of logica as the cultural knowledge that was embodied in language and the discursive arts; that logica provided the paradigmatic basis of culture. This language being the culturally agreed upon conceptual format that could not help but bias expression and understanding of knowledge expressed in its terms. Theory is recognized as normative given its reliance on the normative foundations of language arising from cultural conceptual agreement. How can PA theorists and practitioners--from the grand diversity of multiple disciplines and experiences--promulgate a shared normative conceptual agreement regarding American PA theory and practice theory that allows for shared discussions among them? This is a big question, as well as a hard and necessary question that we face today in our concrete historical context.

Responding to both Descartes and Kant, how can PA utilize both empirical and intuitive ways of knowing?
Are empirical findings more suited to upholding public policy implementation when some observable social element is to be changed, while intuitive findings are more appropriate to situations where some condition is to be avoided or prevented? More broadly stated, how can American PA best incorporate the totality of human existence and human capabilities appropriately?

Following Ruge and his concern for both political and social freedom and the realization of the full human potential, as does the United States, how can American PA ensure the alignment of political reality that ensures the potential for diverse social realities? This is one of the most poignant perennial questions we face in our PA theory and practice in the United States. Our state requires tolerance of differences, some of which can be perceived to run counter to the predominant religious values within our nation or even to the basic values of the nation itself. The balancing of each individual’s interest and the public interests includes the balances of various groups of sometimes large and powerful collective interests with those not so established, all of which are guaranteed in our theory of the state.

Marx posed one of the most intriguing questions for PA. Given that the world changes, how can PA theory and practice facilitate that transformation? Further, toward what type of new world is American PA driving? How can PA theory and practice command relevance such that man can believe in administrative institutions? What foundation would be needed in order for our governmental administrative institutions to receive public support?

Existentialism suggested one of the great questions with which the founding fathers’ grappled.
How can American PA both fulfill individual interests and the interests of the state?
And, following Wittgenstein, how can this be done in theory and practice that do not leave either the individual acting or the state itself alienated from greater society?
How can American PA contribute to enhancing the individual and collective realities and contribute to the actualization of both?

In line with Peirce’s concerns with the ways of knowing, how can American PA theory and practice ensure active agency? What should PA study in order to ensure a sound praxis, what should constitute the praxiology of American PA? How can both educators and practitioners use knowledge within the concrete reality of American PA to form habits and beliefs that transform that reality? How can PA theory and practice embrace the self-corrective process of inquiry in the administration of government?

Modern analytic philosophy brought with it a fuller appreciation of the concrete, historical, material human reality. Philosophically, the historical move toward modern analytic science took the discussion of theory and practice out of the realm of ontology and epistemology, and away from whole human being as well. What earlier scientists and philosophers were so able to take apart into constituent parts and study through its methodologies, they remained unable to reassemble into whole human being, much less a polity. The question for American PA is how to incorporate their findings into PA theory and practice. The application of technical expertise continues to improve life in society and to provide opportunities for individual and collective improvement and these remain responsibilities of PA as well in the form of responsible public policy and program implementation.
PA must incorporate such technical expertise without forgetting about its noble activity.

Its broad, diverse disciplinary nature requires consideration of all aspects of the actualization of the PA theorist and practitioner, and that of the state.

This challenge is the topic of the next Chapter.
CHAPTER 2
THE FALL AND RISE:
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PRAXIOLOGY

Introduction

The new philosophy of the nineteenth century was dedicated to the modern analytic sciences, to the examination of methods and techniques needed to ensure reliability of the results at the level of the discrete, individual project. A world undiscoverable by the modern analytic method was a world unexplored—a world left for a future when analytic science can formulate an adequate methodology and accompanying techniques. This narrowing of historical discussions of ontology and epistemology to empirical methods and methodologies attracted philosophers originally trained as scientists and ignorant of traditional philosophy. The gap between traditional and modern philosophy developed and grew. This analytic philosophy was focused on an empirically grounded logic provided by Hume and Locke. 3

3 Once again, I am indebted to the chronology of idea development provided by Richard Berstein and referenced in Chapter 2. Again, my summary does not necessarily reflect Bernstein’s interpretations or conclusions presented in his significant work.
Empiricism

During the eighteenth century, Scottish philosopher and historian, David Hume conducted his examination of the constructs of knowledge. He concluded that true knowledge must be expressed in terms of logical propositions. Man must first experience an idea and inquire about its relationship to other ideas, and then he would discern the meaning of the idea and formulate this meaning in universal terms. Meaning derived from experience. Hume proposed the term as the basic unit of meaning. The range of meaningful terms within language was that of experience. Once discerned, meanings were expressed in terms of logical propositions. It was through this logical expression that ideas came to be considered true, to become knowledge.

Hume looked to the philosophy of mathematics to provide this critical logic of expression. A central question for Hume was the confirmation of a priori universal laws through experience and meaning established by propositional expression. Wittgenstein had searched for what had gone wrong in western philosophy to leave humanity in an existential morass. This search had led him to develop a means of detecting the universal and lasting truth about the world. He concluded that what was needed was a language that would be used for expressing ideas such that their truth would be revealed through this expression—a language that provided the cultural paradigm of empirical truth.

Wittgenstein developed his principia logica as language guided by a normative logic that would provide that means to establishing truth of empirical observations. The principia logica included a truth-functional extensional logic that allowed the recognition of a propositional type whose forms were considered true for all values of its arguments. This tautology represented all logical and mathematical truths.
In proposing his logical empiricism, Wittgenstein argued that such tautologies said nothing about the actual world observed. Instead, they spoke to the paradigm of language and the expression of observations themselves or the symbols of expression. As such, the empiricist could admit logic as a priori knowledge. The assurance regarding empirical truth expressed in terms of these logical propositions was not based on direct experience; direct experience was translated into the logical propositions in order to realize truth in experiences. The analytic philosopher became focused on the syntax and the formal relationship between symbols in the paradigmatic language used to express experience. Philosophical arguments consisted of the manipulation of symbols in accordance with precise rules to ensure truth resulted. These philosophical questions continue to dominate logical positivism and logical empiricism.

**Logical Positivism**

The analytic philosophers of the Vienna Circle recognized two forms of research that yielded knowledge: empirical research and logical analysis. The central philosophical responsibility was the verification of meaning. To be true, a contingent proposition had to be empirically verified; this necessitated an empirical methodology that they found in logical positivism.4

The positivist notion of verification provided four types of propositions. There were the formal propositions in the form of tautologies and contradictions, the atomic propositions, the molecular propositions and the pseudo-propositions.

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The truth value of each of these types of propositions could be determined ultimately by means of observation and logic. The central difficulty for the logical positivists was the verification of what appeared to be scientific laws via a finite set of observations. As a result, some positivists shifted away from strict verification to logical empiricism that more liberally allowed the use of both observation and experiment as means of testing the truth of a proposition.

The analytic philosopher’s attention shifted to the relationship between the proposed law and the observations that would confirm it. They examined how scientific ideas or truths came to establish meanings. Characteristically, logical empiricism concentrated on analyzing propositional forms, the construction of artificial languages and calculi, and using them to establish scientific truths.

Twentieth century logical positivist A. J. Ayers proposed development of an ideal artificial language into which all knowledge could be translated and then logically assessed for its truth value. Analytic and synthetic propositions would compose this language. The analytic propositions would be linguistic in nature and hold no factual significance. The validity of analytic propositions would depend solely on the definition of the symbols employed to express them. The synthetic propositions would be empirical and subject to evaluation according to a verifiability criterion. All phenomena, all empirical observations, could be expressed in terms of verifiable, synthetic propositions. For Ayers, the evaluation only required partial, even indirect, empirical evidence to establish a theory or hypothesis.

Twentieth century logical positivist Rudolf Carnap recognized the difficulty of attempting to define observation terms explicitly.
This was especially difficult given the existence of the terms of disposition essential to scientific discussions. These provided a syntactic bottleneck that only a logic of conditions could remedy. Instead, Carnap proposed the requirement of reducibility, that all empirically significant problems must be stated in terms of observations that are reached through reduction chains. His reductionist construct sought to reveal the structural relations among different levels of concepts.

All concepts were reducible to more basic concepts. A layered complex of these most basic elements ultimately gave rise to language, to meaning, to the world itself. Carnap assumed that a reduction of the world to such basic elements was possible. The logical positivist was concerned with these fundamental elements and the constructs that would reveal them. Such discussions were elite and powerful, exerting tremendous influence over the modern analytic sciences.

The contributions of logical positivism included the reduction of observed relationships among phenomena and scientific propositions to a more basic conceptual framework or language. Positivism also accomplished philosophical examination of science to evaluate truth and validity. Logical Positivism also established the sense among the sciences, among inquirers, that was could not be expressed in the terms of this language must not be valid or true. Unfortunately, discussions of human acting or thinking, of praxis or praxiology could not withstand such translation or reduction.

**Logical Empiricism**

Twentieth century logical empiricist Carl G. Hempel urged rejection of the positivist analytic criteria of verifiability and falsifiability.
Hempel regarded Ayer’s assertion of the reliability of terms as the basis for cognitive significance as missing a primary conceptual understanding of the relationship among terms, sentences and theory itself. Hempel granted that Carnap’s reductionism might be advancement over prior attempts that sought to establish cognitive significance on the basis of specifying vocabulary to be used to construct sentences. However, Hempel pointed out that still Carnap failed to account for the deductive axiomatic terms that were so central to advanced scientific thought.

For Hempel, these terms were extra-logical and non-empirical. As such, they must be interpreted within their theoretical and linguistic frameworks alone. This lack of understanding accounted for Carnap’s inability to establish theoretical significance through reductionism. Hempel could not accept that the logical relationships between the empirically significant terms and observational terms could be managed to yield cognitive significance. In their place, Hempel proposed the development of criteria that attempted to establish degrees of significance at the level of the theoretical construct.

Hempel eliminated the tedious problems of specifying distinctions between analytic and empirical sentences, and distinctions between significant and non-significant sentences. At the level of terms, he carried out the same eliminations. His central opposition to logical positivism was its inability to deal with significant sentences found to be central to scientific theory even though they resisted being either analytic or empirical. Hempel then urged that the criterion of verification or falsification not be used as a strict line of validity, but rather as an indication of the degree to which such general statements could be considered significant.
The consideration of the degree of significance would allow greater meaning to be gained from theories, and would allow the refinement and strengthening of theories through additional work. Hempel appeared to accept established scientific theories as representative of reliable knowledge and then to try to account for their truth.

In contrast, logical positivism appeared to begin with analytic philosophy and applied it to existing theories, too often ending up by denying their observed reliability. Hempel also appeared concerned with a philosophy of science that could manage entire sets of concepts or systems.

Hempel searched for a philosophy of science that could account for both irrational and rational numbers, specific and general observations, and the development of both general and predictable theory. He evaluated the degree of theoretical significance through consideration of the clarity and precision of the theoretical explanation of logical relationship. He examined the systematic, explanatory, predictive power of the theory when compared against experience. He was concerned with the formal simplicity of the theory and the actual extent to which theories were supported by experience.

His establishment of cognitive significance required a formulation of evaluative standards. In terms of empirical scientific methodology, this meant the rules regarding the running of tests and subsequent acceptance/rejection of an empirical hypothesis on the basis of empirical evidence. The general theoretical problem was the characterization of the precise and general terms under which evidence could be held to affirm or disconfirm the hypothesis. Theory construction required defining the initial issues, what the scientific research sought to accomplish, the generality or regularity across particular occurrences the researcher sought to establish.
Science was focused on trying to make sense out of the multitude of data in our lives by detecting and scientifically testing for these generalities or regularities. Good scientific theory contained an empirical interpretation of reality that yielded empirically testable consequences. In turn, these consequences were confirmed empirically. Good theory affected a logically simple systemization of the relevant consequences or theories it offered. Good theory suggested future research and potential generalizations.

In Hempel’s work, deductive systematization of data by sentences was coupled with inductive systematization of theoretical terms, sentences and constructs. Warranted assertibility was moved from the level of the sentence to that of the theoretical construct. The verification/falsification of sentences or terms was replaced by assertibility expressed in the degrees of the confirmation power of the deductive systematization of data within the theory. Hempel advocated statistical significance as the key measure of assertibility. This involved an analogy between confirmation and consequence in order to realize the nature of inductive systematization. Just as the truth of a logical inference was based upon a set of true premises, a hypothesis was confirmed by reliable reports or observational findings. While logical consequence was conceived as the semantic relationship among sentences, the criteria of logical consequence were expressed in purely syntactic terms. Confirmation could be viewed as a semantic relationship between an observation report and a hypothesis.

Confirmation first required a definition and second required a statement of the necessary requirements it must meet. Conditions of entailment and equivalence were necessary requirements, and consequence and consistence were sufficient ones.
A hypothesis was confirmed if each sentence entailed in the hypothesis was confirmed by an observation report. A hypothesis was disconfirmed if an observation report confirmed the denial of the hypothesis. The criterion of satisfaction was derived from the degree to which a hypothesis could be asserted as reliable. The contributions of logical empiricism included the establishment of significance in terms of degrees at the level of theory. Hempel also asserted the need for a philosophy of science able to validate science in the real world.

**Neoanalytic Philosophy**

Much like Hempel, W.V. Quine, another twentieth century philosopher, dismissed both logical positivism and logical empiricism as too preoccupied with terms and sentences. These were artificial derivations—ideas of Locke and Hume taken to the extreme. Quine agreed with Hempel’s disregard of the logical positivist dogmas related to analytic/synthetic truth and that concerning reductionism; however, his conclusions radically differed from those of Hempel. Quine found logical positivism unable to define analytic or synthetic truth. Instead, positivism relied on a priori understanding of these fundamental terms and for Quine this was its fatal flaw. In reference to Hempel’s verification at the theoretical level, Quine appreciated Hempel’s requirement that each sentence of a theory be empirically confirmed.

Quine accepted that each sentence was synonymous if alike at the level of empirical confirmation where the relationship between the statement and actual experience lead to its confirmation.

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This required that each sentence be translated into a true or false statement about direct experience. Hempel’s radical reductionism had attempted to specify a universal language and to translate knowledge into that language for the purpose of assessing its explanation, its reliability and its predictability. Quine noted Hempel’s achievement over Hume and Locke’s preoccupation with terms. Still, for Quine, both the logical positivists and the logical empiricists had missed the main point of philosophy. Both had failed to recognize the inherent relationship of metaphysics to science. For Quine, the enterprise of science grew out of the common sense knowledge found in the world around us.

Formal science should focus on larger and more central ontological elements of this common knowledge; simplify and generalize explanations of human experience; transform them into lasting knowledge and reliable truths. There was no actual demarcation between the synthetic and analytic language as posed by logical positivism and logical empiricism.

Quine pointed out that no specific empirical observation could be linked to a specific statement within any theory in order to establish its lasting truth. Instead, Quine reasoned that the purposeful linkage of theory to common experience was the attempt to explain aspects of the world around us without losing a sense of reality as a whole. The degree of certainty was never absolute or pure truth. Certainty was tenuous, but adequate for human being and development. Theories necessarily incorporated elaborate and yet workable myths and fictions as they projected individual experience back upon the whole of reality. Theories withstood anomalies and departures from their details; theoretical cores withstood peripheral differences until these differences required a corresponding change to the cores of theories themselves.
Given the powerful and applicable central theoretical constructs, it was ineffectual to speak of empirical content of an individual sentence inside that core. These sentences were within an inner domain that was established at a distance from the multitude of observational data upon which they were asserted. The truth of a theoretical statement instead was dependent upon the network of statements for validity. The theory as a whole construct faced reality and gained credibility through the logically expressed content of its ideas that were derived from experience. A theory was not found valid on the basis of the discrete validity of its individually constructed sentences.

The demarcation of synthetic from analytic that had been applied by logical positivism and logical empiricism at the level of the sentence held little relevance at the level of theory. As a result, Quine did not direct his attention to such questions. There were more provocative questions for Quine. Pragmatically, each man acknowledged scientific knowledge, using it to make sense of the data intensive world around him. He warped his knowledge to fit his experiences out of pragmatic necessity. Science was a tool for mankind to use to predict the future on the basis of past experience. For Quine, this placed ontological questions once more on an equal basis with those of natural science.

Paul Feyerabend, another twentieth century philosopher of science, took the discussion to an invigorating extreme by asking if it was even necessary to consider experience as the exclusive source of truth as maintained by empiricism. Feyerabend did not dispute the other contributions of observation, just the need to subject theory itself to direct empirical observation.6

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To answer this fundamental question, Feyerabend examined the modern analytic testing of theories, the assimilation of test results into theory, and the understanding of the resulting theories by others.

Regarding the testing of theories, Feyerabend explained that given modern technologies guided by intrinsic logic, a computer was now capable of carrying out the manipulation of data and generate an objective evaluation of the proposed theory. This evaluative information reached the theorist cognitively via a computer; it did not come directly from sensual experience of the data to the theorist.

Feyerabend’s controversial contention was that information or data could and did reach the cognitive processes of the observer without traveling through any sensual route. Unfortunately little was known about these extra-empirical data precisely because they were not empirical in nature. The philosophy of science itself was constraining the actualization of human knowledge by restricting its inquiry to sensual empiricism alone. This was a refusal to acknowledge a great deal of human experience and perceived truth, experience and truths relied upon daily that had sustained humanity and social reality for thousands of years. Modern analytic philosophy of science failed to account for that social history or its legacy in modern society.

The gateway Feyerabend sought to open was the inquiry into truths gained in extra-empirical ways, including ways of knowing and learning associated with subliminal perceptions, with the more latent learning that leads to memory traces directly, to posthypnotic suggestions, and to telepathic phenomena. In the intervening years, modern society has experienced the affects of these truths held by an elite few.
Regarding the understanding and application of theories, Feyerabend contended that experience did not precede the scientific formulation of theoretical assumptions. It was incomprehensible to him that any experience could be understood, could have meaning, much less a sense of truth itself, without a previously accepted theory to reveal its meaning. Experience and theoretical assumptions arose together in an iterative relationship. The interpretive apparatus for making sense of experience of reality was in place within the individual prior to the development of sensual capacities. The full development of sensory capabilities was dependent upon a preconditional theoretical capacity. A theoretical capability could operate without any actual sensual accompaniment and this theoretical capability could apply meanings without understanding consciously it was doing so.

The use of the empirical observational language—through which experience was expressed in order to determine truth and reliability—served to limit human understanding, as well as to eliminate powerful and lasting aspects of human understanding. These understandings were present in the innate theoretical capability that preceded individual sensual experience. Modern analytic philosophy not only failed to explain reality, it also failed to acknowledge other essential, non-empirical ways of knowing about the world and seeking its truth.

This critique became the legacy of logical positivism and logical empiricism: an inability to confine their discussions to sensory data without obliterating the existence of all else about humanity. For Feyerabend, human experience was rational, conscious and sensual. Human being also was irrational, unconscious and extra-sensory.
Even though the latter were not easily detected or studied, they remained essential and could not be dismissed.

T.S. Kuhn challenged logical empiricism on a different basis. He was concerned with the comparison of theories and the selection of appropriate criteria for that comparison. Hempel had proposed a degree of confirmation and systematic power to establish significance and a universal language to allow for theoretical comparison. Empiricism assumed the objectivity of sensation-reports and the reliability of the universal character of their expression in a vocabulary consisting of pure sense data connected by value-neutral synthetic terms.

Kuhn joined Feyerabend in rejecting the notion of such universal language. All language was value-laden, encompassing a biased world-view. Language expressed presuppositions regarding reality that became part of the knowledge expressed. Both science and language described the existent world, not the potential world. Topics not readily expressed in a language were topics most probably not talked about in usual situations.

Again, Hugh of St. Victor’s logica emerges. The individual most readily learned what the collective paradigm of language had anticipated. Language delimited what the social world could learn. Language challenged what an individual perceived and then tried to express through language. A language unable to accommodate more than sensory data limited the seeking of knowledge to direct sensual experience. Such language again failed to account for social reality.

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For Kuhn, modern analytic science and philosophy dealt with what the philosophers and scientists expected to have occasion to say. Kuhn seemingly backed modern empiricism way back from any creative, enlightening cutting edge. Such scientific knowledge could not gain that edge given the nature of language itself given the logical positivist empirical paradigm. Kuhn maintained that the need language fulfilled was much fuller. Knowledge was embedded in language in some unconscious, illogical, irrational, non-linguistic manner as well as through direct sensory experience. Individuals were introduced by language to similarity-dissimilarity without requiring leaning about what was being distinguished and without necessarily examining the determining criteria themselves. The individual incorporated the meaning with the terms unconsciously and then relied on the meanings as truth. Learning in this sense was a language-conditioned way of viewing the world that incorporated meanings that would be cast back upon all human experience as if true.

The fact that individuals learned distinctions, but did not examine the basic distinguishing criteria, did not make learning mystical or simply intuitive. Kuhn maintained that the knowledge of nature was tacitly embodied in whole experience and did not require any intervening abstraction of criteria or generalization in order to be grasped and understood. Man assimilated entire problem-solving paradigms as he learned language. Man then used these paradigms to know the world already known by the theorists themselves. Theorists worked within such problem-solving paradigms for longer periods until something inexplicable intervened and the paradigm shifted and finally came apart at its seams.
The progress of knowledge was not a rationally controlled matter of continual, objective translation of various groups of knowledge into a universal language that allowed assessment and selection of the most viable, reliable, complete theory grounded in empirically verified and universal language. For Kuhn, the philosophy of science required a fuller appreciation of epistemology and, more specifically, an appreciation regarding how man learned about the world. Man’s way of learning about the world, Kuhn’s ostention, was a mental self-patterning, a consumption and incorporation, an absorption and metabolizing type of cognitive process that accounted for nonlinguistic acquisition of language. Because of this, language always was value laden and expressive of man’s concern with problem solving. Learning was an unconscious, uncritical acquisition of distinctions and values inherent in the expression of problem recognition and solution inherent in a theory. Because of this, paradigm gave way to paradigm suggesting natural selection as the appropriate analog for the progression of knowledge in place of the more teleological view of the progression of knowledge over time and through history, ever moving closer and closer to the one realm of absolute, reliable, unchanging truth. Given the paradigm sifts, Kuhn points out that we must have the criteria articulated by which we will know whether knowledge is reliable or not, whether knowledge remains relevant or not, or we will not be able to judge its worth.

Dudley Shapere, another twentieth- and twenty-first-century philosopher of science, provided comment on both Feyerabend and Kuhn and their seeming slide into a relativism that left science without meaning. Feyerabend’s claim that a comparison of theories could only be accomplished on a subjective basis lead to a useless relativism.

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Feyerabend maintained that that all meanings were theory-dependent, that theories were shaped to accommodate meanings, and that all observational data were interpreted in order to be fit into theoretical propositions were also mistaken. For Shapere, the objectivity of experience and scientific experimentation were not farces. Feyerabend’s attempts to free theoretical construction from overly restrictive demands of empiricism had resulted in depriving them of all value. Shapere concluded these excessive definitions were all to characteristic of neoanalytic thought. Such critique of empiricism failed to note the real contributions to society made by these sciences. Feyerabend’s pronouncement that modern analytic philosophy and the sciences themselves held no objective truth as they claimed were too harsh, too dead-ending.

In examining Kuhn’s work, Shapere noted Kuhn’s conclusion that all scientific change was complete, arbitrary and revolutionary. Progress was arbitrary in that one paradigm replaced another only when it could assert more knowledge. However, Kuhn could not explain how theories were compared such that this claim could be recognized. Like, Feyerabend, Kuhn’s work encouraged a futile relativism due to its extreme claim that no comparison between theories was possible, to any degree. Shapere concluded that the new philosophy of science may well have something of value to offer the modern analytic world if it would overcome these extremes with more positive, consequential perspectives.

Lakatos and the History of Science

Imre Lakatos looked to the interrelationship of the history of science and the philosophical foundations of science in order to salvage an understanding of both
scientific meaning and scientific progress.

Understanding scientific progress required not just an examination of the development of scientific theory, but also of the philosophy underlying the doing of science. It was this underlying philosophy that provided the normative methodology necessary to explain the development of science, the progression from one theory to another throughout history. The rational reconstruction of the history of science, using such philosophical foundations, had to be tempered by an understanding of the historical context, the social and psychological aspects surrounding the doing of science. While the normative philosophical methodology was used to reconstruct an internal history of science, the empirical--social and psychological--knowledge was used to construct an external history. The history of science gave rise to a philosophy of science that must reconcile the internal and external in order to establish that scientific knowledge progressed rationally.

Lakatos examined the rules governing the acceptance or rejection of scientific research programs and identified three fairly straightforward logics of discovery: inductivism, conventionalism and methodological falsification. The inductionist historian recognized both factual propositions and inductive generalizations. Scientific revolutions served to reveal prior errors yielding a progression in thought toward greater and greater scientific assertibility. The inductionist did not attempt to understand or reveal why certain facts were preferred over others in the real world. That was an inquiry for those concerned with the external history of science. Some strains of inductivism were extreme in their rejection of the validity of any scientific theory that could be shown to have been tainted by external influences, by worldly concerns.
Conventionalism characterized the development of science as an enterprise that filled in the gaps among theories in order to rationalize a whole and recognizable scientific enterprise. The central scientific system developed cumulatively, gathering proven and lasting facts into the growing body of true knowledge. Conventionalism admitted that false assumptions could yield true consequences and false theories could still exhibit high predictive powers. Conventionalism faced the problem of comparing rival and potentially false theories. To remedy this flaw and counter the more classical observationalist-inductivist account of science, Karl Popper advanced his empirical *falsifiability* as the criterion for distinguishing scientific theory from non-science.

Falsifiability was paradoxical. A theory was scientific only if stated such that it could be contradicted.

A theory was invalidated if that contradictory statement could be established to be empirically true. That is, all scientific theory must be expressed such that it would be possible to make an observation that would show it to be false. It also had to present novel facts. All cows are white would be considered scientifically sound if all cows observed were white; when a non-white cow was observed, the theory was falsified. The very stating of the proposition allowed it to be tested and provided the criterion upon which it could be falsified. Popper’s theory had to be expressed in empirical terms that would allow both for its empirical validation and would constitute the empirical basis upon which it could be invalidated.

With Popper’s contribution, conventionalism became flawless for Lakatos. However, it did so by failing to explain the external realm of scientific history and then, like inductivism, failed to associate the internal with this external history of science.
Any knowledge not expressible in such language could not be considered scientific or to constitute truth. Lakatos’ own philosophy of science required the consideration of the relationship between the internal and external histories of science. Lakatos proposed, in contrast to Kuhn, that the great scientific accomplishments could be evaluated in terms of problem-shifts. Scientific revolutions resulted as one research program overtook another and moved ahead. Research programs defined problems, outlined supporting hypotheses, anticipated and explained anomalies according to a central core of assumptions. Where metaphysics was largely an external matter for conventionalists and falsificationists, it became a central matter for Lakatos. Scientific rationality and the research program methodologies were supported by an appeal to an external empirical history. A central and very intriguing notion in Lakatos’ work was that the internal history of science, of knowledge and truth, was most valuable when reconstructed through meaningful reflection. He advocated a rational reconstruction of that internal history accompanied by an explanation as to how history actually occurred. Because all history was selective and interpretative, a radically improved version did not threaten a scientific code of honesty as long as the enterprise was undertaken with integrity. Intention reigned over actuality in Lakatos’ work.

Lakatos used the history of science to explain the development of knowledge that resulted in relative truth. That is, when viewed over thousands of years, knowledge has been established to change over time, to be relative. Although established to be absolute at any one concrete time in history, few such truths have remained untouched, unaltered over all time.
Taking the truths of the present, then looking back in time to explain their evolution, could require a reconstruction and a filling in of gaps and a provision of interpretation to make them wholly comprehensible. That is, we may have thought we were doing pure, modern, analytic, objective science that would yield truth, but this has not been the case over the thousands of years of human society.

In agreement with Feyerabend and Kuhn, Lakatos explained that such a pure science is not possible given the nature of the scientist. Human learning processes were not objective in this sense, they were projective. Knowledge was relative to what man expected to be able to know, in ways he expected to be able to know it. Numerous individual and collective realities were projected onto one shared actuality. Shapere’s concern that neoanalytic philosophy had pulled the rug out from under modern analytic science appeared valid. Larry Laudan responded to the call for a normatively viable philosophy of science. Laudan agreed with Lakatos that the philosophy of science must be sensitive to the essential characteristics of scientific activity, including scientific change, while also able to explain why science has worked as well as it has throughout history. Toward that end, Laudan provided several observations.

Scientific theoretical transitions were not cumulative as commonly held. Theories were not rejected on the basis of anomalies alone or accepted on the basis of empirical confirmation alone. The focus of a theoretical transition was on conceptual, not empirical, questions. The criteria for rational scientific evaluation of theories changed over the course of history. The acceptance/rejection of theories represented a spectrum of scientific activity, which included the pursuing, and entertaining of theories.
Scientific theories themselves assumed a variety of forms that ranged from the articulation of laws to that of conceptual frameworks. The testing, comparing and evaluating of theories varied significantly. The criterion of truth and the assumption that scientific progress was a cumulative progression toward truth did not allow for a conclusion that science was rational, given history. Theory evaluation was a comparative affair that dealt with the coexistence of rival theories. Laudan’s challenge was to incorporate all of these in some viable philosophy of science.

Laudan proposed that the purpose of science was to formulate and establish theories that effectively solved problems in the real world. Scientific progress was reflected in the increased ability of theories to provide effective solutions. Science was not the search for absolute knowledge apart from the real world; it did not seek to transcend a problem to get at some absolute truth and it remained accessible to epistemological examination. Science confronted both conceptual and empirical problems.

Empirical problems could be either potential problems that lacked explanation, as solved or actual problems that made relevant claims about the world and provided viable proposed solutions, or as anomalous problems that were solved by some theory, if not the one currently under examination. In contrast, conceptual problems arose from questions about scientific theory. Questions about internal consistency, ambiguous postulates, assumptions which contradicted prevailing metaphysical assumptions, challenged associated epistemological or methodological principles.
Contradictions of the basic research principles of the theory’s own discipline, and failures of a theory to recognize its subordination to more general theories.

The solution of an empirical problem required a restatement of the problem with appropriate boundary conditions. The solution of a conceptual problem required elimination of the conceptual difficulty. The solution of both conceptual and empirical problems constituted scientific progress. Under this approach, while many theories could solve the same problem, the value or significance of the theory rested in the number of problems it resolved. Theories were representations of more basic views of the world. Changes in theories had to be assessed within this broad context, this grouping of beliefs that supported fundamental views about the world. The research tradition was itself composed of beliefs about the kinds of entities and processes that appropriately fell within its domain. A research tradition was concerned with the epistemic and methodological norms regarding how that domain was to be examined, including how theories were to be tested, how data was gathered, what problems were significant. Due to the ontological generalities of research traditions, research traditions were not directly testable in that they did not produce specific predictions and their methodologies were not direct assertions of fact.

Theories within research traditions were not necessarily consistent with one another even though they shared a basic ontological orientation and were subject to that tradition’s established methodologies. Research traditions existed to indicate what they held as uncontroversial assumptions, to identify problems within theories that needed attention, and to establish methods of data collection and methods of theory testing.
Conceptually these research traditions existed to confront any theory within a tradition that contradicted the tradition’s basic ontological and epistemological suppositions. Theories tended to be modified over time where research traditions tended to endure and provided much of the continuity noted by the history of scientific change.

A critical aim of a philosophy of science was to distinguish unreliable from reliable claims to knowledge. Laudan cautioned that it was time to abandon the notion that a philosophy of science operated on the level of distinguishing scientific from non-scientific knowledge. Whether the problem was defined in terms of physics, literary theory, philosophy or common sense, the responding theory could achieve the problem-solving status and be subject to a philosophy of science to establish its reliability. The sciences and sound knowledge were not coextensive.

**Other Analytic Perspectives on Human Action**

**Man the Machine**

Many early analytic philosophers held that questions of human action and thought were outside their domain because they were not demonstrated to be empirical questions. Instead, these ancient concepts came to fall to the new empirical psychologists and sociologists to examine. Clark Hull, an empirical psychologist, did apply many of the tenets of analytic philosophy to his own studies of human action as he searched for the basic constructional elements of purposive acts, intelligence, intuition and ethics. He maintained that, once understood, these elements could be layered conceptually into more or less complex relationships to explain the human mechanism.
That explanation would provide the descriptions of the universal atomistic elements of human being. The traditional philosophical issue of realizing the *ought* from the *is* was reframed as the behavioral problem of goal attainment.

This behavioralism relied on a reductionist, mechanistic understanding of human practices to provide explanations regarding why goals were achieved at times and not achieved at others. This understanding would allow for a reengineering of human practices and circumstantial factors in order to permit a greater success rate. Human practice became a colorless contingency model of receptor impulses. The manipulation of these impulses resulted in adaptive or maladaptive behaviors. From these basic movements and impulses, human purposive action, intelligence, insight, values, strivings and such could be derived as secondary or molar principles. Neuro-biology, socio-biology and physio-psychology are just some of the research traditions that have been intent upon discovering the more colorless movements and receptor impulses. The prior establishment of the mechanizations of human being is necessary then for establishing the secondary principals. As a result, for Hull and other empirical psychologists, human agency remained a theoretical speculation, at best, until the fundamentals could be discerned to prove existence.

The More Colorful Oxford Perspective

From the Oxford perspective, intellect, language, meaning and values did not need to be reduced to these colorless movements and receptor impulses in order to be considered worthy of study. These philosophers were not concerned either with the development of a universal language for inquiry.
They focused on the role that ideals played in achieving a rigorous, analytic clarity, and what analytic techniques would be contribute to that end.

For P.F. Strawson, an alternative to reductionism was needed for understanding concepts and conceptual categories. Strawson’s descriptive metaphysics required an understanding of language as the medium of thought. Strawson explained a central core of human thought whose categories and concepts did not change over time constituting absolute knowledge. These were commonplace to the least refined and most refined of thinkers. These were the focus of metaphysics. Human action was a fundamental, rather than secondary, concept. This human action could not be reduced farther. Man was not simply or basically mechanical. Scientific empirical analysis was supplementary to this conceptual analysis of human being. By the 1940s, philosophical psychology—philosophy of the mind—had developed based on Strawson’s work.

Also rejecting reductionism, R.S. Peters held that commonsense explanations of actions usually reflected a rule-following purposive model. Peters held Hull’s reductive model to be insufficient for explaining human action because it lacked the distinction between a reasoned explanation and a mechanistic or causal one. Peters pointed out that a mechanical cause presupposed a close connection between human movement and its cause in terms of the time and the space involved. In contrast, a reasoned explanation realized that an action could never be explored exhaustively in terms of bodily movement that was inherently confined both temporally and spatially. In fact, there were human actions that gained their significance from the very absence of any observable bodily movements, including acts of violence.
A causal explanation of human action would be doomed to the constraints of observing bodily movements alone and missing most of the intended meaning. Peters also raised the distinction between doing and happening, agency and suffering. An agent purposely doing something must be treated differently from a spectator undergoing an experience. This approach resulted in recognition of the agent-as-cause and of the subject-of-causation. This approach supported the recognition of regularities in similar events and related functional patterns as the only legitimate approach to causation. The functional correlation of variables was the key to scientific causation.

Charles Taylor examined the question of intention as it related to agency. The idea of an agent who willed some effect through action made that agent’s interpretation of the action a primary consideration for establishing the overall meaning of action. Taylor considered the range of intentional actions as the basis of all moral activity, including political, legal and social activity.

A.R. Louch held that a science of man or a science of society was not possible. He cautioned that psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science and economics would all do well to avoid the analytic models, as these models could not deal with the issues of morality that all of these traditions required. To explain observed human behavior, we must be able to judge its correspondence to the human circumstances and that entails moral explanation. Only by accessing morality can human behavior be judged as entitled or warranted. To be moral, Louch explained, was to consider one’s own actions amidst an understanding of the actions of others and establishing the entitlement to act in a certain way given these understandings.
Science may deal with what is observed or observable or the *is*—what is lasting and non-situational and is observed by the scientist-observer. Morality is based on intention attached to human action and must be evaluated upon criteria regarding socially sanctioned actions. The apprehension of the moral act is dependent upon the subject’s disclosure of intention and evaluation of that intention against society’s judgments. Moral actions are situational, transient and temporary. As such, philosophy deals with the subjective and inter-subjective realm of morality and temporal, spatial social occurrence. This human intention and human action was the realm for the philosopher not the scientist.

**Modern Analytic Philosophy and The Study of Public Administration**

**The Early Days**

As Frederick C. Mosher explained in his seminal work, *American Public Administration: Past, Present, Future*, the first hundred and so years of the practice of American Public Administration (PA) went largely unstudied. It was not until the third and fourth decades of the twentieth century that students of American PA began to look back in time for the historical roots of PA theory and practice and found them in several turn of the century writers. This mid-twentieth century rising of consciousness regarding the theory and practice of PA coincided with the rise of analytic philosophy and science and the rise of specialization based on empiricism.

Given that discussion, it is understandable that the earliest discussions of PA reflected an overwhelming identification with the emerging applied sciences and the promises they held for an ultimate and final truth that would transform empirical reality.
The empirical psychological and sociological studies were developing a promising model of man based on more mechanistic views of human individuals and their social organizations. And, higher education itself, the home of early PA students, too took on the flavor of this analytic empiricism.\(^9\)

By accepting applied science as its model, PA concentrated its self-awareness on PA practices. This was not a self-awareness of “doing politics or governmental administration” in an Aristotelian sense or the “making of a material political/economic reality” in any Marxist sense or the self-conscious governmental action or “praxis” in terms Duns Scotus would have encouraged. Instead, given the large hold empiricism and its derivatives held on American education, the study and understanding of American PA was conceived as more of a technical-procedural matter. Procedural techniques were derived from experience and re-employed to ensure accurate repetition of practices.

These techniques were not theoretically organized or analyzed for their truth in promoting public policies, their reliability or the meanings they attached to public policy implementation. They were conceived as value-free, neutral means to the ends of public policy. PA was assumed to be a highly instrumental, value-free, procedural means to the end of government. Public policy emerged as self-evident truth that was handed as accomplished fact to administrators to carry out. The carrying out was narrowly boundaried in terms of efficiency and economy of implementation. These were actions without reference to the values within the policy or government itself. PA was the instrumental component of meeting the end of government.\(^10\)

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\(^10\) Ibid., p 4.
This lack of a set of general and coherent statements about American PA practice derived largely from the general lack of epistemological and ontological discussion that was pervasive across developing professions during the early to mid-twentieth century. In addition, there was a lack of any methodological context that would have ensured the critical and systematic organization of ideas to support the cultivation of PA. There was a marked absence of the theoretical and practical richness sought by Peirce and Dewey that would have required PA to look beyond itself as instrument to a critique of policy substance within the overall context of the extended republic. Instead, PA was the study of the distinctly situational, concrete and the particular. Unfortunately, the historic politics and the ethics of turn-of-the-century federal administration—in reality and practice—were distinctly corrupt.

Dealing with the abuses of government put the initial self-consciousness of American PA on a distinctly defensive and negative footing. These characterizations persist. At the base of this negativism, was the political patronage that had culminated in a public denouncement of federal administration during Grant’s administration. The political leaders themselves elegantly and ironically sidestepped much of the responsibility, leaving the politically appointed administrators to accept the blame. The conceptual challenge was similar to that faced by many philosophers through the ages as discussed in the last chapter. How to preserve what appears to be working, in this case the republic itself, and leave behind what was not, in this case the administration of that republic. The solution too should be familiar.

First, the politics of the state and the development of public policies conceptually were distinguished from the administration of these policies.
Second, administrative actions were characterized as derivative. Third, administration was condemned as failing to fulfill its instrumental nature. Concretely and historically, the administration of U.S. Grant provided the final blow to the patronage system of administration and provided the historical impetus for significant governmental reforms that took place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The formation of the Civil Service Report League in 1881 and the passage of the Pendleton Act in 1883 signaled a reorientation in the federal government around greater integrity, and increased efficiency and economy across the administration of public policies.\(^{11}\) Woodrow Wilson underscored this concern in his classic article, “The Study of Administration.”\(^ {12}\) Those looking to PA to become a laudable instrument of public policy, looked to Wilson as a founding father for American PA.

In keeping with the historical reform spirit, Wilson called for a patterning of governmental procedures after the successful private industrial business practices. Wilson envisioned a politically neutral, highly efficient and professional cadre of public servants that could implement the policies developed by elected officials without affecting their content. Administrative integrity would be defined in terms of the economy and efficiency of standard operating procedures. PA scholar Robert Denhardt characterizes the normative dimension of early American PA as one of instrumental-managerial efficiencies.\(^ {13}\)

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Frank Goodnow, a Wilson contemporary, followed Wilson’s politics/administration dichotomy when he called for democratic government with its expression of the will of the state through its elected officials. The execution of this will was to be accomplished by the administration.\textsuperscript{14} Integrity achieved by PA was the natural byproduct of efficiency and economy in the value-free implementation of public policy. As with private industrial management, the most reliable administration was the administration that could deliver management’s will in the most efficient and economical manner.

Orion White, Jr., described the primary question for early PA as not being about man’s nature or what man was capable of knowing about the world, but how man could be conceptualized so as to allow for an optimization of efficiency and economy.\textsuperscript{15} This was not a question of ontology but a question of instrumental method or technique that lent itself well to modern analytic psychology’s preoccupation with goal optimization. Therefore, early PA discussions reflected this instrumental perspective and looked to modern management theory for delivering administrative goals in the most efficient manner.

\textbf{The Classical Period of Management Theory}

The effects of Wilson’s formal theoretical separation of politics from administration had resulted from a public critique of government administration gone wrong.

\textsuperscript{14} See Frank Goodnow, \textit{Policy and Administration} (New York: Macmillan, 1900).
Wilson and others realized that such publicly recognized corruption required corrective action, some introduction, at the minimum, of standards of conduct into PA practice.

Robert Denhardt summarized the longer-range effects of this historic separation:

If politics could be separated from administration, it was only logical to assume that the same lessons learned by students of management in the private sector could be applied to administration in the public sector….a generic approach to management….regardless of its setting…students of public administration would… seek scientific principles of administrative management that would assist in attaining organization efficiency.16

The first decades of the twentieth century then yielded research designed to produce a more scientific approach to practicing PA. This period was marked by the problem-solving approach of the bureau or governmental research movement. There was an emergence of professional, public interest minded associations like the infamous 1313 and by discussions of the powerful and proven tenets of scientific management.17 The difficulties faced by the federal government during the 1920s and 1930s reflected the culmination of the classic age of public administration. Rowland Egger characterized this as an age of intense orthodoxy. This was not orthodoxy grounded in doctrine or belief. Instead, this was an orthodoxy grounded in harassments of a discipline so focused on meeting immediate needs that it had little energy left for substantive theorizing,18 much less any notions of praxis.

PA coupled this theoretically lethargic period with a less demanding and accepted empirical view of human action itself. Human action during this classic management period was perceived as stereotypical, habitual responses to the apparenty of facts in any given situation.

16 Denhardt, 1984, pp. 51-52.
The work of more dynamic and humanistic social theorists was largely ignored and remains ignored in today’s organizations. For example, the brilliant and proven organizational consultant, Mary Parker Follett, was ignored despite more empirical bottom dollar line evidence that her approaches worked.\textsuperscript{19} Instead, classicalists insisted on defining human organizations in terms of the problems that could be identified for resolution. That is, situational needs presented themselves in a manner that revealed the needed reaction. This obviousness eliminated the need for any explanatory, theoretical discussion on which to base needed action. This conceptualization of PA obviated the need for a shared theoretical basis for PA practice, other than the mechanistic model’s requirement for increased economy and efficiency.

**The New Deal Era of Management Theory**

The social and economic realities of the first part of the twentieth century applied pressures to the federal government resulting in a need to move the administration of government beyond measures of efficiency alone. President Roosevelt, in trying to respond to this historic materialism, proposed his first and second New Deal policies. Federal administration grew dramatically during these years and enlarged its mission beyond efficiency to delivering innovation in agency missions, streamlined and meaningful and citizen-focused services, corresponding changes in administrative procedures to accomplish this new found public interest, and significantly expanded administrative spheres of influence.

\textsuperscript{19} I do not analyze Follett’s work in this discussion; however, Follett’s work evidences assumptions about human beings in collectives that resonate with the work of Orion White and Michael Harmon whose work is discussed here in depth. She was especially perception in her distinctions between coercive power and participative decisions in human organizations and the consequences this holds for management theories.
The Executive mandate to agency heads was the call to perform, to act, to deliver on changes in the citizens’ lives. “Top management was experimental, innovative, ad hoc and frequently impromptu; it had to be.”

Tied to the success of the New Deal administration was the recruitment of qualified personnel. Academic training was scrutinized during this search, as was the existing civil service. Patterned after the classical management model, scientific management theories abounded. Here the classical discussions founded on increased efficiencies continued to abound. These were discussions about traditional staff functions. Planning, personnel rules, budgeting, procurement, accounting, and how to get more with less were typical. All of these assumed a view of man as instrument within the greater organizational leviathan and the overwhelming and exclusive need to improve production and profit.

Frederick Taylor’s contributions of scientific management to industrial production line economies were applied across organizations, including public service. The work of such management theorists as Max Weber, Mary Parker Follet, Luther Gulick, Lyndall Urwick, Chester Barnard, Robert Merton, V.O. Key, and F.J. Roethlisberger also would contribute within this instrumental framework. Some stretched instrumentalism to recognize a spectrum of human needs fulfilled in organizations while others focused on the recognition and development of exceptional human traits, including leadership.

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20 Ibid., p. 62.
During the 1930s, the classical perspective was broadened with Carl Friederich and Taylor Cole introducing the question of political responsibility. The 1937 President’s Report on Administrative Management—the Brownlow Report—stressed the relationship of PA to public values. Pendleton Herring urged the integration of interest group perspectives into public policy discussions. William E. Mosher asserted that public administration was itself a recognizable discipline with methods that were learnable and teachable. John Gaus, Leonard D. White and Marshall Dimock lectured on the needs for long-term planning in policy areas, on the inadequacies of training programs for administrators and on the need for an end to orthodoxy.

The second New Deal produced the Reorganization Act of 1939. With it came the establishment of departmental personnel offices to act in conjunction with the Civil Service Commission, the establishment of the American Society for Public Administration, and the establishment of an in-house organization management research unit within the Executive Department. Some fifteen universities established training programs in PA closely aligned with federal needs assessments.

Toward the end of the second New Deal, the scientific principles approach to PA came under close examination. Some scholars began to reconsider the adequacy of scientific management to provide the exclusive foundation for PA practices.
Others continued to remain focused on the prior instrumental public management perspectives. The critique of PA and the first sense of self-consciousness were established. W.F. Willoughby’s work, later developed by E.O. Stene, upheld scientific principles despite the protests of scholars like A.B. Hall and Leonard D. White. Herman Finer challenged Friedrich and Cole on their introduction of the question of political responsibility into PA. During this time, advances in empiricism added insight into management methods and techniques that yielded tangible and sought after results. The hold of such classical management theory over PA remained strong, as it does today. However, again concrete historical reality presented PA with a second public challenge.

World War II established the fallacy of the politics/administration dichotomy on a global level. PA could not simply claim to carry out public policy and accept no responsibility for the policies themselves or their effects in the real world. A sense of integrity in governmental administration, not exclusively associated with instrumental efficiency and economy alone, was required. Fritz Morstein Marx editing of the 1946 text, Elements of Public Administration, illustrated the interrelatedness of policy and administration. Paul H. Appleby focused PA discussions on policy processes within the context of interest-group pluralism.

Appleby and Marx, in opposition to the Wilson-Goodnow classical tradition, asserted the distinction between public and private administration. The very publicness of PA defined its intrinsic nature. To wash out this publicness would be to wash out the democratic system itself.²⁷

Orion White, Jr., describes the 1940s as the period during which PA bifurcated into the traditionalists who followed Appleby, while retaining faith in Gulick and Urwick’s classical principles, and the modernists who followed Herbert Simon into rational, applied science and the continuation of instrumental managerial organizational theory.

Traditionalists and Modernists

While acknowledging the classical principles, traditionalists embraced the public interest as their key theoretical concept. The challenge was the management of the gap that resulted between the theoretical ideal of pluralism and its historical, material practice. Traditionalists like Norton Long, Robert Dahl and Dwight Waldo developed this normative concern. For Long, that concern included an expanded place for constitutional systems, politics and the organizational aspects of PA. For Dahl, the concern included the impossibility of escaping from normative consequences of efficiency and economy, the importance of understanding human behavior, and the relationship of public administration to its social setting, its concrete and historical context.

To Waldo, this concern resulted in the formal rejection of the classical PA claim of value-free or neutral efficiency and economy and the need to integrate democratic values into PA.\textsuperscript{28}

The traditionalists looked to intuitive cognitive processes for the accomplishment of the public interest. Theory was established as moral principles or assumptions to be applied in the world through human action. Theory was the normative foundation for practice. PA centered on a consolidation and centralization of ideas about PA practice, including professionalization. The reliance on intuition led as well to a idealization, a rationalization of action, via theory, that would guide future actions. This theory could not address the documented observations of the modernists. PA itself suffered an inability to account for both observed and prescribed action with one united theoretical basis.\textsuperscript{29}

In contrast, modernists followed Simon in his rational applied science of organization. From this tradition came the highly successful human relations approach to management. A.H. Maslow, Douglas McGregor and Frederick Herzberg produced theories of human motivation of great use to management. Philip Selznick provided his theories of cooptation also of great explanatory value. Chris Argyris focused on many aspects of human behavior within complex organizational settings.\textsuperscript{30}


\textsuperscript{29} White, Jr., Summer Lecture, Center for Public Administration & Policy, Virginia Tech, 1983.

For modernists, theory was empirically accurate analysis that yielded an explanation of prior action and predicted future action. Action was conceptualized as goal-oriented activity within a problem-solving world view. Action was instrumental and management oriented. Research within this tradition benefited from their strong relationships to the emerging analytic social sciences. These sciences were supported by logical positivism and logical empiricism and justified by modern analytic philosophy.

Modernists looked to these empirical perspectives to reveal the ontology of human organization. Modern organizational managers focused on defining the structural and functional needs of their organizations and the development of interrelated position descriptions that would act together to yield sought after products. Among the desired traits of modern managers was the ability to match the right people to the right position to set the organization into motion. Organizational failures resulted from mismatches.

Orion White noted that the three recognizable PA research movements—classical, traditional and modernist—provided contrasting approaches to understanding PA. However, he noted that at their basis, they all shared a positive science model of theory and action. And, they shared a common goal oriented approach in trying “to create and maintain administrative authority.” From this basic and fundamental misperception regarding human action and knowledge, White also noted the setting in among PA practitioners of a certain “esoteric confusion.” PA Practitioners studying the multitude of intuitive-empirical models and voluminous data could not recognize their own beings, much use such information to inform their practices.31


31 White, Jr., 1973, p.57.
In the early 1970s, his seminal article, “The Concept of Administrative Praxis,” White pointed to the need to redefine the relationship of human theory to practice. Although a great deal had been written on the topic, White pointed out that the need for increased understanding of this relationship remained a “traditional bane” of PA.32 Against the backdrop of several thousand years of philosophical discussion, White’s observation appears warranted. This constitutes the founding of the new PA.

**Conclusion**

The introduction of the concepts of praxis and praxiology into modern PA constituted the founding of PA as a self conscious theory and practice. By bringing the discussions of ancient philosophy together with discussions of analytic science, the PA knowledge base was expanded dramatically. Some fifty years later, it remains still for committed scholars to carry these discussions forward in the midst of the ever popular and dominant analytic sciences and philosophies and the escalation of information at the level of techniques.

To examine the components of the new PA, it first is necessary to examine closely the contributions of several enlightened PA scholars. When integrated, their work provides the unified foundation necessary to focus energies on the continual improvement of both PA theory and practices. The next chapter examines the work of preeminent PA social-organizational theorists Orion White, Jr., Michael Harmon, Robert Denhardt and Bayard Catron. With the addition of John Rohr’s political theory, the pentagonal foundation for American Public Administration is completed.

32 White, Jr., p.55.
CHAPTER 3
THE FOUNDING OF AMERICAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
PRAXIS AND PRAXIOLOGY

Introduction

Imre Lakatos has explained that true knowledge requires examination of the history of knowledge, the philosophical foundations of knowledge, and then an examination of the interrelationship between these. An understanding of both is needed for salvaging an understanding of the meaning of the knowledge itself and of knowledge as historical human progress. This is an examination of the development of theory and of the ontological assumptions and values underlying the theorizing. Lakatos points out that it is the underlying philosophy that provides the normative methodology necessary to explain the development of theory, as well as the human progression from one theory to another throughout history. The rational reconstruction of the history of knowledge, using such philosophical foundations, had to be tempered by an understanding of the historical context, the social and psychological aspects surrounding the discovery of knowledge. In this sense, civilizations rewrite prior history and historical understandings.
Societies, communities, organizations look back over history in light of newly gained or current understandings of truth. These notions of truth are based on current value systems, normative foundations. These are used to look back over history to reveal the prior biases or historical value preferences and to separate what may be reality from meanings attached to those realities to the extent possible. We use current values to reinterpret historical information or theory through lenses we believe to be freer of such biases. In this sense, learning, in its longest historical material sense, entails a process of reflection that retroactively corrects prior interpretations and with these, at time the prior social intentionality, attached to what has been learned. This process is essential to any belief that civilization is progressing, or coming closer to a truer understanding of the world over time. We learn over time that what we may have intended according to social values may not be what we ended up accomplishing according to those very values. Or, at times sadly, we come to understand that prior beliefs are basically mistaken and need to be abolished in order for our notions of social progression toward a greater global humanity to be realized. In the midst of this endeavor, remains the notion that the very language we use to communicate our knowing is itself grounded in rarely examined ontological values about which our historical collectives have considered it worthwhile to discuss and know and share with one another. Miami has not had need of a language that has many words for snow; Fairbanks, on the other hand, has. When we finally are able to understand how snow affects tropical winds, and vice versa, we are in for a dramatic shift in language constructs. Modern science is at this time facing just sense a challenge. Social theory, much more subtly, is as well.
Normative philosophical methodology is used then to reconstruct an internal history of knowledge. Empirical—social and psychological—knowledge is used to construct an external history. The history of knowledge gives way to a philosophy of knowledge that must reconcile the internal and external in order to establish that knowledge progressed. The examination of historical context must include examination of the basic concepts that drove mankind’s knowing within a particular time and place.

**Critical Philosophical Foundations**

We must then back beyond modern analytic philosophy to continue forward toward modern a sense of praxis and praxiology for American Public Administration (PA). Looking back first, then, to Aristotle, the values of honor and virtue were significant in his theoretical, political constructs. He detected these values and he promoted these values in lives, in human actions, dominated by what he discerned as the human element focused on the here and now, and dedicated to the purposive doing of politics, of governing. But these elements were related to the human, and not the divine, in man kind.

For Zeno, it was essential to connect a theory of such values to daily life. It was essential for mankind to comprehend or consciously understand that virtue and honor reflected both the divine and human elements of human being. That man could obtain a notion of lasting truth in one tangible, concrete daily existence. Man did not have to live forever on earth in order to discern lasting truth. Man certainly should not attempt to choose between these elements of the concrete and the lasting.
Instead, man kinds’ and man’s quest was entailed in combining virtue and honor, lasting truths recognizable through all ages, into a set of behaviors in a historical material here and now existence. Man could both contemplate the lasting and the divine and live in a real world of activity, integrating his learning to inform both his contemplation and his doing. Zeno judged the man able to acquire reasoned, conjectural knowledge and practical skills and experiences to become the noble man. Zeno did still retain a sense of discerning what was honorable from “out there” and transplanting that notion into daily life.

Cicero’s work is essential to a notion of modern virtue and honor as he taught that the noble and divine life was one of living in harmony with the lasting truths of nature—nature revealed and contained the cosmic truths. Cicero is essential to any notion of PA is we agree that our State is founded on lasting notions of what it means to be civilized, of the relationship of the State to individual being. Cicero was compelled to bring the object of contemplation down from the heavens into the natural, material world of mankind. He urged man to learn about lasting truths contained in his immediate material reality. His prudent man used lasting knowledge to inform practice that, in turn, tested and validated knowledge.

For Seneca, the virtuous man was the informed, proficient man—the man that contemplated and acted—the man that theorized and practiced. American Public Administrative praxis relies on an understanding of what is noble and virtuous because such praxis must realize the values of the constitutional state.
Avicenna explained that while theorizing, man generated theoretical knowledge as he generalized lessons learned across his experiences. These generalizations were based on experiential knowledge of practicing that used knowledge in a material world. Therefore, practical knowledge had a direct and powerful affect on human action in the material world. Practical knowledge was true, but not lasting due to its grounding in changing, everyday reality. Resulting theoretical generalizations were not as explicit or exact as practical actions are, but still they served a vital function in society, in history. Theorizing, generalizing knowledge from experiences, strengthens man’s intellectual faculties. This was a valuable end, in and of itself. This notion is basic to ensuring praxiology is valued in terms expanding intellectual capabilities to be able to look backwards and realize prior biases and how these may have constrained the ongoing development of our constitutional state.

Individual theorizing resulted in valuable generalizations that served to strengthen intelligence across human beings at the level of society, across history. Cultures could be more advanced because of their access to generalizations subjected in turn to additional examination and generalization across time and space.

Hugh of St. Victor cautioned mankind about unquestioned acceptance of the generalizations and their medium, language. Such knowledge, though generalized across specific experiences, still remained historically rooted in language. Hugh of St. Victor’s logica explained how basic cultural knowledge and values were embodied in language and the discursive arts. Hugh of St. Victor explained that because language represented culturally agreed upon conceptual formats with inherent assumptions and values, it could not help but bias perception.
Perceptions embody understanding and expression of generalizations inherent in language, in theory. PA theory inherently communicates and reinforces the values and biases and perceptions inherent in the very terms and structures that are used to express it. Language cannot help but imprint its material time and place in history upon the knowledge it captures and seeks to explain.

Duns Scotus explained that praxis was that human activity capable of conforming to prior intellectualization, to prior knowledge and to prior developed human faculties or intelligence. Praxis could be judged right or wrong in terms of its conformance to what was intended. Many human practices were simply acts of a nonintellectual human faculty, simply habits or behaviors, extra-ethical behaviors. In contrast, a purposeful focusing of intellectual faculties toward the practical realm to inform actions elevated human acting to the level of praxis. Only such praxis could yield virtue and morality. It was left to Marx to explain how knowledge resulting from generalizations could be drawn out from the material, historical biases of the language used to grasp and share it.

When we purposefully set out to develop a praxiology and a praxis, we must attend to the very concepts and values we are intending to reinforce and ensure these are obvious in our discussions.

Marx’s dialectical materialism comes into play in its power to realize that the generalizations come with embedded assumptions and accompanying value structures. Language is the lens used to frame and understand the world around us. Series of specific experiences can be accumulated and gathered together in the mind and then shifted into culturally shared constructs that then can be used to inform future actions.
These actions test the validity of the knowledge in every day life situations and refine that content. However, alongside this motion is the development of human faculties, of human intelligence and understanding. Human faculties also can reflect back on human knowledge and critique the content and the formats. Human intelligence is capable of critical self reflexivity. Human intelligence—reason—can critique assumptions and values and resulting knowledge constructs. For Marx, Hegelianism could not be considered a philosophy capable of transforming the world before it underwent critique. Critique was essential to purge philosophy of any internal contradictions. Hegelianism had to be able to demonstrate—through surviving this critique—that it had a claim to absolute knowledge. This absolute knowledge included the realm of thought and concrete social-material reality. At that point, Hegelianism could be considered to be capable of transforming that material reality. Any body of knowledge had to be subjected to radical critique before it could be considered worthy of transforming reality, of being enacted.

Finally, American PA

This chapter then examines the work of several American Public Administration (PA) scholars who sought to move discussions of PA praxis and praxiology out from under the weight of dominant technical-instrumental managerialism where it had become stifled by managerialism’s inherent contradictions and values regarding individual and collective human being and acting. These theorists sought to subject logical empiricism to radical critique in order to reveal the inherently narrowly and unrealistic assumptions and values regarding individual and collective being.
They spoke to PA during the last quarter century, while modern analytic empiricism dominated discussions of American Public Administration. These scholars were committed to a much fuller and meaningful notion of both human thinking and acting, and inter-personal theorizing and practicing. They sought to breathe life back into individual and collective being and actions. They were committed to a notion of human potential and the potential of the social world found in the ancient philosophical traditions. They began with their resuscitation with critiques of logical positivisms and the assumptions made about human acting and thinking, collective knowledge and practices.

The Founding of American PA

Orion White, Michael Harmon, Robert Denhardt and Bayrd Catron brought back into discussions of PA theory the conceptualization of man and mankind as inherently alive, dynamic, thoughtful, and capable of purposeful actions and reflective thought. These are needed foundations for the possibility of reestablishing the nobility of public administration. Nobility requires purposeful action and reflexive thought. Characteristic of these PA scholars was their critique of modern analytic science that, in turn, set the foundation for their return to ancient philosophical traditions. They looked to these traditional discussions to infuse PA with a fuller sense of its mission and responsibility. Their work held promise for man and mankind in all types of organizations, including the administrative state. Also intrinsic to their work was the assumption that human being, human organizations, social reality, all changed over the course of history. Further, individual and collective being are subject to humanly authored, purposeful change. This included the collectives that administered the state.
This acceptance of change and the potential for purposeful change challenged the modern analytic managerial emphasis on organizational stasis and its focus on authoritative controls directed toward preserving a status quo. This dynamic model of social reality sought to bring about the realization, the Marxist realization, that the point was not so much to change the world; the point was that the world did change. Knowing this, mankind could contribute to the shaping and the timing of change. And this placed a high value on both creativity and change processes rather than on stasis and status quo. This chapter brings together these social theorists’ views on man and the social world as a foundation for a more valid and reliable discussion of praxis and praxiology. They shared these central concerns while each contributed individually to a fuller conceptualization of administrative action and awakening of minds to these concepts.

Where these critical social theorists gallantly and successful established the need for a normative foundation that reflected human potential and intelligence for PA, they alone could not provide a distinctly American normative foundation for American Public Administrative study or informed practices. The work of John Rohr, the fifth and essential cavalier, was needed to fill this void and complete the founding of self-conscious, normative American Public Administration praxis and praxiology during the late twentieth century. Rohr provided the distinctly political value orientation through his analysis of the constitutional state being administered.33

33 It should be noted at the onset of this discussion that the critiques offered here were undertaken to reveal the absence of recognition regarding the full capacity and potential associated with individual human beings and human collectives. This was a lack of appreciation regarding the individual and collective human potential to act self consciously and to be able to critically reflect back on actions and the consequences of such actions and then to express the gained understanding in the form of theory or knowledge that can be used to guide future actions. The point of these theorists here is to establish that such a lack ensures the traditional PA literature will not be up to administering the State. For a somewhat different interpretation of such critiques, see Laurence E. Lynn, Jr., “The Myth of the Bureaucratic Paradigm…,” Public Administration Review, Mar/Apr 2001. Lynn appears to be concerned that much of
White’s Counter-Model

As noted in the last chapter, Orion White, Jr. observed that the classical, traditional and modernist phases in the development of American Public Administration (PA) theory all shared the positivist scientific perspective. White pointed out the consequences of the positivist assumptions and subsequent value constructs in his seminal article, “The Concept of Administrative Praxis.”34 Among these assumptions, was the belief that time was linear with sequential, causal events ordered toward some purpose. This was an ontology preoccupied with rationalism, with the design of the predictable, with maintaining a status quo to support and endow predictability. New experiences, irrationalities, creativity unchained were abhorred because they failed to follow the universal rules/laws of social-economic-political behaviors that kept the real world intact. Any aberrations required explanation. For White, this resulted in an organizational reality where “experience is assimilated through the process of reification, where sense impressions are evaluated and objectified.”35 White explained that the classical, traditional and modern PA traditions all assumed that knowledge was true, eternal and static. Science was a body of knowledge that human beings used in temporary, problematic situations to regain their equilibrium, to return to the proper, static state. Change, movement and process were remedial; they were utilized in order to restore organizations, like administrative bodies, to their proper, true, eternal, static states.

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the critique of the traditional literature lacks respect for the Constitution and the consequent structures, authorities and workings of the resulting extended republic. I share this bottom line while contending the critiques are necessary to ensuring the human potential necessary to govern well.

34 White, Jr., 1973.
These underpinnings were most visible in the modernist tradition with its basic approach to theory as the analytic understanding of human actions as instrumental attempts to resolve a series of problematic situations.

For the modernist, theoretical analysis revealed problem solutions. These solutions were translated into goal statements. The achievement of these solution-oriented goals was achieved through instrumentally conceived actions. Human action was conceived as a linear process with the ultimate goal being a return to a situation that was no longer problematic. Action was utilized by individuals and groups to move them directly from a problematic situation—through the development of a theoretically conceived solution—back to the normal state of equilibrium that was marked by the absence of problems. When a problem was recognized, it had to be resolved so the status quo could be restored. The development of a theoretical solution began with the gathering of empirical data, information gathered through the senses, and analyzed rationally to produce the desired solution. One determined whether one was within a normal state or a problematic state by assessing empirically if a problem existed to be resolved. If there was a lack of problems, then the static, normal state was soundly in place. White concluded that the solution was the paramount contribution of positivist theory.

This solution oriented perspective viewed time as linear with an assumption that purposeful action was action committed to a predictable end, planned action. The end result is a causal relationship in which action is rationalized and becomes simply data. When the causal relationship is imposed on all human action, then human action becomes little more than an instrument within a plan to reach a desired goal.
Because “experience is assimilated through the process of reification, one will look more and more to “data” (the more quantified the better) as the means of defining and evaluating action. Hence, action becomes data.”36 Living then was the experience of moving from one solution to another as one problem after another was solved. In this progression, security was valued over insecurity, stability over change.

Postindustrial society, with its reliance on systems, emphasized maintaining stability to such an extreme that even personal socialization processes were guided through formalized external policies. As technological innovations provided solutions to industrial problems, individuals and institutions became the primary sources of stability factors for emerging postindustrial society. In order to control these stability factors to ensure there are no disruptions in social equilibrium, organic human relationships had to be analytically explained and made predictable. The variables with social situations had to be specified and interactions among them brought into testable hypothetical arrangements, then tested, and then a theory realized that could be used to predict and control behaviors in order to bring about the desired continuation of social stasis. In the positivist model, what human beings did, as represented by empirical observations as to how they behaved, was dependent upon the sensing and thinking of the observer. Observational data was accumulated and theoretically organized. Not only did human action become empirical data, the organized data became the theory for future problem detection and solution. Both inter subjectivity and human intimacy became data. The more one could say about another and others, the more knowledgeable one appeared.

Knowledge produced influence.

36 Ibid., p. 63.
The knowledgeable influence wielded the opportunity to be viewed by others as an authority. Privacy about oneself or others was an enigma, an individual contradiction of psychocultural reality. This represented one potential source of a deconstruction of modern psychocultural values. Detection was replaced by prevention whenever possible through directed, controlled planning efforts. Social life became the incarnation of positive science. Individual behavior could be explained and made predictable through social interventions. Social equilibrium became stabilized as individual behavior was institutionalized, and then reified and made more predictable. Once predictable, the social world became manageable through the maintenance of meaning structures held in place by authority structures.

The (Hegelian) dream of imposing a rational conceptualization upon the social world was exceeded by the (Marxist) actualization of a rational society. Knowledge and revelations about this actualized rationalized world was the normative basis of the positivist science model. The maintenance of objectivity, of value-free data and of logical analytic reasoning was its moral imperative. Though positive science did not recognize this normative foundation for its ontology, epistemology, methodology and techniques, it projected this set of values onto all aspects of the modern, postindustrial material world. A primary difficulty with conceptualizing action in terms of this logical empirical model was the basic commitment to stability as ontology. The maintenance of the stable state was dependent upon administrative authority. Therefore, White proposed a counter model.

White proposed time in terms of a holistic here and now, “the present.” Space became multi-dimensional with many synchronous planes, “as diffuse.”
And, most critically, relationships became “synchronous rather than causal.” Generalizations would give way to situation specific understanding, “explainable only in the context of a single moment.” The single moment becomes the orientation for understanding simultaneous events that go to comprise it: “the moment is made up of events which occur together rather than as a result of each other.”

This counter-model reorients understanding to a subjective and inter-subjective basis and presents knowing or understanding “as essentially personal and hence best transferable through empathy. The ontology of this view would be movement and change rather than stasis.”37 The counter-model stressed “disproof rather than positive proof, openendedness, and community.” Change became the normative foundation for organizations. Instead of preserving the status quo, organizations were viewed as in need of change to accommodate the true nature of individual and collective human being, as they changed over time.

White explained that he was not attacking “a particular epistemological position….Rather what is being discussed is a deeply rooted psychocultural pattern of long standing and great power (Geiger, 1967).”38 The great power was found in the recognition of creativity and commitment over control and authority. Organic processes were recognized and developed as interactive relationships based upon commitment, not in need of replacement by social interventions that would guarantee stability and stasis. The focus of the heterodoxy was placed on the people in situations, not on an external standard of authority.

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37 Ibid., p. 66.
The reification of authoritative standards gave way to the development of trust in and commitment to interactive relationships:

The alternative model shows man’s motives to be synergistic or mutually reinforcing. One needs others for the discovery of his identity….And the other must be a partner, not an object. Hence, dominance relations (where the subordinate becomes a projection of the superordinate) do not further finding one’s self.39

Knowledge sought was self-knowledge, not some absolute, universal knowledge sought by positive science. This signaled a reorientation away from the prior emphasis on the historical development of mankind as collective toward the immediate development of current, actual individuals. The needs of the existential self were no longer waived aside by history. To discover individual identity in synergistic interrelationships required an integration of intuiting and sensing, feeling and thinking, and unconsciousness and consciousness. Theory that was derived from only a part of such integrated relationships would be partial, incomplete and faulty. Theory could best be understood, according to White, as a discussion—complete with data—that made a value coherent. Theory actually did not address objective facts; theory addressed actual values. Administrators actually did not act in order to solve problems, secure stability or support external authority patterns. Administrators actually and continually faced immediate moral choices between actual, not ideal, alternative values:

Values are not truly “available” when put in the form of ideals. Availability means that the value seems practicable. And for practicability, a theory, replete with date, must be attached to the value. Theory is valuable for its mobilizing effect—it makes a value coherent. It helps the administrator secure the cooperation of others he needs to implement the value.40

39 Ibid., p. 78.
40 Ibid., p. 83.
White contended that a coherent theory revealed and mobilized plausible action. Theoretical research was action oriented. The work of Michael Polyani contributed to this perspective. Polanyi characterized theory as a frame on reality, as a way to organize reality conceptually, so that one could perceive action inherent in a framed situation. Reality was framed much like a painting was framed. The frame on a painting served to relate brush strokes to one another to present an integral reality to the viewer. The perception of reality was dependent on that frame that held dynamic reality in place so it may be viewed in a stabilized fashion such that action could be perceived within that framed situation. Theory-as-frame was a temporary, heuristic, unreal and unnatural freezing of the flux of human experience. Action informed by theory became tentative, exploratory and heuristic. The appropriateness of action depended upon reference to that temporarily placed frame or theory; correspondingly, ethics were situational. Action was a learning-by-doing source of knowledge and future theory. Reality was interpretation derived from the temporary framing of the immediate situation. This framing enabled man to comprehend a situation immediately and intelligently and to act within it. Such action required a short feedback loop that allowed information exchanges prior to judgment and action. All individuals were involved in the immediacy of the proverbial human learning experience.41

White explained that theory could be brought into action only through a commitment to do so. As Marx had pointed out, the realization of knowledge in the material world did not just happen. A commitment to bring the greatest potential knowledge into a situation would take the commitment to ways of knowing beyond sensory and empirical data.

The development of the human capacity for intuition and feeling in addition to these was essential in the acting out of full commitment. In a specific situation, intuition and feeling overcame the bias of theory as a generalized statement. For White, it was “the use of intuition and feeling which we tend to call the assumption of responsibility.”

The assumption of responsibility was proactive; it was an active, intentional commitment to bringing values into administrative choice that was acted out through the recognition of the human capacity for intuition and feeling. This was an assumption of responsibility for revealing the values we already quite naturally assume in our intuitive and emotive capacities.

This also was a proactive responsibility that looked to move beyond a constrained logical empirical view of theory as resulting from conscious sensing and thinking exclusively, toward a view of theory as situation emergent via intuition—sensing, feeling—thinking, unconsciousness—conscious perceiving:

Responsibility means, in this sense, moving beyond the safety of the cognitive thinking—sensing theory and acting in the dark of the moment, where we know that outcomes are not totally predictable and that justice is not knowable. It is intuition and feeling that guide us, mysteriously, through this darkness.

If justice was not knowable in the immediacy of the present, then authority structures that were held in place through intricate patterns of accountability—patterns that supposedly ensure the apparentness of wrongdoing and the assignment of blame through retroactive evaluation processes—did not necessarily result in justice. Accountability was the retroactive acceptance of the retroactive assignment of blame.

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42 White, Jr., p. 83.
43 Ibid., pp. 83-84.
Accountability was balanced by responsibility as the proactive commitment to action in the face of the existential aspects that the immediacy of situations presented. It was this sense of responsibility and commitment that allowed for authentic symbolic exchange. The exchange became the basis for “deciding what to do next” in any situation.

Symbolic exchange was the medium for sociality. It replaced the absolute, authoritative theory that viewed action as an instrumental means for ameliorating a problematic lack of equilibrium. In place of these positivist notions, symbolic exchange was the context of the immediate situation that looked to all affected for the creation of communal action. Such symbolic exchange entailed a recognition and acceptance of all the tension born of the uncertainty in the immediacy of human affairs. The tension is unavoidable. Because language is a collection of symbols and symbolic structures, parties using a symbol it must agree to a definition. Such definition or meaning was found “somewhere between the poles of complete ambiguity and complete perspicuity. This is only to say, of course, that the symbol must be interesting.44

The notion of human potential is paramount in the counter-model. White reflects Jung and others in positing a highly structured unconscious, which served as “the central locus for the psychodynamics of finding one’s identity.” Accordingly,

[m]an is a natural organism, integrated in his feeling and intellect (Perls, 1969; Fagan and Shepard, 1970). Moreover, if healthy and attuned to the situation, man is able to focus on that aspect of the total “gestalt” of his existence which is most in need of repair or completion. He is self-curative and grows naturally in a physic as well as a physical sense. In short, he knows the right thing to do and does not need external control or guidance.45

44 Ibid., p. 65.
What appears necessary is for man to realize this about himself and other human beings. This would require critique of the current value structure and assumptions about human being. Only when man could come to believe he actually could know the right thing to do in a situation, would he trust himself and trust others in the immediacy of any situation. At that point, full human potential would be revealed through human action. Attaining such a state of trust became the basis for assuming responsibility and expressing commitment in human situations that called for moral choices.

This sense of knowing, that led to trust and to responsibility, emanated from the highly structured unconscious, both individual and collective. Man had to come into touch with the unconscious to experience morality—individually and collectively—in order to reach full human potential, full human knowledge and action. White’s powerful application of this extra-empirical research tradition to American PA constituted a cornerstone in the foundation of PA theory and knowledge. Over a quarter of a century later, this full potential remains to be explored further in the midst of the dominant logical empiricism that is slowly documenting the outlines of a structured individual and collective unconsciousness.

**Harmon’s Action Theory**

A contemporary of White, Michael Harmon, also focused on the inadequacies of modern analytic science, especially logical positivism. Harmon brought a more Kantian perspective to the discussion. His view is focused in the individual consciousness and intentionality. He shared with White a grave disappointment with logical empiricism’s unnecessarily constrained view of human knowledge and action.
He also shared the deep concern for the effects this dominant modern analytic approach held for the application of theory to action within the context of American PA. In the introduction to his notable book, *Action Theory for Public Administration*, Harmon asked whether academic studies could contribute to the improvement of administrative practice, whether the theory-practice gap, White’s bane of American PA, could be closed. Harmon concluded that in order for theory to improve practice, it must be perceived as applicable to practice, as a “theory for practice.” This action theory was formulated with the awareness it would be a foundation for fully conscious, administrative action.

First, Harmon provided a critique of logical positivism and behaviorism. Modern behaviorism was lacking because it attempted to explain human practice exclusively in terms of external stimuli and causal forces. Following A.R. Louch and others of the Oxford perspective, Harmon contended that behaviorism minimized, if not actually excluded, the significance of intrinsic human motivational factors. In doing so, it failed to apprehend human practice as a kind of social action, as “a form of moral and committed action,” that relied on a theory of values and a theory of knowledge. Neither the essential theory of values or of that of knowledge could be derived from the classical behaviorist paradigm or its methodologies. Instead, Harmon looked to beliefs about human nature or ontology for a foundation. On this ontological foundation, he would then integrate normative and descriptive theory with epistemology.

Harmon proposed the face-to-face encounter as the primary unit of social action:

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47 Ibid., pp. 3-14.
48 Ibid., p. 25.
The primary unit of analysis in social theory should be the face-to-face situation (or encounter), which is preferred over the individual and more encompassing units of analysis such as the group, the nation-state, or the “system.”

The face-to-face situation provided “an analysis of values at the personal level of experience should take precedence over other values.” The group, the nation-state or the system were too abstract and remote; “the more encompassing the unit of analysis, the more abstract and remote it was from personal experience.” The encounter was superior as a unit of analysis because it avoided the treatment of abstractions as real things; it provided a means of systematic inquiry into individual morality; and it provided a level of inquiry commensurate with actual material experience at the level of human interactions. It was the ideal type of social interaction. All other types of human interrelationships take their meaning from comparisons with this ideal, this prototype that is unbounded by stereotyping or other depersonalized interactions.

During an encounter, the awareness of an “other” developed within each individual. The experience of the other was reflected upon and became the basis for a corresponding awareness of the self. The medium of the encounter was symbolic exchange or language. It was symbolization that permitted reflection or a temporary standing back from immediate events and experiences, including both those of ourselves and of others. People did not react to all stimuli automatically as reductionist empirical psychology would assert. Instead, people had reflective capabilities that allowed them “to make choices about whether, and what of action or response is called for” in a situation. This reflective capability was conscious and rational.

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49 Ibid.
50 Ibid., pp. 28-30.
Through the development of symbolic reflectivity, one came to know oneself and to know others by learning to stand apart from the situation temporarily. This reflectivity also allowed for the projecting of intention into future action. When such experience occurred, the action that followed was intentional. Man was active due to this potential for intentional acting; man was social because the encounter occurred only in social settings. A theory of knowledge and a theory of values together addressed what would constitute individual moral action.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 31-35.} For Harmon, it was the inter-subjective sharing of individual consciousness that yielded knowledge about the world. Man learned about the world by \textit{mutually} participating in another’s stream of individual consciousness.

Sufficient commonalities in thought processes allowed for this participation. Modern analytic science assumed that facts regarding the social world existed independently of the observer and could be recorded without picking up shared value connotations. Harmon, like Hugh of St. Victor years before, argued that this notion was in error. Applied within the context of PA, Harmon rejected administrative accountability and its proposed separation of facts from values, politics from administration, planning from acting, and policy formulation from policy implementation. Harmon explained that inter-subjective action was not just the observed, collective-instrumental behavior, but also included intentionality. The active, intentional, inter-subjective creation and maintenance of social institutions were moral actions. Appraisal of such social relationships had to recognize that the value-laden aspects of these activities were inter-subjective in nature.
Any theory regarding behavioral knowledge needed to recognize this value-laden aspect in order to apprehend the full meaning of human action. Such theory must examine the subjective meanings people attached to their own behavior. Further, it must understand or account for the inter-subjective agreement about collective values attached to some observed behaviors. A full notion of human action included notions of the observed behavior plus subjective intent plus inter-subjective interpretation. That is, any descriptive theory of behavior had to be accompanied by a value theory in order to be capable of dealing fully with human action. Both theories were needed to provide a comprehensive theory regarding human action. This clearly placed a premium on conscious, rational, intentional human interaction.

The acceptance of mutuality dissolved any conflict between individual and collective values manifest in the voluntarist-functionalist debate. The voluntarist viewed collective values as aggregated individual values. The social collective was tenuous because it did not always successfully resolve differences among individual value sets. The primary concern for the voluntarist was the preservation of the freedom of the individual. The functionalist accepted the social system as the expression of values that individuals come to embody in order to be a part of the collective. All elements of social reality were explained in terms of the social system as a whole with the maintenance of the social equilibrium through order as the primary concern. Through mutuality, individuals would subjectively define the meanings for their actions and infuse the results with this meaning.

Mutuality posited that social reality was much more than a simple aggregation of individual or subjective values.
Social reality was a community in which active-social individuals interacted. Collective values were derivative of the primary values revealed through mutuality. Collective values are but surrogates, abstractions, constructed from empathetic consideration for the well-being of people with whom we ordinarily cannot interact on a face-to-face basis.

We can participate immediately in only a limited number of face-to-face situations. During these interactions, the other person’s unique subjective life world may be revealed more or less adequately to us. However, mutuality was not always, or even often, attainable in the social world:

In the absence of either face-to-face interaction or some other means by which the uniqueness of each individual’s situation is knowable, we nevertheless often make judgments, and decisions based on those judgments, about collectives of people about whom as individuals we have no direct knowledge.53

Sometimes—many times—individuals make decisions without access to Harman’s model of mutuality to inform them. This could be due to a lack of awareness on an individual’s part or this could be because the situation had not yielded any opportunity for mutuality. Extremely relevant to American PA, Harmon noted that not many public policy decisions were easily disaggregated to allow for mutuality. In these situations, there is a resort to what he terms “second best” values and decision models. Such models must first be justified in terms of their correspondence to the fundamental model of mutuality, the ideal:

Just as descriptive theory about larger collectivities is derivative of the encounter, so too should normative theory about those collectives be derived from mutuality, the normative expression of the encounter.

53 Ibid.
The idea of social justice is the logical extension of mutuality applied to social collectivities and should therefore be regarded as the normative premise underlying “aggregate” policy decisions made by and implemented through publication organizations.54

A necessary shift from the normative to the practical required a parallel shift to consideration of projected decision outcomes and consideration of the logical comprehensiveness of decisions, rules, procedures and roles. PA is unique for Harmon because it has a “primary practical and theoretical concern with the rules and processes used in making and legitimating decisions in public organizations.”

The five kinds of rules that can be employed in public organization are hierarchy (unilateral decision), bargaining or market rules, voting, contract and consensus.55 The intrinsic value commitment of a type of rule selected by an organization would impact both the organizational processes and norms. Harmon, like White, valued consensus. The face-to-face encounter with its non-coercive negotiation resulted in synergistic solutions. In turn, consensus required an equal opportunity for participation in the encounter and possible renegotiation of values through intersubjective symbolic exchange. Harmon’s Action model focused on the normative adequacy of the process and its opportunity for participation:

The “process” bias of the Action paradigm suggests that the quality of the process (i.e., the extent to which definitions of the problem are shared and understood, mutual trust is developed, and solutions are arrived at free of coercion or domination) is the principal criterion for determining the goodness of the outcome.56

Reflective of the Oxford perspective, intention was paramount to actual results.

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54 Ibid., pp. 83-84.
55 Ibid., p. 96.
56 Ibid., p. 102.
The immediacy of participation and intentionality were relied upon equally to establish
the goodness of the outcome of a decision process. Consensus eliminated domination of
decision processes by some external authority standard. The face-to-face negotiation
made values more apparent, lessoning the chances of resorting to an instrumental-
managerial approach to problem definition and goal-oriented actions. Consensus
admitted a fuller range of human meanings into discussions. Like mutuality, consensus
brought challenges to the actor/actors:

Making consensus work thus requires of administrators skills, role definitions,
and normative and cognitive perspectives that are not ordinarily acknowledged or
rewarded in organizational settings in which decision rules other than consensus
are used.57

Like the use of mutuality, in many public policy situations, selection of consensus as the
decision-rule was not always or even often practical or practicable:

…practical considerations may frequently and legitimately dictate using
normatively less satisfactory rules, although a too ready acceptance of practicality
and efficiency criteria over other normative criteria should be cautioned against.
The tendency to rely mainly on criteria of practicality and efficiency in the choice
of decision rules is itself an acknowledgement of an instrumental attitude toward
collective decision making.58

One could default to criteria of practicality and efficiency only if mutuality and
consensus were not practical or practicable. However, the conscious moving to this
position, through default, was necessary. The awareness would ensure better decision-
making. That is, awareness of action theory, as an ideal, could lead to a rising of
individual and group consciousness. A lack of such awareness resulted in a lack of
personal responsibility, in an irresponsible reification of the social world:

57 Ibid., p. 115.
58 Ibid., p. 104.
Irresponsible administrative action is rooted in the cognitive processes that lead people to deny or simply not comprehend personal responsibility for their actions. These processes constituted the problem of reification, that is, the tendency to view systems, institutions, roles, and other social artifacts as both existing and having legitimacy independent of the intersubjective processes people actually use creating, sustaining, and transforming them.\(^59\)

Irresponsible administrative action resulted when man did not or could not commit himself to bringing theory into practice, to infusing actions with values. Irresponsibility resulted when man refused to act accordingly or when man was not aware of the active, social self or had never experienced the mutuality of the face-to-face encounter:

Responsible action presupposes moral conceptualization, an ability and willingness to perceive possibilities or choices in situations and in such a manner that they may be informed by an appreciation of standards, rules, and situational constraints, but not determined by them.\(^60\)

Moral conceptualization required a dereification of standards, rules and situational constraints that would lead to apprehension of intersubjective authorship and prior reification of these shared values into intersubjectively accepted facts. This recognition of authorship permitted a dereification of fact/value preferences and an examination of them as intersubjectively formed and reformable. Once examined and reformed, they once more could be reified as intersubjective standards. This established both individual and collective responsibility for subsequent action that would be based upon them. This view reflects Berger and Luckmann’s three defining moments in human history:

\(^{59}\) Ibid., p. 131.
\(^{60}\) Ibid.
Man made the social world, man learned he made the social world, man continually remade the social world.\textsuperscript{61}

Reification and dereification were crucial to Harmon’s work. It was through these abstract thought processes that man reached comprehension of the rights and just entitlements of others, that man reached the abstract principles of justice that appealed to logical comprehensiveness:

Dereification involves a conceptual ability to stand apart from existing social and institutional definitions both of “what is” and “what ought to be” in order that alternative values and conceptions of the social world may be apprehended and acted on…. The crucial point here is that nonreified thought, which enables both personally responsible action and a comprehension of the meaning of choice, is made cognitively possible by an ability to think abstractly. \textsuperscript{62}

Harmon pointed to the need to institutionalize these abstract thought processes that would better ensure a sense of moral responsibility in modern PA institutions. These values would then become part of all institutional decision resulting in the emergence of a proactive administrative style. Proactive action would be recognized by its mediation of responsive and initiative action. The proactive administrator would both engage in mutuality and consensus when practical and practicable, and when necessary would use these moral foundations to reach levels of more abstract reasoning centered on social justice. Man could shift from personal responsibility and commitment to “disinterested, uniformly applicable standards” logically derived from “the primary motive of mutuality implied by the We-relation” when necessary. This was a derivative social justice, tempered by equity that social action theory provided:

\textsuperscript{61} See Berger and Luckmann.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.
Thus, for aggregated decisions, the tension between possible alternatives suggested by the administrator’s knowledge, resources, and the like, and the external demands to which she or he is obliged to respond, are mediated by abstract principles of reasoning. Principles, according to this view, are seldom, if ever, “applied” in a deterministic sense. Instead, they are the cognitive/moral devices available for weighing and balancing between and among conflicting external pressures and alternative possibilities for initiation made possible by one’s understanding of the situation and one’s professional and organization resources.63

Denhardt’s Critique

White and Harmon concentrated on providing well-grounded critiques of logical empiricism. These would lead to alternative theories of human being and action. Their work establishes broader views of individual and collective theory and action that open the existing view of organizations as machines to organizations as organisms. Their esteemed colleague, Robert Denhardt, shared their concerns with unnecessarily narrow views of human knowledge and action that dominated PA at the time.

For Denhardt, Marx’s conceptualization of social theory as critique provided a fascinating focal point and means for broadening these views. Like White, he traced the development of early PA theory in order to assess early twentieth century views of theory and practice. Like White, Denhardt also found them to demonstrate a progression toward more and more sophisticated articulations of shared concerns.

Denhardt point out that Herbert Simon had provided his classical description of rational administration that moved beyond prior models of management, but “did so in a way that preserved much of the politics-administration (now translated into fact-value) dichotomy as well as the hierarchical pattern of the administrative management viewpoint.”

63 Harmon, p. 161.
The human relation theorists “may have simply provided a more sophisticated array of
techniques for managers to use in securing compliance.” And, the more modern day
policy analysts “increased role of bureaucracy in policymaking” by focusing on the
“scientific assessment of the impact of established or proposed policies while suggesting
implementation strategies that return us directly to the days of administrative
management.”64

Like White and Harmon, Denhardt examined Woodrow Wilson’s early twentieth
century positing of the politics-administration dichotomy, Simon’s subsequent rational
model of administration, the human relations managerial techniques for securing
subordinate compliance with authoritative mandates, the managerially oriented
implementation techniques outlined by policy analysts, and the rational-bureaucratic
models of Max Weber. The central challenge was “an attempt to construct a rational
theory of administration based on a positivist understanding of human behavior set within
a framework of democratic accountability.”65 The central problem for this tradition was
“how to operate public organizations most efficiently, that is, how to achieve given
objectives with the least cost.” Following the separation of policy from administration,
ends were separated from means and a rational, authoritative sequencing of “deciding-
doing-determining” developed. The understanding of responsibility as accountability and
causation held this system in place. A hierarchical authority structure was imposed to
integrate the then departmentalized administrative subunits of necessary expertise.

64 Robert Denhardt, *Theories of Public Administration* (Monterey, California: Brooks/Cole Publishing
65 Ibid.
These subunits provided the *means* to accomplish the previously established political *ends* provided by the legitimated, politically responsible, elected and appointed officials.

Administrative behavior within administrative subunits were directed and monitored based on logical empirical psychology:

> In this effort, science is the key. Science, it is said, can provide causal explanations that will permit greater control over the organization and its members by those with access to knowledge and resources, those in positions of power.66

The traditionalist problem of providing good government through moral men was reconceptualized as the problem of providing efficient and economical scientific government through the hierarchical structuring of organizational functions. Well managed accountability meant well developed causation patterns. These replaced the need for traditional moral commitment and normative theory. Denhardt viewed the new science of administration as an attempt to obscure or veil the moral responsibility inherent in administration. This provided public administration with a veiled, a false consciousness of administrative theory and practice.

The raising of consciousness would come for Denhardt through Marx’s dialectic process. Critique would not only point out the inherent contradictions in these theories, but also serve to eliminate them and restore a more balanced approach. For Marx, social theory was critique. Theory revealed the conditions of domination inherent in established social relationships, especially the material conditions. An awareness of such dominance then and subsequent understanding of its foundations in historical context then exposed actions by which man could free himself.

66 Ibid.
In the process of achieving freedom, both the human potential for subjectivity and accepting authorship for the social world was realized. Acknowledgement of subjective and inter subjective authorship lead to the acceptance of human autonomy and human responsibility. Man could then come to realize that he was the most powerful historical force in the development of mankind. Theory as critique was crucial then to attaining this awareness that lead to both autonomy and responsibility.

The Frankfurt School of critical theory concentrated its efforts on language as the medium of this critique and Denhardt followed their lead closely. The Frankfurt School’s theory-as-critique concentrated on the raising of false consciousness about the social world through reconceptualization of that world, through a resymbolization about that world. To think about and to talk about reality in different ways was to act differently within that social reality, to change the social world through discursive action. Changes in symbolization resulted in changes to reality because actual material actions patterned themselves after such symbolizations or conceptualizations. The critical theorists are not talking about a retalking of reality or a Hegelian change in one’s perceptions alone. Critical theorists maintained that a change in symbolization provided a different value basis and conceptualization of action itself such that action affected changes in the material world. More effective critique was necessary to reveal the sources of domination. In terms of language as medium, the more undistorted the communication of theory-as-critique, the potentially plainer the understanding of domination became. Domination patterns were embedded in the most fundamental social relationships. These patterns also were manifest in any social institutions founded on these relationships.
Social institutions, social superstructures, appeared to man in reified form. They were accepted as givens and along with them the fundamental patterns of domination too were accepted as given. Language syntax and semantics also were conceptualized and expressed in terms of these assumed patterns. Communication reinforced domination. A rising of social consciousness was necessary to reveal deeply seated psychocultural valuing of domination and the authority patterns that supported it.

Denhardt, like White and Harmon, urged a rejection of instrumental managerialism’s dominance over PA understanding and discussions of theory and action. Unlike Harmon and White, Denhardt turned directly back to the ancient philosophical tradition of Marx, as carried forward by the Frankfurt School, to assist in the critical foundation for a new PA:

In praxis, we find once again the connection between personal learning and the relationship between theory and practice. The notion of praxis implies that, as we acquire knowledge about our circumstances and as we view that knowledge in a critical manner, we are compelled to pursue more effective communication and consequently greater autonomy and responsibility.67

Critical Theory and Freedom from Patterns of Dominance

Freeing man from reified patterns of dominance would allow fuller development of man’s potential, a potential toward the conscious creation of a better reality for all mankind. For the critical theorist, material conditions rooted in psychocultural patterns of dominance stifled not only human development of the dominated, but also equally that of the dominators. Individuals inherited these patterns through history and knowingly or unknowingly perpetuated them as part of nature rather than as social artifacts.

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67 Ibid., p. 185.
The freedom critical theory sought for mankind was a freedom for all people to move beyond the false consciousness bread and maintained by these embedded intersubjective patterns of domination. Only by becoming conscious that the world changed and could be changed, could mankind finally and completely free himself from the clutches of a social history where he had not been conscious of his authorship or how this authorship affected his interaction with nature.

For the critical theorists, human consciousness had developed over time and space, history, to the point in history where mankind was capable of maintaining, revising and recreating a social world in a conscious manner. The time had come to seek freedom from domination through praxis. The world had become dominated by the means of production:

The laws of self-reproduction demand of an industrially advanced society that it look after its survival on the escalating scale of a continually refined administration of human beings and their relations to each other by means of social organization. In this system, science, technology, industry, and administration interlock in a circular process. In this process the relationship of theory to praxis can now only assert itself as the purposive-rational application of techniques assured by empirical science.

The result is a focusing of science on issues of power and control at the level of technique. No longer is science a potential source of “enlightened action:”

The claim by which theory was once related to praxis has become dubious. Emancipation by means of enlightenment is replaced by instruction in control over objective or objectified processes….Socially effective theory is no longer directed toward the consciousness of human beings who live together and discuss matters with each other, but to the behavior of human beings who manipulate. As a productive force of industrial development, it changes the basis of human life, but it no longer reaches out critically beyond this basis to raise life itself, for the sake of life, to another level.68

Man’s failure to distinguish the technical from the practical has resulted in mistaking technical solutions produced by logical empiricism as being sufficient to answer such practical and ancient philosophical questions like what constitutes good government. Empiricism provided technical control over technically conceived situations; man had selected to view good government as a problem with solutions in theories of rational-instrumental-managerial control of people. However, the critical theorists pointed out that this really just confused control with action within a historical view of the social world as an objectified reality:

…as a nexus of behavioral modes, for which rationality is mediated solely by the understanding of sociotechnical controls, but not by a coherent total consciousness—not by precisely that interested reason which can only attain practical power through the minds of politically enlightened citizens.69

This confusion of the technical with the practical had other consequences. As discussed earlier in conjunction the work of White and others, by definition, a problem had a solution encompassed in its definition, or it was not a problem:

From the outset, all practical questions, which cannot be answered adequately by technical prescriptions, but which instead also require a self-understanding within their concrete situation, go beyond the cognitive interest invested in empirical science.70

The result was human action left without a practical-moral orientation. The price paid for rational-technicalism was a “decisionism set wholly free in the selection of the highest level goals.”71 Habermas argued instead for a committed reason that would be reflective as well as proactive:

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69 Ibid., p. 155.
70 Ibid., p. 264.
71 Ibid., p. 265.
Today the convergence of reason and commitment, which the philosophy of the
great tradition considered to be intimately linked, must be regained, reflected, and
reasserted on the level of positive science, and that means carried on through the
separation which is necessarily and correctly drawn on the level of technological
rationality, the dichotomy of reason and commitment.\(^{72}\)

Denhardt looked to this social theory as critique to lift the veil that obscured PA’s
moral responsibility for governing. Once consciousness was raised, PA had to undistort
its symbolization and conceptualization of its concrete, historical circumstances. Then
PA could posit a worldview free from patterns of dominance. This would impact the
individual and the collectives, theories and practices, as well as thinking and acting.

**Catron’s Messy Issues of Social Interaction**

Bayard Catron’s work focuses on bringing greater clarity to the related
discussions within social theory of collective theorizing and practicing, and individual
thinking and acting:

…if we can clarify the messy set of issues surrounding the way we understand our
social action, this improved self-understanding will eventually provide a clearer
and surer foundation for our own social practice—and thus the conduct of public
affairs.\(^{73}\)

Both White and Harmon focused on individual thinking and acting as a basis for
collective theories and practices. Denhardt focused on the historical collective level with
social theory as critique complete with inherent action. Each of their discussions shift
from the individual to collective levels and back again somewhat blurring several critical
issues. Catron’s work contributed to a clarification of such issues:

\(^{72}\) Ibid., p. 281.

\(^{73}\) Bayard L. Catron, “Theoretical Aspects of Social Action: Reason, Ethics and Public Policy,” Ph.D.
moving from “thinking” to “theory,” and from “acting” to “practice,” involves moving from “personal” interaction to “social” interaction, and simultaneously and similarly, from the abstract/philosophical to the concrete/historical. This shift is of great significance, since the terms of reference are radically altered. The new dimension, the dimension of organization and institutions, requires a new understanding….the basic analogue is preserved, and the relationship between theory and practice is informed by the more fundamental (in a philosophical sense) relation between thought and action.  

This fundamental relation between thought and action was perceived, as White, Harmon and Denhardt already pointed out, as instrumental and rational:

In contemporary Western culture generally, and particularly in American culture, action is viewed predominantly as instrumental in nature. We act in order to reduce the mismatch between felt ideal and perceived actuality; action is viewed as the set of means adopted to achieve specified ends. This is generally considered the pragmatic view of rational action, which Habermas calls purposive-rational (Zweckrational).* Action, in this problem-solving, goals-oriented mode is thoroughly familiar to use; indeed, it is so familiar that we can scarcely conceive of “rational action” in any other way.  

Individual action was more than instrumental, “action refers to the ways we make our influence felt and, in an “objectified” sense, the mark we make on the world.” More than this, action can realize the sense of contribution, of “making a difference.” This is “both much broader and far more rudimentary than the instrumental view of action would suggest.” Making a difference in the world did not depend on actualizing some tangible pre-established goal. In fact, “doing nothing is doing something:”

Being-in-the-world is a fundamental ontological concept; its central significance here is as a term of relatedness, concerns our relations as persons….portraying the bare or “mere” fact of human existence as intrinsically active….intrinsically

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74 Ibid., p. 8.
76 Ibid.
related to our capacity for self-understanding and self-expression. We understand ourselves in relation to the world as actors or agents.\textsuperscript{77}

Catron confined the term action to the discussion of meaningful activity:

In “action” is included all human behavior when and insofar as the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to it….Action is social insofar as, by virtue of the subjective meaning attached to it by the acting individual(s), it takes account of the behavior of others and is thereby oriented in its course.\textsuperscript{78}

The aspects of the individual that are perceived by others, the personality, are related to the individual’s ability to understand himself inwardly and then to express this personality outwardly. This phenomenological perspective explained how an individual came to know and to express his self through a retrospective process. This process included the reflections of his self that were produced by others observing him. Man came to understand himself and others through this retroactive reflective or retroflective process. Our understanding of human action is found in the commonplace contexts, understanding in general in the \textit{Lebenswelt}, the life-world, around us:

Our self-understanding that we are actors is inescapable, and is directly accessible to us in reflection. It is through the process of self-reflection that we interpret our actions…. Our ordinary actions are available to us in reflection: we interpret and reinterpret them; we give reasons to clarify and to justify them; we sometimes even discover, post hoc, that we have other purposes than those we had thought for undertaking the; and so forth.\textsuperscript{79}

The foundation for making sense out of the messy issues surrounding theory and practice, thinking and acting could be found in the retroflective process:

Our consciousness of our being in the world is the fundamental primal awareness which lies at the root of all human interest, concerns, and commitments.

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., p. 35.
\textsuperscript{79} Catron, p. 66.
And I believe that it is here that the concept of human action might finally be grounded.\textsuperscript{80}

Catron then grounded his view of human nature in the realm of conscious and rational reflection of prior action. The intent that preceded an action could be expanded or reinterpreted following that action through retroactive reflection or retroflection. Such interpretations served as the basis for personal and interpersonal identities and meanings. The retroflective process of deciphering meanings was thinking; the interpretations themselves were thought. Interpersonal exchange of personal thoughts about a shared experience could result in a general intersubjectively shared impression of that experience. If the experience occurred often, then shared thoughts came to identify and to predict future interpretations of the recurring experience through the comprehensiveness of a shared explanation. This shift from the individual to the collective was the shift from the personal thought to the collective theory. There was a corresponding shift from the abstract/philosophical to the concrete/historical context. In recurring situations, the individual did not need to rethink or reflect back on every experience every time in order discern what was experienced in the social sense. The collective explanation provided meanings after the experience occurred and even suggested explanations or intentionality before the experience recurred:

A theory is (among other things) an organization of thoughts into sets of interconnected propositions stated in a language accessible to some community of concerned inquirers. Quite similarly, a practice is an organization of actions into appropriate combinations in accordance with certain socially derived conventions and standards accessible to actors (aspiring practitioners) through language and interpersonal relations (symbolic-interaction).\textsuperscript{81}

\begin{footnotesize}
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  \item \textsuperscript{80} Ibid., p. 36.
  \item \textsuperscript{81} Ibid.
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Catron observed “an obvious *prima facie* parallel here.” The individual can think without theorizing and without explicit reference to theory. An individual also can act without engaging in a socially recognizable practice. Only when the individual acted repeatedly in a similar manner in a similar situation, without consciously projecting intention, or retroflexing with the experience after in order to determine meaning, but instead *assumed* that his actions would embody and had embodied similar meaning for him and for others, that personal habits or practices became recognizable.

There also was the equally fundamental activity of monitoring or what Catron calls “checking” that is carried out by both the individual and the others. Checking orients us to our actions and is essential to social cohesion. It is also central to the practice of science. We check to determine a mistake or match, and we stop or interrupt activity in order to do a quick check on reality, as a way of providing “action to guide action;” as a way to make sure we are doing what we want to be doing. We often interrupt what we are doing to make sure that it is what we want to be doing—as a way to insure that the action is in keeping with the intentions with which it was initiated. Checking, then, is not continuous with the projected course of the action, but interrupts it. Checking is more nearly self-reflexive than ordinary reflecting, but it is never “merely” or “purely” reflecting on the action itself. All of the activities involved in checking—matching, evaluating, analyzing, interpreting, categorizing, etc.—are attempts to locate the action in a certain sense, and give meaning to it.  

Catron turned to the work of Alfred Schutz, existential phenomenologist, to establish checking as a fundamental collective activity.

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82 Ibid., p. 80.
Schutz explained that it was the “checking” of other peoples’ intentions that provided the “social glue” for community:

The prototype of all social relationships is an intersubjective connection of motive…. If I imagine, projecting my act, that you will understand my act and that this understanding will induce you to react, on your part, in a certain way, I anticipate that the in-order-to motives of my own acting will become because motives of your reaction, and vice versa.\(^{83}\)

The intention or motive that prompted an action was central to the understanding of and expression of personality/sociality. Intention action was value-conscious in both pre-action and post-action senses. Like White, Harmon and Denhardt before him, Catron compared this notion of human action with that of the instrumental-managerial approach:

Let me know try to show the fundamental importance of the concept of “intention” by comparing it with “instrumental”…. Notice that “instrumental action” and “purposive behavior” are very close in meaning; both are subject to functionalist explanations. To speak of an action as instrumental is to refer to its function; it calls attention to the action as means to a defined end. To speak of intentional action is to call attention rather to the attitude or orientation of the actor in acting. To this extent, they may be viewed simply as two aspects of the same thing. But they are not always consonant with one another.\(^{84}\)

Catron posited checking as essential to intentional acting as it was the process by which man became aware of his own being in the social world. Checking moved way beyond goal definition and instrumental goal attainment within a collective. It was “the fundamental primal awareness which lies at the root of all human interests, concerns, and commitments.” This was an awareness directed toward doing the right thing, the “ultimate practical interest of all actors.”

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\(^{84}\) Ibid., p. 49.
When an actor asks the paradigmatic practical question, “What should I do not?” he wants to learn the right thing (or sorts of things) to do in a particular set of circumstances. The “right” think to do is ambiguous between such interpretations as “correct,” “proper,” “moral” (permitted), “obligatory.” The adjudication of disputes in all these cases, and the resolution of internal conflicts, is subject to the same sort of reasoning—whether appeals to rule, norm, convention or principle are involved.

Catron built on the significant work of Karl E. Weick regarding the social psychology of organizations and of Sir Geoffrey Vickers regarding the social world when focusing on checking. Catron pointed out that checking was not just fundamental to social being, it also was predominant among social actions, was basic and essential. In fact, “we spend a great deal of time, in ordinary life, checking with other people.”

All those myriad of things that we do in concert, and those we depend on others doing—all those actions that require for successful performance some mutual agreement about whether what is to be done or what the “relevant situation” is, or both—require continual checking. Therefore, checking is a primary ingredient in communication, and it contributes vitality to “culture maintenance.”

For Catron, praxis both preserved the vitality of the initial intersubjective agreement on the inter-personal level while providing patterns for intersubjective action. Praxis embodied the awareness of the intersubjective origin of social customs and institutions in inter-personal thinking and acting and checking. This last element was often lost when the inter-personal creations were reified. He also took care to point out that it was the conscious link to authorship that allowed for change:

Praxis serves the crucial social function of drastically simplifying the requirement for, and reducing the realm of, deliberation as precursor to action.

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85 Ibid., p. 183.
Just as habitual action simplifies individual life, and lets us concentrate on “more important” decisions, so *praxis* provided expectations and standards which we normally meet and fulfill “automatically,” as we play our roles in everyday life. Moreover, the routinization and institutionalization implied and permitted by *praxis* provides an important source of predictability and stability in social relations—without which social life would be impossibly difficult to maintain. This predictability should not be construed as evidence supporting a philosophical behaviorism, which would interpret it as indicative of the appropriateness and adequacy of a deterministic view of human enterprise. Rather, as Vickers once commented, “Men are predictable because they are concerned to be.”

The maintenance of social relationships (and thus of social life), in which we all have an interest, is contingent on the continuing satisfactory (without wide limits) performance by members, in their multiple roles, in meeting the expectations raised and conditioned by existing settings of the norms of social practice.  

Social customs and institutions were formulated to be predictably normative so they could and would perpetuate inter-subjectively agreed to value-laden activity. The perennial challenge for society was the avoidance of dogma:

The problem is to conceive, develop and organize into both *theoria* and *praxis* ways to prevent and/or overcome the tendency toward dogmatism without destroying *commitment*, which is essential to both knowledge and action.  

The challenge was to conceive, develop and organize into a praxiology, the full sense of praxis as critical, reflexive, conscious and intentional actions, including repetitive actions. When the full sense of praxis remained apparent in repetition, then man avoided dogmatism. This required an understanding of behavior that exceeded observation; it required acknowledgement of the intent of the actor to affect the social world through action and for others to experience and grasp and accept the affect and the intention. Praxis was then not habitual acting, but more of a proactivity:

…our actions in ordinary life are normally governed and arranged in such a way that we avoid testing the limits of acceptable practice.

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87 Ibid., p. 62.
88 Ibid., p. 218.
We ordinarily operate within the norms without (and without the felt need for) reflection on the legitimacy, limits, or requirements of the practice.

It is clearly more comfortable to avoid testing the limits. But more fundamentally, it is crucial for getting along, for managing, since what is at stake is a social support system without which we would go (or be) insane.\(^8^9\)

This practicality corresponded to the philosophical notion of prudence by which the Stoics and Romans had judged virtue and mediated knowledge:

The injunction “Be practical!” may mean a variety of things, and be employed from various motives. But at a minimum, it means that one should conduct oneself in accordance with some set of rules or norms that the speaker believes should be operative in, or are appropriate to the particular situation at hand. All forms of practice are governed by such rules, whether the practice of a profession, the fulfillment of a particular social role, or the practices by which collectivities are characterized.

The rules are, of course, socially derived and culture specific. To this extent, they share the characteristics of mores or customs. In addition, they are customary in the sense of habitual, ordinary—and are thus relatively durable over time; they are not changed on a whim, or “at will.”

The norms of practice serve the functions of social integration, coherence, and the providing reliable expectations; concretely, they help us manage our lives and get on in the world both individually and communally (both when our interests are antagonistic to those of others and when they are shared by others). Therefore, they are not discarded or transformed easily, or without risk or cost.\(^9^0\)

The realm of the practical was the realm of normative consciousness and normative unconsciousness. That is, the practical and the normative coincided in an individual’s consciousness of self and sociality or others, and in the collective consciousness of selves and sociality. Praxis served to raise what had been the collective unconsciousness regarding normative connotations perpetuated in social practices and institutions to a level of collective consciousness where they could be consciously reenacted and changed.


\(^9^0\) Catron, p. 228.
Given the strong conservative part of mankind’s nature, there had to be a strong collective commitment to praxis—a conscious, intentional, critical, reflexive collective commitment—in order to marshal social energy adequate to conceive of and enact a change because any basic social reorientation—reconceptualization/resymbolization—would cause significant reverberations throughout that social world. And mankind was aware of that, if only at the level of individual and collective unconsciousness.

Social change was this traumatic, this dramatic an event. “Changes” that fell short of bringing about reconceptualization/resymbolization were merely examples of a false consciousness regarding reality. The need to impose stability and predictability for day-to-day being in the social world brought about a commitment to previously made and depended upon social agreements. This commitment was necessary to stability and predictability. From these, individuals and collectives gained a sense of sanity and projected social continuity. Such a strong commitment that produced the social world also embodied then the effect of an embedded resistance to significant change that would call for resymbolization. When we proscribed social policy, as we administered the state, we initiated change. The more needed the social policy, the more such policy purposefully shook the intricate nets of social relations:

…the social system is made up of nets of reciprocal relations: the social “regulators” are also regulated in turn by shifts in perceptions and relations between and among individuals, social groups, organizations, institutions and cultures. Social change is viewed as a function of shifts in social relations, including changes in interests and expectations, self-concepts, cause-effect beliefs and modes of understanding.91

To maintain that norms, nets of relations and sets of standards prescribed acceptable interaction and provided meanings to these was not to assume that social interaction was “caused” or “determine” by such norms, relations or standards. Rather, it was an adherence to practices that enabled certain social interactions but could be ignored if chosen:

The fact that a given practice may be said to govern our behavior does not of course imply any causal connection; given practices do not dictate or determine our behavior. This has been a convenient fiction for those of the behavioral persuasion, and is a shorthand way of representing the things that people do. (The “ideal-type” method of Weber, and Schutz’ “typification” are also shorthand representations, making it unnecessary—for certain purposes—to understand the particular actions of particular actors, but only to see them as typical.) While we do not “choose” all our practices, and while we certainly have no choice whether to practice or not (for that is simply a requirement of our living in a social context), we still inevitably have to decide what to do. Of course that is not to suggest that we do anything, but when it is important we can arrange things, “construct the world,” so that many things become possible—and practical—which would not otherwise have been. This goes beyond saying that practice is permissive: It is saying that practices are constructed of actions over which we do not relinquish control simply by seeing them as embedded in social life.  

Man made a practical and normative choice to practice—man was predictable because he had a need to be. In doing so, he accepted full responsibility for the actions. Man maintained the control and responsibility of practicing through his ability to critically reflex with and to check back on those practices, even if he did not choose all of them. Since practicing was an intrinsic aspect of being in the social world, being normatively practical was intrinsic to social being:

As Krieger says, being practical has something to do with managing the world of the possible—but it is about doing much less than is possible, since can do many things that would destroy the social world.  

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92 Ibid., p. 230.
It was important to develop an awareness of actual social practices, an awareness of the norms governing these, and an awareness of man’s responsibility for both practices and norms:

While it is important to engender among practitioners an awareness of “practice theories” under which they operate, their education needs to be extended by addressing the more fundamental questions about the norms under which the particular practice operates.94

The particular norms in PA are political ones:

Practical political discourse can be seen as the ongoing process of adjudication and resetting of the norms which govern social practice. While in our everyday lives we are subject to existing norms (and to punitive sanctions if we choose to violate them), we are able to question them, and communicate about them in what amounts to “constitutional” debate, since the shared understanding is constitutive of praxis. This is also ethical discourse in the straight-forward sense that the discussion is about the terms of our relations with our fellows (which amounts in part for Aristotle’s treatment of ethics and politics as intimately related). The challenge is to work individually and collectively toward freeing ourselves, through critical reflection, from slavish obedience to and doctrinaire acceptance of the existing settings of the norms of social practice, and so to enlarge the sphere of self-understanding and self-determination, the proper sphere of political praxis.95

For Catron, it was essential man understand that theory and practice were not so much sequential as copresent:

…each implies the other, that they are copresent, that each serves as a sort of control over the other, and that it is through this interrelation that we are able to maintain the critical epistemological reflexivity which is ultimately necessary for the adequate development of either theory or praxis.

If my argument is anywhere near accurate, pursuing the talks will necessarily result in a radical reconstruction of the relationship between social science and public policy.96

94 Ibid., p. 236.
95 Ibid., pp. 62-63.
96 Ibid., p. 239.
Catron described the most common view of the relationship of social science to public policy as that of social science providing the pure knowledge, the theory, that public policy converted into applied knowledge or practice. In this view, theory was not social practice or action itself and further practice was dominated by such theory in a type of causal relationship where the pure was the ideal toward which all applied knowledge yearned to travel. In contrast, Catron argued against a conceptualization of pure and applied:

...against the domination of practice by theory—and also the reverse domination, against subordinating theory-work to praxis, or action, or the “problems of everyday life. While there seems to be no question that the Lebenswelt and praxis constitute necessary conditions of theory-work, this is quite different from attempting to set them up as criteria of any sort. To accept this latter sort of subordination of theoria to praxis is, I have suggested, to indulge in a naive or vulgar rendition of Marxism, pragmatism or phenomenology (etc.) which is not sufficiently insulated from existing practice to avoid deterioration into dogmatism. While the concept of practice theory is still not sufficiently well-grounded and is still rather narrowly understood in the literature, I believe that it is a very promising development.97

Catron emphasized this was true as well at the individual level of thinking and acting:

All actors, and all “scientists,” have both theoretical and practical interests which, when one observes given situations closely, can be seen to occur simultaneously; this is the phenomenological point.

The logical point is that neither the classical celebration of cerebration—the love of the contemplative life and the vision of the eternal—nor the romantic commitment to the vita active as the source of human freedom can be demonstrated, I think, to be superordinate.98

In specific regard to theory, social action and public policy, Catron explained:

On the one hand, I believe that knowledge should govern action, and in particular the social action that gives forms and substance to public policy.

97 Ibid., p. 238.
98 Ibid.
We are aware of the painful and sometimes tragic consequences of impetuous or unthinking action. Whether in domestic programs or in foreign policy, we have been confronted at every turn with the searing and rending consequences of ignorance in action. Whatever one’s own personal catalogue of social phenomena classified as “problems,” I believe our ignorance in coping with them is at best thinly veiled.

We have shown, in addition, a fair measure of insensitivity, social paralysis and timidity, alternating with convulsive action, and rampant narrow-self-interest operating in the perception of “problems” and in the process of developing “solutions.” To those with an optimistic attitude and a “rationalist faith,” these features might also be expected to be ameliorated by improved knowledge.99

Unfortunately, improved knowledge was not the only source of failed policy. Catron explained that knowledge was mediated by ethics and norms as it was acted upon.

In a sense, policy grew out of social practice. Therefore, both sound knowledge and sound practice together were necessary for sound change. As a result, on the one hand, Catron did not look to improved practices alone to improve the social world.

On the other hand, I do not believe that improved knowledge insures better policy. There is a chasm between our understanding of social phenomena and our understanding of the action we ought to take which is obscured by facile talk of “conversion” and “transference.” The poverty programs and foreign policy have been informed by the “best available” social science knowledge—whether theories of the “Negro family” and the way learning takes place, or deterrence and “domino” theories. That man of those programs and policies have failed does not mean merely that the theories have been wrong or inadequate—such an explanation would be too simple and misleading.

It is more nearly correct, I think, to say that we have not been sufficiently wary of the differences between the two sorts of understanding.100

The reified working logics that gave rise to practices were in need of improvement as were the analytic reconstructive logics that gave rise to theories.

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99 Ibid., pp. 243-244.
100 Ibid.
Working logic was a first level abstract generalization that grew out of intersubjective agreement regarding a typified practice which actualized a typified social experience. Working logics are commonly referred to as practices. There was a subcategory of such working logics that were analytically arranged for presentation and these were theories. Both of these were forms of human knowledge, or theoria for Catron.

Theories were more second level abstractions that took first level practices, analyzed them into constituent elements and used this new analytic logic to re-present them in a different light. This was the distinction between procedural and analytic knowledge, the difference between the two parts of the cake recipe: the first part usually listed the constituent ingredients with the amounts of each, the other part gave the steps for what one did with the ingredients in order to realize the cake at the end. Both were types of knowledge. For Catron, the practice, the working logic, was closer to the initial intersubjective agreement where they were infused with value and meaning and this agreement was most apparent at the personal level of intersubjective interaction. The theory or analytic logic could appear foreign to many practitioners because it did not discuss these constituent elements in the way most of them encountered these elements in social interaction. Sometimes, one could not retell life, sometimes one did just have to be there to get it.

The proximity of practices to social life enabled the practitioner to pick up embedded clues:

I suspect that policy makers take their clues, and get their clues, much more from the social environment itself than from the theoretical reconstructions of social processes provided by their social science advisors.
Of course that information is processes through their own screens and filters, but it is arguable that the product of this is more likely to be appropriate and defensible than that which is the product of elaborate reconstruction and reduction for very different purposes. The structure of knowledge pursued to meet certain standard of coherence and verifiability by a relatively small and closed community of inquirers is unlikely to correspond to—or even bear family resemblance to—the knowledge fragments synthesized in the process of coming to decision. The alternative that is ready-at-hand is to attempt to take the phenomenological vantage point of the social actor, viewing his inquiry/action with a bare minimum of behavioral reconstruction.

This might itself reveal some important features of the process that have been obscured, but the longer range hope is that the phenomenological approach will permit the development of systematic and critical inquiry based on the decision maker’s own research procedures, rather than relying on grafting essentially exogenous interpretations of social phenomena onto the public decision process….the image is not one of “converting knowledge into action,” but rather, the focus is on the paradigmatic practical question, “What action/knowledge-seeking activities are appropriate/desirable for me now.”

For a way to know what to do next, Catron turned to Habermas’ pragmatic model that had been designed to join the social sciences and politics. The selection of this model symbolized the rejection of the decisionist model that had been prevalent in the managerial tradition from Hobbes to Weber. For Habermas, this decisionist model had resulted in a dangerous “scientization of politics.” Objectivity and technique were used to provide the basis for the selection of “means;” political intentions and authority were used to provide the basis for the selection of “ends.” This technocratic, decisionist model did not attend to the realization of social values through the political entity of the state or society:

101 Ibid., pp. 249-250.
The technocratic model represents the reversal of dependency. The specialists, by virtue of superior knowledge—in particular of the conditions and consequences of public actions, take the initiative and become the effective decision makers over ever-wider terrain, while the politicians simply ratify them, and take positions in the arbitration of other public disputes for which there is no technical resolution, but also no cogent analysis or practical discourses. Their arbitration is therefore arbitrary….

The technocratic model maintains the separation between the technical and political and tends to camouflage the political under a veil of the “natural” and the “real.” This leads to an expanded form of decisionism, since it permits no room for further self-reflection or criticism.102

In contrast, to this technocratic model, both Catron and Habermas advocated a pragmatistic model in the tradition of Peirce. This pragmatic model would avoid the scientization of politics by respecting the sphere of the expert and that of the decision maker while providing an interactive mode. Catron described this pragmaticism in principle:

The pragmatistic model is in principle more nearly adequate, since it begins with an interaction of function between expert and politician, a reciprocal communication which make the two coproducers of social action in the form of public policy. This is more descriptively accurate, I think.

But more important for Habermas, the pragmatistic model is more desirable because, by insisting on pragmatic corroboration of traditional values in specific situations, by insisting on the pragmatic examination of the relation between available techniques and practical decision, the pragmatistic model makes the value systems accessible to “scientifically” informed discussion, thereby substantially changing political dialogue. Thus, technique is governed by needs as historically interpreted in value systems, and the social interests reflected in the value systems are regulated by testing with regard to the technical possibilities and strategic means for their gratification.103

102 Ibid., pp. 251-252. See Habermas, p. 63, as referenced by Catron at p. 251.
103 Ibid., p. 252.
“In this manner they are partly confirmed, partly rejected, articulated and reformulated, or denuded of their ideologically transfigured and compelling character.”\(^{104}\)

Following the tradition of Peirce and Dewey, this model required the scientific examination of values in a spirited and yet concrete and historical discussion. Values were accessed; values were available for immediate examination, confirmation, rejection, and reformulation. It was in reference to reified norms that practices and theories could be organized and reorganized. It appeared plausible to consider this pragmatistic model the collective analogue to that of individual critical reflexivity in terms of individual thinking and acting. This analogue then opened the way for Catron’s formulation of a sense of praxiology and praxis:

...an adequate praxiology must embody both axiology and ethics. It must embody axiology both because value-seeking is fundamental to praxis (however values may substantively be construed), and also because it is a fundamental attribute of *praxis* to be valuative.

There is no “world of acts” to set over and against a “world of values.” Man’s living and doing in the world has intrinsically a valuative character, as I’ve suggested in the discussion of analogical reasoning, appraisal, and appreciation. Praxeology must embody ethics most simply because *praxis* has a social character, and deals inevitably with man’s relations with his fellows.

Those relations are governed or regulated by social practices which are historical products of socio-cultural circumstances; the setting of the norms of those practices is constantly subject to criticism, to a self-reflective process by means of which persons, separately and collectively, reconstruct and reconstitute the terms of their relations to one another.\(^{105}\)

**The Normative Foundations of the State**

This leads the individual and the collective back to basic questions regarding social norms and their viability.

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\(^{104}\) Habermas, p. 67, as quoted by Catron at p. 252.

\(^{105}\) Ibid., p. 181.
These are the ongoing, continual and fundamental questions of social reality. Within the limited Republic of the United States, a fascinating view of reality emerges.

The political norms were created and continually are sustained as a subset of the much greater, highly diverse and sometimes opposing sets of social norms. However, this subset of political norms was and continues to be the fundamental set of norms for the sustaining of that greater social reality and all of its diverse cultures. The acceptance of these political norms is the paramount social act for individuals and collectives within the United States. The acceptance and reacceptance is the acknowledgement that individuals and collectives expect and predict and assume the political norms will be recognized as meanings and values, and that dogma will be avoided.

This discussion is a normative and ethical one. Building on Catron, theory and practice are copresent, each serves to exert form over the other. In this way individuals and collectives maintain the critical epistemological reflexivity necessary for the adequate development of either theory or praxis. These then must be present in the administration of the State. There must be what Catron called a radical reconstruction of the relationship between social science and public policy. Knowledge is mediated by ethics and norms as it is acted upon. Policy and social practice are coterminous. Both sound practice and sound knowledge are interrelated to bring about responsible social change. The reified working logics that give rise to practices are in need of improvement as are the analytic reconstructive logics that gave rise to theories. Catron jointed Habermas in advocating a pragmatistic model. This model would avoid the scientization of politics by respecting the sphere of the expert and that of the decision maker while providing an interactive mode.
This model required the scientific examination of values in a spirited and yet concrete and historical discussion. Values were accessed; values were available for immediate examination, confirmation, rejection, and reformulation.

It was in reference to reified norms that practices and theories could be organized and reorganized. It appeared plausible to consider this pragmatistic model the collective analogue to that of individual critical reflexivity in terms of individual thinking and acting. This analogue then opened the way for Catron’s formulation of a sense of praxiology and praxis. PA praxis and praxiology must be based on the understanding that administrative relations are governed or regulated by practices that are historical products of socio-cultural circumstances. If these circumstances have resulted in PA as instrumental managerialism, then that is what the daily activities of PA are regenerating. However, these humanly created practices are constantly subject to criticism, to a self-reflective process by means of which persons, separately and collectively, can reconstruct and reconstitute the terms of practices and their relations to one another.

These PA social theorists described how these norms come about and how these processes are dependent upon continual, critically reflexive affirmation. They reflect ancient philosophy’s focus on epistemological processes that uphold these norms and social reality. These norms were distinctly social in nature, providing a larger social context of PA. Is this enough of a normative foundation for a praxis and praxiology for the American State?
Shared Norms and Values

Amy Guttmann and Dennis Thompson maintain that the articulation of shared political norms and values is necessary to American government. In their joint work, *Ethics & Politics: Cases & Comments*, Guttmann and Thompson explain that:

Because in a democracy officials and institutions are supposed to act in our name and only on our authority, we want their actions to conform to the moral principles we share with each other. …Moral or ethical principles, broadly speaking, express the rights and duties that individuals should respect when they act in ways that seriously affect the well being of other individuals and society, and the conditions that collective practices and policies should satisfy when these similarly affect the well-being of individuals and society.  

The discussion of political praxis and praxiology may be informed by social philosophy to the extent that the formal governing power of the state reaches into the broader socio-economic context or the broader social reality of that nation. In some nations, governing permeates most aspects of the social world; while in others, the reach of government into the daily social world of the citizens and their daily activities is formally limited. The United States limited its government actions within that larger and diverse social context through the Constitution.

The Constitution recognizes both individual interests and public interests and sets a government in motion to ensure and to balance both. American PA then cannot set out to affect all social values and norms; public administration must consider the limitations placed on its administrative activities. American PA praxis and praxiology must be viewed within the limited sphere of constitutional values and norms within the vastly broader context of the social reality within the United States. Constitutional, rather than social, values must provide the foundation for praxis and praxiology.

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For the United States, public administrative praxis and praxiology must implement shared agreement for the vast spectrum of cultural and social norms and values:

Although political ethics must be consistent with a more general theory of ethics, it cannot be the same as ordinary ethics because political like differs in morally significant ways from private life. More than most citizens, public officials assume responsibility for protecting the rights and interests of all of us. They act in our name and on our behalf. And the environment in which they act is largely impersonal and intractable. Often it is populated with powerful people and institutions that are hostile, sometimes extremely hostile, to the purposes of public-spirited officials. These and other differences between public and private life do not make ethics irrelevant to politics. If anything they make it all the more important. But they do require us to take account of the special characteristics of politics as we frame our moral judgments.  

Guttmann and Thompson continued by noting the lack of discussion of political ethics in American literature. This reflected observations made by the PA scholars in the last chapter. This made sense in light of what these scholars have pointed out in their work. If one viewed administrative activity as nothing more than instrumental mechanizations, then self-conscious authorship and responsibility at the level of political ethics simply would not be reached. Instead, White, Harmon, Denhardt and Catron called for acknowledgement that administrative action did reach, had to reach, the level of norms and values. Guttmann and Thompson echoed these concerns from their focus on political ethics, while also reflecting an Aristotelian view of a life of politics:

Discussions of political ethics are hard to find in the literature on American politics or moral philosophy. Texts in American government tend to concentrate on the mechanics of power. If they do not banish ethics from politics, they keep it safely segregated in a realm of ideas that rarely intrude into the real world of politics. The literature of moral philosophy often takes the opposite, equally mistaken, approach. It introduces the principles of ordinary morality into politics without change.

107 Ibid., p. xiii.
It attends to none of the special features of political life—neither the necessities of politics in general nor the imperatives of democratic politics in particular. The moral values of the political process itself, so important in a democracy, usually meet with benign neglect.\textsuperscript{108}

Moral principles in their pristine form often seem to have little critical force in politics. Either they are so general that everyone readily accepts them as truisms, or they are so extreme that almost no one takes them seriously….context matters in political ethics.\textsuperscript{109}

\textbf{Defining American PA}

Returning to the work of Robert Denhardt, the challenge became one of defining American PA in political terms and then using this identity to articulate the values and norms for it:

Public administration theorists seem to dispute endlessly about their work, hence, there seems little possibility of developing anything approximating a paradigm in the field. This confusion has been described in a number of interesting ways. Years ago, for example, Dwight Waldo (1961, p. 210) referred to organization theory as an “elephantine problem.” More recently, Waldo (1968), Golembiewski (1977), Ostrom (1974), and others have comments on the “crisis of identity” in public administration, a situation in which disagreement about the direction of the field prevents us from addressing certain problems.\textsuperscript{110}

Denhardt, instead, would describe the problem as on in public administration theory itself:

There is indeed an identity problem in public administration theory, although I would describe it instead as a crisis of legitimacy, in which the agreed-on bases of theory fail to reflect or respond to the needs of actors in the field— theorists, practitioners, and citizens. In fact, I would argue, there is considerable, although often implicit, agreement as to the proper direction of public administration theory, but questions of the legitimacy of theory arise when attempts are made to relate mainstream theory to practice.\textsuperscript{111}

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., pp. xii-xiii.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., pp. xv-xvi.
\textsuperscript{110} Denhardt, pp. 150-151.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid.
The first step to relating PA praxiology to praxis may be in understanding why PA has not established an identity or perceived legitimacy after several hundred years. As discussed in the last chapter, part of the delay may be attributable to the early corruption of American PA that gave rise to a concern for reform and authority and control, and that ignored the need for a political normative foundation. The polity did not look to the corrupt administration to right itself. The issues of corruption coincided with the rise of logical empiricism that offered a limited view of human knowledge and practices in its instrumental managerialism. A corrupt administration was a problem that could be corrected by authority and control over mechanistic behaviors of individuals and collectives. The other parts of the government, the uncorrupt parts, had to exert their authority and control over PA; they needed to use that set of instrumental solutions to reach the goal of eliminating the potential for corruption from administration. The social theorists who advocated a normative foundation for PA were not able completely break through the dominance of PA theory and practice by logical empirical managerialism. These theorists’ asserted a critically reflexive, responsible, creative and proactive man. This human being had the ability and responsibility to create and recreate social institutions, including political ones. This being accepted full responsibility and accountability for human and administrative action. Apparently this view of human being could not be reconciled with the instrumental tradition and its preoccupation with control and authority. Therefore, the question as to whom would exert such authority and control over administration continued to plague discussions of PA. In addition, a different—but related—type of control issue emerged among political scientists with the dramatic growth in administrative agencies during and after World War II.
This growth brought political and economic concerns about big government to the forefront of the public interest discussions.

Social theorists’ concerns regarding corruption and the need for control were joined by questions regarding PA’s political legitimacy. This line of inquiry followed two primary paths. One path held that the Founders never anticipated PA—otherwise the agencies would have been named as the fourth branch of government. Therefore, this path concludes, PA must be considered illegitimate, even if also considered to be necessary. The point for these followers became one of minimizing and controlling this “necessary evil” that arose from modern times and mass society. This view sought to place PA under the control of one of the three named and legitimized branches of government. The challenge was selecting the most legitimate one. A form follows function type of reasoning.

An alternative view was more practical in its conclusions. Granted, PA originally had not been conceived to have the potential to become the force—with the reach and power over every day lives of citizens—it indeed had become by the mid-twentieth century. However, now that it had grown to the point it was an indispensable aspect of modern American government, the Constitution should be changed to make PA a formal branch of government. More of a function follows form argument. The challenge here was the necessity of the constitutional amendment process that could open up unforeseen concerns about the current government amidst an every more complex and diverse set of modern day values and norms.

In contrast to these two major streams of thought, a comparatively unpopular and more challenging third path was that followed by the preeminent scholar John Rohr.
In his *To Run a Constitution*,¹¹² despite the challenges, Rohr thoughtfully and convincingly has established the political legitimacy of PA at the time of the Founding down through to modern times. This legitimacy both eliminates the need to provide additional control mechanisms by the executive, legislative or judicial branches of government, or to reopen the Constitution to a major amendment process in order to legitimate PA as a fourth branch or power of government. In taking a path less traveled, as often is the case with critical discoveries, Rohr has revealed how American PA has contributed—continues to contribute to all three primary powers of government, in keeping with the Constitution. In doing so, Rohr has accomplished a challenging feat. His work also has raised the activity and study of PA to a status that reinforces the work of PA social theorists that was presented in the last chapter.

*To Run a Constitution* allows a reconciliation of political theory and values, with social theory and values, as the Constitution requires. This astounding Constitution rests on an implicit and explicit notion of American PA to a Federal government of the people, for the people, by the people.

**Controlling PA**

James Madison, in Federalist 51, highlighted the central issue of control faced by our founding fathers in their framing of a new government:

> In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself.

Under the authority of the new government, men would govern other men and, at the same time must be compelled to apply the norms and values of this government to themselves. The founders faced the challenge of trying to create a framework where the authority to exert control over others was balanced by a sense of accountability for exerting such control. The need to establish a new nation under one government was tempered by the fear of abuse by that government. The framing sought to establish a representative government, an extended republic and to limit the reach of that government to allow maximum social and cultural diversity. First and foremost, the Federal government had to safeguard against tyranny.


> In a polity that has always distrusted establishments, how may such a system be held responsible through representative democratic processes? ¹¹³

This lead to a continuing confusion according to Price:

> We are confused about what government should do, how it should do it, and how we may hold it responsible for what it does. ¹¹⁴

In the United States, two main perspectives emerged regarding how to resolve this concern about control, an issue central to the dominant managerial instrumentalism. One advocated placing PA under the control of the executive or legislative branch, the other suggested a constitutional amendment to make PA a formal branch of government and responsible for controlling or self-governing itself.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 1.
While unable to develop a viable instrumental solution, the work of both perspectives has clearly established that PA is essential to the development, execution and adjudication of policy at the level of specific policy issues. They also have established that PA effectively spans the public interest in general and individual interests in particular while spanning governmental powers and structures. Instead of changing either the practices or the theory, this discussion will turn back to the Constitution itself in order to consider PA in that normative context.

The Enlightened Approach

To Run a Constitution provides a comprehensive and enlightened approach to appreciating the Founders’ understanding of PA and its place among the structures and functions of the new nation. This approach aligns with observations of PA already discussed in this chapter. Ironically, the work calls for neither a change to practices or to constitutional theory; instead, both are placed within the American tradition. As such, this work constitutes a founding for American PA.

Constitutional Legitimacy

The purpose of To Run A Constitution is “to legitimate the administrative state in terms of constitutional principle.” There were two intended audiences, “public administrators themselves and interested Americans who are the beneficiaries, victims, citizens, and authors of the administrative state.” Because the United States is an extended Republic, it would seem that the people purposely have reserved to themselves the ultimate responsibility for the Nation; that the audiences for this work really extend beyond public administrators to all of the appointed and elected officials of the Federal government and most importantly, to all citizens of this Nation.
This establishes a potential transparency to government without instituting conceptions of grassroots democracy which is beyond our Constitutional Republic. However, because of the historical reaction to corruption in government and the focus on managerial control as the only solution, a lack of knowledge and skills regarding the normative foundation of our State, the Constitutional, has been considered acceptable for those engaged in American PA:

In writing for the Public Administration community, my goal is to introduce both practitioners and students of Public Administration to the constitutional origins of our profession. Unfortunately, the word *introduce* is used with some precision. Constitutional law and history are sadly neglected in academic programs in Public Administration and in public-management training as well.\(^{115}\)

PA praxiology instead focuses only on aspects of praxis, including behaviorism applied through management control theory, policy analysis/program evaluations, budgeting, personnel, economics, political science, without much regard to their fundamental normative context within the American State. Absent, among other critical social theory and philosophy, are discussions of what unquestionably is the normative foundation of our State, the Constitution, the value statement that provides the context for all decision-making by public servants, elected or appointed. What exacerbates this neglect is the historical de facto tokenism that has accompanied the taking of the oath by public servants through the years to uphold this Constitution, as Rohr has observed:

Because public administrators at virtually all levels of government take an oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States, this neglect deprives the profession of the opportunity to consider an important normative foundation for its activities. An oath is a profound moral commitment…. It seems fitting that those who take an oath to uphold the Constitution should be invited to reflect seriously on how the object of their oath grounds the agencies they manage.\(^{116}\)

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\(^{115}\) Rohr, p. ix.

\(^{116}\) Ibid.
It seems not only fitting that PA praxiology would include constitutional theory and would include studies of how such theory is applied, how the constitutional values are balanced and applied through the public service, through the PA, an essential component of American government. Having identified his audiences, Rohr then moves to the central purpose of his work, to legitimate the administrative state. It is through such awareness, acquired in the way of knowledge and skills that Rohr seeks to ensure individual members of PA are equipped to implement the Constitution through their agency activity:

In grounding the nature and function of the administrative state in constitutional principle, we invite administrators to assimilate the salient values in the constitutional heritage. If they do this, they will find at the center of this heritage a profound belief in individual rights and in the securing these rights as the great, overarching purpose of American government. If administrators look to this heritage to grant legitimacy to vigorous administration, they will find what they seek; but they will find much else besides. They will find principles capable of instructing them on how to avoid the worst excesses of the administrative state. To legitimate is to tame, to civilize.117

It is this legitimization, this taming of the administrative state that may temper preoccupation with traditional management control theories and open discussion to fuller, social action theories that admit the ancient philosophical concerns with the noble, ethical aspects of governing. For Americans dismayed by their growing central government, Rohr’s point here is crucial. Even if historically significant centralized governments have been observed to grow through expanded public services and servants, it is not the growth that history has condemned, but the values realized through such growth. Increasing complex societies continue to attract people looking for opportunities to secure life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for themselves and their families.

117 Ibid., p. xiii.
As countries have developed, their economies and societies become increasingly diverse and complex. The tempering of equity and equality in access to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness brings about the need for clarifications and opportunities by government. These have resulted in more complex types and numbers of public services. In this day-to-day environment, the focus on ensuring equal and equitable services as means to addressing and rectifying inequalities and inequities, and to further National prosperity and security, can obscure other overarching constitutional values.

Constitutional knowledge and skills are requisites to ensuring that American PA remains focused on how to carry out these public service mandates while ensuring the protection of individual values. The Constitution guarantees equal and equitable policies for all its citizens while also guaranteeing individual freedoms, while also guaranteeing the limited reach of a limited Republic through its Constitution.

Establishing the Legitimacy of the Administrative State

Rohr first established that the administrative state could—in principle—be legitimated by retracing the critical discussions taking place at the time of the founding of the Republic. He examined the Framers’ original intent to establish a balanced system of powers in the federal or central government; a government powerful enough to prevent tyranny, and powerful enough to protect and ensure individual rights. Rohr constructed his argument in three steps:

(1) The combination of powers in administrative agencies does not violate Publius’s relaxed standard of separation of powers, (2) the higher researches of the career civil service fulfill the constitutional design of the framers by performing a balancing function originally assigned to the Senate, and (3) the career civil service en masse heals the defect of inadequate representation in the Constitution.118

118 Ibid., p. 171. Also, see pp. 1-46 for an eloquent as well as definitive discussion of the founding of the Republic.
Rohr then moved beyond what he termed his “legal technical” argument to an examination of the “founders in speech,” the work of Wilson and Goodnow. Like the social action theorists, Rohr expressed difficulty with tradition that emerged from these “academic founders of American PA.” However, unlike social theorists advocating a fuller appreciation of human knowledge and action and of the social context of PA, Rohr’s objection focuses on the consequences of Wilson’s and Goodnow’s conscious departure from the Framers’ documented intents:

Their unhappy legacy is a theory of Public Administration that is at odds with the primary legitimating symbol of American politics, the Constitution of the United States.\(^{119}\)

Third, Rohr examined the New Dealers as “the founders in deed” of the administrative state noting their “serious effort to square their administrative innovations with the funding principles of the Republic.”

Despite notable lapses, especially in the Brownlow Report, the practical thoughts and actions of the New Dealers offer more reliable guidance on aligning the administrative state with constitutional principles that did the elegant academic works of Wilson and Goodnow.\(^{120}\)

Rohr emphasized that his discussion relied on constitutional tradition rather than constitutional text, as did his ultimate goal:

I found compelling the image of the Constitution as the conclusion of the great public argument of one hundred and fifty years of colonial experience and the premise of the great public argument of the next two centuries. This put the Constitution at the center of American argument. It was to this high ground that I wanted to bring the administrative state so that it could claim its rightful place in the public argument alongside such established worthies as judicial activism, presidential leadership, the war powers, and civil liberties.\(^{121}\)

\(^{119}\) Ibid.

\(^{120}\) Ibid., p. 172.

\(^{121}\) Ibid., p. 173.
Rohr’s notion of the great public arguments invokes ancient philosophical
traditions as well as the work of the public administration social action theorists and their
concern with ongoing, authentic dialogue that results in inter subjective agreements on
values that become the basis for social and political praxis. Rohr’s goal was to ensure the
administrative state continued to be a part, a legitimate part, of the ongoing great
arguments essential to a constitutional government dedicated to protecting individual
freedoms:

It is because the regime was founded in argument that I have emphasized
argument throughout this book—the argument that Woodrow Wilson and Frank
Goodnow had with the framers; the argument over the ICC; the New Dealers’
argument with the conservative Court of the mid thirties; the argument within
New Deal circles that surfaced in the tone of the Brownlow Report, as opposed to
that of the Attorney General’s Report. Because the founding was in argument, it
was only fitting that the development of American politics should be in argument
as well. And because the administrative state is part of American politics—a
terribly important part today—it, too, should be part of the argument that is a
projection in time of the act of founding.\footnote{Ibid., p. 180.}

Once legitimated in terms of the founding of the Republic, the founding of the
study of PA and the founding in deed of the administrative state, PA continues to uphold
and implement the Constitution:

The role of the Public Administration is to fulfill the objective of the oath of
office: to uphold the Constitution of the United States. This means that
administrators should use their discretionary power in order to maintain the
constitutional balance of powers in support of individual rights.
This, of course, is what the Congress, the president, and the courts are supposed to
do as well. This unity of purpose is as it should be, because the Public
Administration, like Congress, president, and courts, is an institution of
government compatible with the constitutional design of the framers. Congress,
the president, and the judiciary, taken discretely, either constitute or head one of
the three great “branches” of government.* Each contributes in its own peculiar
way to the grand end of maintaining the constitutional balance of power in
support of individual rights. The Public Administration neither constitutes nor
heads any branch of government, but is subordinate to all three of them.
Like Congress, the president, and courts, the Public Administration makes its distinctive contribution in a manner that is consistent with its peculiar place, which is one of subordination.123

Rohr, like other political theorists, observes that agencies do align themselves with these three formal powers at different times and do affect policy formulation. However, unlike other theorists, Rohr’s point is not to criticize this activity, but instead to examine this functioning using a constitutional framework. In the end, Rohr finds such activity to contribute to constitutional governance. Unfortunately, agencies themselves miss the significance of their contributions to constitutional government.

Administrative agencies often do choose among constitutional masters, but they usually do so as a matter of fact and seldom as a matter of constitutional principle. Their preoccupation with the low arts of organizational survival blinds them to the brighter angels of their nature. They should lift their vision to see themselves as men and women who “run a Constitution.” The normative theory that I propose is intended to encourage administrators and the public to think about administrative behavior in constitutional terms.124

Pivotal to this normative theory is the constitutional oath required of each public administrator. For Rohr, this oath “captures nicely the tension between administrative autonomy and subordination.”

The oath to uphold the Constitution legitimates some kind of administrative independence; but precisely because it is an oath to uphold the Constitution, it has the potential to tame, channel, and civilize this independence in a way that will make it safe for and supportive of the founding principles of the Republic.125

American PA Praxis and Praxiology

Rohr’s work has provided the long needed normative political foundation for an American praxiology and praxis.

123 Ibid., p. 182.
124 Ibid., p. 183.
125 Ibid., p. 187.
Using this foundation, the work of the ancient philosophers and that of PA’s social action theorists can be utilized to improve current governing. Taken together, these three discussions urge a praxiology focused on continual improvement of execution, legislation, adjudication and administration—surely required by the adoption of the Constitution that implements the extended Republic. Together, these three normative discussions provide a vision of governing as committed, noble and informed acting. This acting requires adherence to central values, including a sense of responsibility to the Nation that far exceeds preoccupation with managerial control and accountability expressed only in hierarchical or bureaucratic terms. Together, these three discussions awaken American PA to its intrinsic, dynamic nature within an ever-changing, evolving and powerful polity that requires much of its Federal government, as have all significant polities through history. Using this foundation, the work of the ancient philosophers and that of PA’s social action theorists can be utilized to improve current governing. Taken together, these three discussions urge a praxiology focused on continual improvement of execution, legislation, adjudication and administration—surely required by the adoption of the Constitution that implements the extended Republic. Together, these three normative discussions provide a vision of governing as committed, noble and informed acting. This acting requires adherence to central values, including a sense of responsibility to the Nation that far exceeds preoccupation with managerial control and accountability expressed only in hierarchical or bureaucratic terms.
Together, these three discussions assume government as the institutionalization of change through public policies that address varying public interests. Together, these three discussions awaken American PA to its intrinsic, dynamic nature within an ever-changing, evolving and powerful polity that requires much of its Federal government, as have all significant polities through history.
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

American public administrative actions, and the study of these actions, should be contributing to a more perfect union, establishing justice, insuring domestic tranquility, providing for the common defense, promoting the general welfare and securing the blessings of liberty for all persons in the United States. The Constitution sets for these responsibilities for Federal government. This is the explicit commitment made by each administrator upon entering the Federal government, permanently or temporarily. This is the implicit commitment made by each student of American Public Administration (PA). The Constitution also sets forth the governing mechanism, how to accomplish and sustain the constitutional state.

There are several basic questions related to ensuring the Constitution is administered properly. How can a polity ensure that each administrator is able to make that critical connection from the daily—and often technical—and often ad hoc—policy and policy implementation situations back to the Preamble and the Constitution itself? What knowledge should inform administrative actions? What must be included in the study of such informed action?

American public administration contributes to the development of policy and interprets policies and programs during implementation. Administration manages and monitors implemented policies and programs.
Clearly, the technical expertise an administrator brings to the administration of government is necessary for policy development. However, this does not make technical policy expertise sufficient to fulfill constitutional responsibilities.

Each administrator must come prepared with an extensive knowledge of the Constitution and the constitutional context, or, more pragmatically, must be expected to obtain such knowledge once a part of the Federal government. Each student of American Public Administration must obtain the requisite knowledge to exert an appropriate and critically needed effect on administrative actions.

John Rohr has established the political legitimacy of public administration at the time of the founding of the nation and explained how this legitimacy has been assumed, understood and misunderstood in the intervening years. Knowledge includes the many contributions made by American PA over the life of the Republic. PA has extended the reach of each of the three primary powers of Federal government, in compliance with the founding constitutional structures and functioning. Formal education and training programs that are designed to prepare public administrators often omit these discussions. In contrast, a sufficient praxiology must include examination of the Constitution and the constitutional context that underlies all Federal activity in order to provide administrators with knowledge adequate to inform their actions.

Praxiology must integrate knowledge regarding organizational management, human resource development, policy analysis/program evaluation, budgeting and strategic resource allocation, economics and political science to the American constitutional context. Praxiology must prepare administrators to implement the Constitution through the many and varied agency activities.
Whether analyzing legislation to implement a program, developing a human capital management plan, meeting the new demands of a once more rewritten Office of Budget and Management Circular, or restructuring policy networks to increase effective policy data collection, administrators must keep in mind that, as they do these things, they also must uphold individual rights and other constitutional values. Consciously upholding the Constitution and establishing justice for all must be practiced to the point of competence, if not elegance or ease.

As Rohr also has established, the administrative state must be centrally focused on its overarching mission, the delivery of the constitutional state. Praxiology must be sufficient to allow and support such praxis. Given historical circumstances, American PA must transition from covert to overt praxis—from an internalized sense of political illegitimacy to one of proud public legitimacy. In this way, the public administration, and the citizenry, may better perceive purposive attempts by that public administration to insure domestic tranquility and provide for the common defense.

The United States is an increasingly complex grouping of societies, and it appears that it will continue to attract new peoples and new social groups looking for greater chances to secure life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for themselves and their families within a political context that ensures their continued identities. These societies have different ways of knowing about the world, including the extra-analytic, and differing prioritization of their cultural values. The United States will continue to be diverse and complex, resulting in the need for more complex and greater public services. The service delivery systems will have to respect and reflect extra-analytic values in order to promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty for all.
Praxiology then must include more than the traditional—and still dominant—
instrumental management theories that rely on authority and control. PA must discard
those political theories that continue to argue its illegitimacy or call for a traumatic, but
unnecessary, change to the constitutional state. Knowledge about human being must be
part of this praxiology. Administrators must be respected not just for their technical and
constitutional knowledge, but also for what they bring as human beings to their work.

Orion White, Jr., Michael Harmon, Robert Denhardt and Bayrd Catron have
established that praxiology must include organizational theories that assert human being,
individual and collective, as alive, dynamic, unlimited and, at its most fundamental,
noble. This is the view of the individual under our Constitution. They also have
established that praxiology must begin with the assumption that human being, including
all human organization and social realities, do change over time, and can be consciously
changed over time. Individual and collective being can be subjected to humanly
authored, purposeful change. Human beings can and do and must work in creatively
effective and efficient and politically aware ways if they enter the public service. The
constitutional state can be delivered in all of its glory.

The Federal government does appear to have realized over the last decade that
specialized technical policy expertise may not be adequate for senior career executives.
Broader organizational and managerial knowledge and skills are needed, and the ability
to change organizations is now highly valued.

The Senior Executive Service (SES) now requires candidates to demonstrate
various leadership competencies, in additional to evidencing various technical expertise.
Necessary professional accomplishments include those related to leading change, leading people, being results driven, having business acumen, and being successful in developing coalitions and ensuring effective communications.\footnote{126 See www.opm.gov.} This is startling in that such executives head agencies with work environments still entrenched in authority and control.

Praxiology then must include studies regarding the consequences of requiring traits in executive managers that run counter to the entrenched authority and control mentalities rampant in Federal agencies. Praxiology must study whether the successful SESs simply continue to turn to the policy webs alone for success or are able to actually change the agencies that surround them, individual by individual. Allowing promising individuals to spend years within behaviorally hostile and controlling environments and then asking them to demonstrate such leadership knowledge and skills—as senior executive—is an intriguing notion that bears study. Why not place the same requirements on all administrators, regardless of level, to concretely and materially move Federal government toward its full constitutional potential? Does each SES actually practice the SES mantra in the daily workplace? These issues also bear study.

As White explained, meaningful work processes can be brought into action only through a commitment to do so. This commitment must be shared by senior executives and by all other organizational members. Administrators have the responsibility to uphold the Constitution, but praxiology must provide the awareness and then the knowledge that will lead to an informed commitment and an open expectation to do so.
Harmon’s face-to-face situations can accomplish this transition to political awareness and action. Such situations already seem to have culminated in a number of informal and very critical policy webs. If openly informed by sound constitutional considerations, they remain superior units of analysis within government. Administrators learn that they gain an awareness of an “other” as a result of such encounters. It is this experience of symbolization that permits reflection or a temporary standing back from immediate events and experiences. This understanding allows administrators to make judgments, to develop the reflective capabilities that allow them to recognize decisions and justify their appropriateness. This is a conscious and rational and necessary reflective capability that allows for administrators to project intention into future action.

Through ongoing, inter-subjective sharing of individual consciousness and lessons learned about the administration of the state, praxiology will gain additional valuable knowledge that, in turn, will inform future praxis. Sufficient commonalities in thought processes allow for participation in the development of this knowledge—these commonalities are the constitutional values each citizen upholds as a critical part of the Republic. This is a political-value infused and ongoing conversation. This intentional, inter-subjective creation and maintenance of the administration of government will constitute politically right action. This clearly places a premium on understanding that administrative praxis is conscious, rational, intentional human interaction.

Denhardt points praxiology toward the work of Karl Marx, as carried forward by the Frankfurt School, to assist in developing praxiology, especially organization theories.
These concepts provide the connection between individual interests and Federal interests, as urged by Publius. Praxis contains the relationships between individual learning and acting, and theory and practice. PA improves through informed and continual critique. Administrators learn about governing by studying history and learning what constitutes good government. This study raises consciousness and provides learning medium for identifying and resolving contradictions in practices and studies that in turn lead to greater clarity of administrative purpose and actions.

The polity can trust the public administration to do the constitutionally right thing. Bayard Catron has established that doing the right thing is a primal awareness that is the foundation for shared interests, concerns and commitments. Human beings constantly check with those around them to discern what the right thing to do is. This checking process is fundamental to social being and to constitutionally boundaried administrative praxis. Praxiology would tackle the poignant challenge of how to define the right thing in constitutional terms. This would include some consensual agreement among administrators and students of PA, including the citizenry.

As Catron also explains, administrative praxis must preserve the vitality of the initial inter-subjective political agreement, the founding of the Nation, while providing patterns for subsequent inter-subjective policy actions. The Constitution founded various political customs and institutions to be predictably normative so they could and would perpetuate the State. Praxiology must embody these origins and praxis evidence their values or the Constitution becomes reified and governance becomes static.

The perennial challenge for the PA is to avoid dogma, to keep constitutionalism alive and responsive, to ensure a prudent praxis.
Administrators make a practical and normative choice to administer this State. They develop reliable ways of carrying out their responsibilities to enable a normative predictability. Administrators must be conscious that those before them, with them and following them maintain control and responsibility associated with praxis through their individual and shared abilities to critically reflex with, and to check back on, those practices. Praxis is an intrinsic aspect of being in the administration of government, being normatively practical is intrinsic to social and political being. In this way, theory and practice are, as Catron suggested, not so much sequential as co-present in daily agency activities. Knowledge is mediated by constitutional ethics and norms, as act upon it.

Following the tradition of Peirce and Dewey, Catron and Habermas, that scientific examination of values is a spirited, and yet also concrete and historical, discussion. Values are accessed; values are available for immediate examination, confirmation, rejection, and reformulation. PA praxis and praxiology are organized and reorganized in reference to reified constitutional norms that can be continually and critically subjected to reexamination. This is the great American constitutional experiment in democracy. Inter-subjective, political discourse is the collective analogue to individual thinking and acting with its critical reflexivity. Praxiology embodies political ethics most simply because administrative praxis has a collective political character, and deals inevitably with man’s relations with fellow human beings within the political state.

These relations are governed or regulated by practices that are historical products of political circumstances.
The communal setting of the norms of those practices is constantly subject to criticism, to a reflective process by means of which persons, separately and collectively, reconstruct and reconstitute the terms of their political relations to one another. The State, once established, must continually be renewed through such discourse.

The Constitution establishes a nation with and a dynamic government to act on behalf of the people while preserving the political values of the nation. The founders limited Federal governmental actions within the larger social context of diverse individual and varied public interests. They set in motion a Federal government to ensure the continuation of both, with the protection of individual rights being the prime directive. American PA must respect the fullest sense of human individual and collective being while realizing its reach is boundaried, limited. The individual and collective must study the fascinating horizontal webs of administrative relationships that span agencies and the multitude of executive, legislative and judicial units dealing with policy issues. To be successful, the civil servant must learn to work within these relationships, understanding the issues that prompt them. In doing so over time, a type of continuity developments that encompasses past histories and issues, and the future is viewed in terms of these issues, across political administrations. These webs are dynamic, reflecting the strength of ongoing, everyday governmental concerns regarding the issues with which they deal.

It is ancient philosophy that provided the first recognition and understanding of meaningful individual thinking and social theorizing, and individual acting and social practicing or praxis.
It is this ancient discussion that informs each administrator as to how individuals and societies come to value and know their world in general and their State in particular. Modern discussions within analytic science and philosophy of science must be understood within this historical philosophical discussion. The world now blends the ancient languages and their meaning paradigms, the many disciplinary offshoots continue to proliferate while attempts to integrate become more and more necessary for knowledge and practice to move ahead to affect the social and material worlds in positive ways.

The historical evolution of ideas regarding the nature of individual thinking and acting, and social knowledge and actions, has developed as the social world around mankind has developed. Aristotle distinguished between knowledge about transient human affairs while praising the life of politics, informed by ethics, as the most virtuous of human being. He also distinguished a life dedicated to learning about what was timeless and lasting, what was divine in the world, despite transient human affairs. Aristotle did not link the lasting to the realm of the everyday. This separation of the lasting from the every day social world has been viewed as the reinforcement of a social, material world beyond human authorship. True knowledge was viewed as being out there waiting to be discovered. There was not an awareness of how individual and communal assumptions about reality, and the associated values, affect how people view social and material realities or how they act upon these realities to maintain or to change them. The beginning of this critical awareness comes to American PA centuries later.

Praxiology must encompass the knowledge regarding those facing medieval life when individuals and collectives became critically dependent upon a sense of lasting and reliable knowledge that informed human action within a social, material world.
These medieval philosophers and theorists went against centuries of thought by focusing on lasting aspects of the transient social world. They grappled with the realization that their medieval reality was a complex realm of human activity reliant on a complex and ever developing set of distinctions and applications of knowledge. The Arab philosophers expressed their awareness of the need for types of knowledge to be formally acknowledged and examined, especially knowledge related to medicine, alchemy and navigation. They also acknowledged similar types of knowledge related to their social world, including studies of material production—economics—and studies of human activities—politics. All of these were recognized as lasting types of knowledge applied to a transient world. These philosophers left behind more ancient valuations of knowledge given the exigencies of their historical times. A century later, Hugh of St. Victor, a world apart from the Arab philosophers, also recognized the need to provide a better differentiation among types of knowledge. Current PA finds itself in a similar position and can learn from this past.

To meet this challenge, Hugh of St. Victor distinguished for western philosophy four equally critical types of knowledge: logica, theoria, practica and mechanica. As had the Arabs a century before him, his elimination of valuing one type of knowledge over another opened up a fresh perspective for western philosophical thought. His recognition that basic cultural knowledge was embodied in language and the discursive arts is significant. Public administrators must be able to understand and talk, converse, about their constitutional responsibilities; to do so, they must have language that enables the sharing of such conceptualizations.
In a global social reality, where the keep-it-simple-stupid sound byte continues to reign supreme, the introduction back into administrative language of such words as noble, virtuous, prudent and such concepts as critical reflexivity and even constitutional responsibility are enormous needs. They are also required. Language represents the politically-culturally agreed and required conceptual formats that cannot help but bias expression and understanding of knowledge expressed in its terms. As such, a constitutionally oriented logica must become the paradigmatic basis of PA culture.

Like Aristotle before him and Catr on much later, Hugh of St. Victor acknowledged that human beings have a desire for happiness and a desire for the right way to achieve happiness. The examination of the constitutional ends is open to this practical reason. Administrative judgment can determine how right the selection of a means is by how close it is to right constitutional action. For Aristotle, theoretical knowledge, with its detection of truth, was needed within the practical realm of human affairs to determine the consistency of the state of human happiness. Centuries later, Aquinas shifted notions of virtue to the pursuit or the means, not the end of happiness itself. Praxis must accept responsibility for both the means and the ends, ensuring the means are commensurate with the ends of the State.

John Duns Scotus cautions that praxis is an extra ethical activity. Praxis is conscious and purposeful, giving rise to a higher level of human action. Praxis is human activity that can be judged right or wrong by its adherence to its intellectual origin, in this case the various theories within our constitutionally based praxiology. Praxis is human activity that is capable of conforming to intellectualization and critical discourse. Praxis yields virtue.
It is the intellectually informed acts, acts of the will that bring administrators and administration as a whole closer to delivering the more perfect union. Praxiology is the means to such praxis, praxis the means to constitutional morality.

Aristotle must be celebrated because he recognized that a life characterized by the purposive doing of politics—informed by ethics—was the noblest manifestation of the human element. Seneca expanded Aristotle’s view by observing that the life of acting and that of thinking, lives of contemplating and practicing, coincide in the individual as two aspects of human being. The virtuous man is the informed, proficient man; a man that contemplates and acts, theorizes and practices. Marx explained that man’s labor, when purposeful, lead to human making and productivity that embodied what was most noble in man’s nature. The virtuous man is the purposeful maker. Political solutions to human material reality are equivalent in value to theological or speculative solutions. Philosophy has both to change man’s ideas about the world and to change the material, historically grounded world itself. Actualization of the constitutional state is dependent upon a shared political reality that forces its way in action toward thought.

Phenomenology reveals the historical reification of American PA as illegitimate, inefficient and ineffective is the source of the current alienation of PA from legitimate and purposeful governing. Understanding how this occurred and continues to occur on the individual as well as the group level is essential to recognizing this contradiction and moving beyond it. The administrator does not first, through praxiology, distinguish the is and the ought of policy and then set out to transform the is into the ought. This would entail an unnatural separation of knowing and acting.
By appreciating the simultaneous and mutual way they were related in historical self-actualization, the administrator appreciates the full potential of administration as simultaneously both potentiality and actuality. Public administrators must come to realize and expect to act purposefully on the social, material world within constitutional boundaries. Such praxis is the conscious realization of each public administrator’s paradoxical nature: the administrator comes to know the nature of constitutional administration as the administrator acts. Praxiology must be overcome false consciousness of its role through critique for the sake of praxis.

In historically concrete terms, public administration seeks a raising of individual administrative consciousness that produces a shared realization that enables public administration to free all governance and politics to move toward a better collective human condition. Whereas consciousness raising may have been the totality for Hegel’s realization of the already perfect world, consciousness raising was but the initial step for Marx.

Praxis gives rise to the full potential of the extended Republic in the policy-centric relationships directed toward that more perfect union toward which administration perpetually strives. Peirce has explained that such inquiry is a perpetual, self-correcting process.

The study of ethics refers to the study of the norms as the preferred basis for administrative praxis. These ethics are dependent upon constitutional aesthetics that tell each administrator and the collective of administration what is to be sought as fine or virtuous in our political existence. Logic then can provide the hypothetical ground rules for administrative reasoning and discourse.
Logic must set forth these rules so that reasoning can reach its conclusion in belief, in deliberate action. Logic anticipates the end to which reason would be the means in order to give appropriate form to reason. Logic then is normative, as both ethics and aesthetics are. The norms of inquiry are themselves the source of authority for knowledge. Aesthetics involves the study of the ultimate justification of the end that determined the content of political ethical inquiry. Praxiology must include philosophy that explores the logic of political ethics and political studies must be conducted within those boundaries. Praxiology examines the adequacy of the ultimate goals and purposes that are pursued through praxis. Ultimate justifications as to rights and wrongs in administrative logic and in ethics depend upon an ultimate justification of the constitutional ends pursued through governance.

Like Peirce, Dewey explains that we must reconstruct administrative constitutional philosophy to move beyond explanation. This is necessary for administrative philosophy, American constitutional political values, to become the foundation for enlightened administrative praxis. We must add to our administrative methods of inquiry the awareness of actual, current sociopolitical issues. Constitutional philosophy and theory are then transformed from the status of sterile, isolated activity into vital political criticism. PA praxiology then leads to tangible and critical consequences for constitutional democracy itself. Praxiology must avoid misshaping and dehumanizing the citizenry in order to promote the vitality of individual freedoms as the foundation for the State.
Whereas the developing nineteenth century modern world included multiple, simultaneous applications of practical knowledge, the developing twentieth century call for greater integration of these back into conceptions of whole citizens and whole subcultures, all within a powerful State designed to protect individual freedoms for all persons. Where the physical and social sciences branched into specialized applications during the nineteenth century, the twenty first century requires new and exciting integrations and cross-disciplinary perspectives. Whereas, during the nineteenth century it appeared that epistemology had given way to methodology as specialized procedures that would yield certainty and predictability, the twenty first century celebrates the unusual, the unpredictable, and the innovative, even in its affairs of State. This new thinking out of the box, is the thinking at the level of ontology, rather than within the so narrowly defined confines of analytic procedures and techniques.

Feyerabend has rejoined aspects of ancient and analytic philosophy with his inquiry into truths gained in extra-empirical ways, including ways of knowing and learning associated with subliminal perceptions, with the more latent learning that leads to memory traces directly, to posthypnotic suggestions, and to telepathic phenomena. Experience and theoretical assumptions arise together in iterative relationships. Administrative experience is rational, conscious and sensual as asserted by analytic philosophy. Administrative experience also is irrational, unconscious and extra-sensory as asserted by ancient philosophy.

Kuhn, like Hugh of St. Victor, explained that knowledge is embedded in language in some unconscious, illogical, irrational, non-linguistic manner as well as through direct sensory experience.
This means administrators incorporate the meaning with the terms unconsciously and then rely on these meanings as truth. Learning in this sense is a language-conditioned way of viewing the world that incorporates meanings that would be cast back upon all administrative experience as if true. Knowledge is tacitly embodied in whole experience and does not require any intervening abstraction of criteria or generalization in order to be grasped and understood. Administrators assume problem-solving paradigms as they learn administrative language and then use these paradigms to learn more about administration. Kuhn’s ostention, is a mental self-patterning, a consumption and incorporation, an absorption and metabolizing type of cognitive process that accounted for nonlinguistic acquisition of language. Because of this, language always is value laden and expressive of man’s concern with problem solving. Learning is an unconscious, uncritical acquisition of distinctions and values inherent in the expression of problem recognition and solution inherent in the underlying theoretical framework. The challenge then for praxiology is to ensure the absorption of American constitutionalism into its fundamental language and logic.

In agreement with Feyerabend and Kuhn, Lakatos has explained that human learning processes are not so much objective as they are projective. Knowledge is relative to what an administrator is expected to be able to know, in ways the administrator can be expected to be able to know it. Numerous individual and collective administrative realities are projected onto one shared actuality. Administrative praxiology must then consider what expectations each administrator and administrative collectives should acquire.
Laudan has pointed out that theoretical transitions are not cumulative. Prior administrative theory will not be rejected on the basis of anomalies alone or accepted on the basis of some empirical confirmation alone. The focus of a theoretical transition must be placed on conceptual, not empirical, questions. For Laudan, theory evaluation was a comparative affair that dealt with the coexistence of rival theories. Theories are representations of more basic views of the world. Changes in theories had to be assessed within this broad context, this grouping of beliefs that supported fundamental views or perspectives of the world.

A research tradition is composed of beliefs about the kinds of entities and processes that appropriately fell within its domain. A research tradition is concerned with the epistemic and methodological norms regarding how that domain is to be examined, including how theories are to be tested, how data is gathered, what problems are significant. Due to the ontological generalities of research traditions, research traditions are not directly testable in that they do not produce specific predictions and their methodologies are not direct assertions of fact. Theories within research traditions are not necessarily consistent with one another even though they shared a basic ontological orientation and are subject to that tradition’s established methodologies. Research traditions exist to indicate what they hold as uncontroversial assumptions, to identify problems within theories that need attention, and to establish methods of data collection and methods of theory testing. Research traditions exist to confront any theory within the tradition that contradicts basic ontological and epistemological suppositions. Theories tend to be modified over time where research traditions tend to endure and provide much of the continuity noted by the history of scientific change.
The research tradition, the praxiology, of American Public Administration is one fundamentally grounded in the Constitution and its every changing historical material reality. All other theories within this distinctly American constitutional research tradition must be tested against the fundamental assumptions about the State.
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