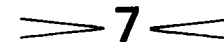# ORGANISMIC PROCESS: A PARADIGM FOR FREEING HUMAN CREATIVITY

Martha Crampton

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ORGANISMIC PROCESS: A PARADIGM FOR FREEING HUMAN CREATIVITY
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INTRODUCTION

Humankind is at a crossroads. We seem to have reached a juncture in our evolutionary process where the directions we choose can produce a quantum jump in evolutionary momentum. There is the possibility of expressing new levels of creative order and wholeness. There is the alternative of fragmentation and chaos or the totalitarian order of Orwell's *1984*. The choices we make will reflect the world views we hold.

This period is marked by an unprecedented acceleration of change. Experts of many varieties avow their incapability to predict the future. None of the theories or methods we have relied on in the past seems adequate to deal with today's world — whether this be the world of economics or politics, physics or psychology. There is a widespread sense of the need for a new paradigm.

I believe that the essence of the needed paradigm shift is from a mechanistic to an organismic world view. We must learn to perceive ourselves and the universe as animate, intentional, organic wholes in self-creating process rather than as inanimate things.

The metaphysical basis for this shift, process-organismic metaphysics, has been a minority position in Western philosophy since Aristotle. In recent decades, process metaphysics has reached a high stage of development, particularly in the works of such philosophers as Whitehead and Hartshorne.

The logical basis for this paradigm shift is also being developed. This century has seen crises in the foundations of mathematics spur research into the foundations of logic. It is clear that what we now know as conventional bi-polar logic is but one tiny and primitive fragment of an infinite variety of logics. We need to develop new logical foundations for an organismic paradigm to come to grips with dimensions of life where conventional logic breaks down — areas such as values, intentionality, and paradox.

With these foundations in mind, and with my experience in working with processes of creative synthesis in individuals and groups as a practitioner of psychosynthesis, I have formed some hypotheses about organizing principles in the animate universe. I am working toward the development of a science of living processes or organismic wholes which I have chosen to call "holodynamics,"* to emphasize its foundations in holism and dynamic process. My conviction is that such a science, though yet in its infancy, offers the hope of a ground on which to stand in responding to the challenges of our turbulent times.

*I wish to acknowledge the contribution to this work of my partner, Norman Hirst, whose years of exploring the foundations of physics, mathematics, formal logic, general systems, and value theory have helped to make possible this next step in our own creative process. His assistance in the preparation of this paper has been invaluable.

In the following section, I will set forth some basic postulates of organismic process or "holodynamics." I will then discuss the need for an organismic world view. The major part of the paper will present principles and techniques of human development derived from my practice of psychosynthesis, as they relate to the postulates of holodynamics. In the concluding section, I will develop some thoughts about implications of these principles for the design of social structures to enhance human creativity.

POSTULATES

1. The universe is an evolutionary process or organismic whole aiming toward higher orders of creative synthesis. It has the properties of a living being rather than those of an inanimate mechanism.

2. Creative synthesis is a process whereby contrasting elements are harmonized and integrated to form more complex organismic wholes. The goal and result of this process is increased value.

3. This process implies a hierarchical order in which the "higher" order or level of organization provides formal or structural principles which act as delimiting constraints for the integration of lower-order entities within itself. In other words, the higher order acts as contentless form ("forma") which shapes the raw material ("materia") of the lower order (allowing for freedom of choice of the lower-order entities).

4. An entity, system, or process may or may not be organismic.

5. An organismic entity is characterized by self-organization.

6. The self-organizing process of an organismic entity is carried out by a center of consciousness and will that we shall call its "Creative Center" or "regnant nexus" (Whitehead's term). Note: the consciousness and will of entities at different levels of the "chain of Being" would reflect their different stages of evolutionary development.

7. The concept of self-organization includes the following:
   — a center or nexus of consciousness and will that directs the process of self-organization;
   — self-responsibility and free will of this organizing center;

— increasing integration of the organism's component parts, according to the principles of creative synthesis;
— integrity of the organism's boundaries;
— a cybernetic process whereby the Creative Center adjusts its input signals according to feedback from the component parts of the organism and input from a supraordinate Creative Center.

8. In its process of evolution through creative synthesis, the universe seems to be "learning" in a particular way. This kind of learning may be called organismic or holistic, as it involves the whole entity — will and heart as well as mind.

9. This kind of organismic learning is the "name of the game," the purpose of the process, at all levels of the hierarchy. It increases the organism's level of organization and bears the fruits of wisdom rather than mere knowledge.

10. The content of this learning seems to be the principles and methods of the creative evolutionary process itself — i.e., learning to exercise free will in self-creation, with increasing degrees of love and intelligence. (Note: "Love" in this context is a principle of aggregation that implies intrinsic valuation. Intelligence is viewed as a principle of effectiveness for a given purpose. It implies an understanding of organizing principles, as choice of the optimal path requires using these principles. The law of economy or "doing more with less" is an example of intelligence in operation.

11. The process of creative synthesis is carried out through two complementary principles: differentiation and integration. Differentiation produces multiplicity. Integration combines differentiated entities into more complex wholes.

12. In the case of organismic entities, the complementary processes of differentiation and integration must be in dynamic equilibrium.

13. Every living entity is simultaneously a "whole" within itself and a "part" within a larger matrix.

14. An organismic entity (such as a human being) cannot be integrated into a more complex organismic entity (such as the planet or certain social structures) until it has reached a

critical point in its process of differentiation or individualization. The principle is that the lower-order entity must maintain its individual identity when it is integrated into the higher-order entity.

15. If such integration is attempted prematurely, the aliveness and creativity of both the lower-order and the higher-order entity will be diminished.

16. When higher-order integration is attempted before the lower-order organism has achieved a requisite degree of individualization, the lower-order entity may respond in two basic ways: primitive fusion or encapsulization (often with some oscillation between them). In the case of primitive fusion, the lower-order entity loses its boundaries and abdicates its self-organizing principle to the higher order. In the case of encapsulization, the lower-order entity augments its boundaries to preserve its identity. In both cases, the entity's individualization process is distorted and delayed.

17. As human beings we can discover the principles and techniques of evolutionary process or self-creation, and apply them in our own lives. As we increase our ability to consciously cooperate with evolutionary process, our experience of life purpose, meaning, and value is enhanced.

The Need for an Organismic View

The need to believe that the universe is unfolding according to a lawful process seems to be a fundamental need of human beings. Without this we feel lost, despairing, and deprived of something essential to the experience of value and meaning in our lives. This fact was brought home to me in a dramatic way in a workshop I led. I gave instructions to the group to "try on" a world view in which the universe was seen as arbitrary, as lacking order and purpose. They were told to imagine what it would be like to live in such a world and to observe the effects of this world view on their thoughts, feelings, and behavior. The reactions in the group ranged from apathy and depression to rage and a search for titillation. The latter even took the form, in one sub-group, of deliberate plotting to murder and

pillage — just for the thrill of it. Their violence seemed to express a profound sense of anger and frustration at the loss of life meaning, a desire to drown out the pain of this, and an indifference to life in a world without human value. As one person put it, "If there is no order in the universe, then nothing matters. So why not kill?"

I believe that the path, which we as a species will choose at the crossroads facing us today, will be decided largely by our understanding of the cosmic order — in particular whether we view it as a living, organismic order or the lifeless order of a mechanical system.

DYNAMICS OF ORGANISMIC PROCESS
APPLIED TO HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

In the following part of this paper, I will discuss some practical issues of human development as they relate to the dynamics of organismic process or "holodynamics." I will focus on areas which I have found to be of particular importance in working with people in psychosynthesis. The principles involved in differentiation of the personality as an integrated entity will be the primary focus, and will be used as the basis for extrapolation to higher orders of organismic process.

Complementarity of Differentiation and Integration — the "Janus Effect"

As our postulates state, every organismic entity is simultaneously a "whole" and a "part." Expression of both aspects is necessary to the organism's fulfillment. This complementarity has been called the "Janus effect" by Arthur Koestler, after the Roman god who had two faces looking in opposite directions. When entities are viewed as wholes, they are like the face that looks "downward" in a hierarchical system — i.e., they are self-assertive entities which organize their constituent parts and have autonomy in their own domain. When viewed as parts, they are like the face that looks "upward" in a hierarchy — i.e., they in turn become sub-wholes within a greater whole. Koestler has coined the term "holon" to refer to the Janus-faced entities which comprise a hierarchic order. He sees such hierarchies as "a universal characteristic of life."

As the Janus effect applies to human development, we need to view the human organism as a hierarchy of holons which exert their "regnant nexus" at different stages in the developmental process. The holon with which we will be primarily concerned with in this paper is that of the integrated personality, which is governed by a Creative Center called the "I" in psychosynthesis. The personality itself is constituted of three primary holons: a physical body, an emotional "body," and a concrete mental "body." These sub-systems of the personality (sometimes called "vehicles" or "sheaths" in Eastern philosophy) have various levels of organization within themselves. Thus the physical body is constituted of systems, organs, tissues, cells, molecules, atoms, sub-atomic particles, etc. Through the aeons of evolution which it shares with the animal kingdom, the physical holon has achieved a marvelous degree of creative synthesis. Were it not for the disorder in our emotional and mental vehicles, the physical body would function smoothly. A major evolutionary task now facing us is to integrate our emotional and mental "bodies" so that they too can function as harmonious wholes. This means that we will need to learn much more about the sub-systems within these bodies and about the methods for their integration. The "I" as the Creative Center of the personality has the task of developing, coordinating, and harmonizing the three personality vehicles to form an integrated personality which eventually becomes an organismic holon in its own right.

Learning the Principles of Self-Organization

To accomplish its task as Creative Center of the personality holon, the "I," like any "regnant nexus," must learn the principles and skills of self-organization. This involves several things. The "I" must first of all become conscious of itself as a source of creative will and take responsibility for the governance of its own domain. It must preserve the integrity of the organism's boundaries, and learn to integrate the component parts of the personality according to principles of value (creative synthesis through free will expressed with love and intelligence). It must also discover the methods by which it can direct the personality vehicles in the fulfillment of its purpose.

Under present cultural conditions, the task of learning which faces the "I" is long and arduous. Many people go through their whole lives without being able to integrate their personality. Making the principles and skills of self-organization more widely known would be a great contribution to human creativity and happiness, and to our ability to live in peace with one another.

Self-Responsibility and Relating to Error

An important aspect of self-organization is the learning of self-responsibility. One of the greatest barriers to this process is the misconception we have about what responsibility means. Most people react to the word as though it meant an onerous burden. The deeper cause of this seems to lie in our misunderstanding of error. We are conditioned from childhood to believe that being wrong means being "bad," and we are afraid of being responsible because we don't want to be wrong. In our dread of making mistakes, we cover them up when they do occur. Thus we miss a valuable opportunity to learn from experience. Our needless anxiety also makes us clumsy and narrow in our approach. All of this adds up to a heavy brake on the creative process. The time has come to take error out of the closet and to give it a place of honor as one of our greatest teachers. I can truly say that, among the gurus in my own life, the ones with the most transformative effect have been the tailor-made lessons of my own mistakes.

The "I," quite understandably, tends to get caught at first in the prevailing beliefs about error. When it is governed by the fear of being wrong, it loses its true identity as a source of creative will. It becomes identified with the popular games designed to avoid the experience of error: blaming, passing the buck, playing victim, etc. When people are trapped in these "false identities," they lose touch with their Creative Center. A little training in the art of making mistakes may be very helpful at this point. Such people need to be reminded that error is an inevitable part of being human, that the only real mistake is the failure to learn from our mistakes — and even this must be forgiven.

Transmutation of Error to Learning

The key to transmuting error creatively, at least when it has involved significant harm to oneself or others, is to find the right vantage point from which to view it. This implies an open heart — being able to perceive the error with clarity and compassion and to be touched at a depth level by this perception. It requires that the person see accurately the blind spots and unskillful behavior which created the situation, and that the pain of damage caused be adequately experienced. When this occurs, there is frequently an experience of compassionate sorrow — a cleansing process which theology calls "contrition" — that the person must go through as part of his or her healing. When the natural cycle is completed, it brings a realignment of the will — a "turning around" (the root meaning of "conversion") of one's orientation. The will is released to move forward in a new direction and the past is forgiven.

It is of vital importance to distinguish between the redemptive experience of contrition and a neurotic attitude of self-condemnation — a distinction which is little understood in the therapeutic field. Paradoxical as it may seem, feeling "guilty" actually prevents us from perceiving error in a transformative way. It blocks us from seeing clearly because we are more concerned with self-flagellation than we are with understanding what happened. The defensiveness engendered by feeling guilty also closes the heart and does not allow us to be truly touched by the meaning of the experience. It is an interestng fact that the heart is traditionally associated both with vision and with spiritual will. The ageless wisdom tells us that we can see clearly only with the "eye of the heart," that love alone can reveal truth. We must set aside the distorting lens of compassionless judgment so that the eye of the heart may be opened and we may know the grace of transformation.

Maintaining Organismic Boundaries

Another skill involved in self-organization is learning to maintain the integrity of the organism's boundaries. This the "I" does largely through self-responsibility. When we fail to

take responsibility for the fact that we create our own feelings, we may believe that other people have the power to "make us angry." In the act of blaming others, we lose our own ego boundaries and we become disconnected from our own causal principle.

An important concept in maintaining the integrity of our organismic boundaries is what I call the "auric field." The auric field is the domain — the sacred ground — for which we have primary responsibility in this lifetime. It is comprised of the interpenetrating energy fields (physical, emotional, mental, and beyond) which constitute our subtle structure. This subtle aspect of our constitution has long been recognized by spiritual tradition and is now being documented by technologies such as Kirlian photography. Clairvoyants who perceive these energy fields refer to them collectively as the "aura" and sometimes speak of the "auric egg" because of its ovoid form.

To protect the auric field, the "I" must own its power and responsibility as the Creative Center of the personality. It must also learn some skills for avoiding situations which could violate the aura.

"Disidentification" of the "I" from Environing Forces

The initial step in self-responsibility is for the "I" to differentiate itself from the various forces around it. These include both the urges of the personality (the inner environment) and the pressures of the external environment. It must learn that its own nature is of a different order from that of its "surroundings," that it need not passively react to the pushes and pulls around it. This "disidentification" process goes through several stages. At first the "I" discovers a still place in consciousness like the eye within a hurricane, where it can observe the phenomena of its experience without being controlled by them. Having attained this "observer" position, we can observe an emotion such as fear within ourselves without having to act on the basis of this fear.

The next step is for the "I" to learn that it is an active, causal principle within its own domain. In other words, it must realize itself as a source of intentionality, of initiatory and creative will. From being reactive, it becomes proactive. It

begins to explore various ways of shaping and directing the forces around it. Through feedback from the environment, it discovers the effects of different ways of expressing its intentionality. In this process it gradually transmutes the clumsiness of "strong will" into a more sensitive and adaptive approach, and learns to include the principles of love and intelligence. This aspect has been discussed by Assagioli in his book, *The Act of Will*, which presents some psychological laws for "doing more with less."

Taking Responsibility for our Auric Field

In order to exercise self-responsibility within the auric field, the "I" must acquire certain basic insights. These include:
— the "I" as Creative Center of the personality has dominion over its own auric field — i.e., it has the power to choose whether to include, to exclude, or to transmute the thoughts or feelings that come within its domain;
— the choice to energize particular classes of thoughts or feelings has definite consequences in both our internal and external worlds;
— that these consequences may be life-enhancing or life-negating for ourselves, for other organisms, and for the world; and
— that we are ultimately responsible for the thoughts we hold and their effects; and that our choices in this domain determine the course of our evolution.

We must eventually learn that, just as we do not allow a demented stranger to enter our home and destroy our living space, so we must exercise discernment in respect to the thoughts and feelings we entertain.

Thoughts that Interfere with Creative Evolution

Specifically, some major classes of thoughts which block creative evolution are:
— those which assume that the world, including ourselves, is thing-like rather than process-like in character;
— those which violate the principle of unconditional love for oneself or others;
— those which violate freedom of the will — i.e., which

attempt, consciously or unconsciously, to impose our will on other people, either directly through force or indirectly through manipulation.

Thoughts that Assume Thingness

As human beings we implicitly view ourselves as "things" when we identify with our behaviors or the existing attributes of our personality instead of identifying with the spiritual essence which underlies our personality expression. We become thing-like when we identify with concrete forms such as the roles or "games" we play, the things we own, or a particular aspect of our physical, emotional, or mental experience. Because we confuse these "false identifications" with our essence or Creative Center, we are afraid to let go of them. We cling to what is familiar even when it is clearly not working. It is not uncommon to see people so identified with their existing behavioral expression that they sincerely believe that they cannot change. When they get a glimpse of some emerging potential, they will quickly deny it, saying "I could never be that way; it would be totally out of character for me." This notion of "being out of character" reflects the pernicious belief that we are fated to remain the way we have been in the past, that growth and change are wrong, frightening, or simply unthinkable. This pattern is reflected on a larger scale in the well-known rigidity and resistance to change of our social institutions. We must find ways to help people and larger scale entities disidentify from their existing behaviors so that they can become open to creative transformation. To do this they must be helped to recognize their "spiritual" identity as an agent of creative process, as a conscious participant in the on-going mystery of Creation. They must experience themselves as living organisms rather than as inanimate things.

Thoughts which Violate the Principle of Unconditional Love

Love as an evolutionary principle is unconditional. That is to say, it places no conditions or limitations on the giving of itself. It is related to the concept of goodwill and is concerned with supporting the evolution and well-being of the loved one.

The recipient of unconditional love is intrinsically valued — i.e., is valued for what he/she is, in him-/herself, rather than for the sake of some extrinsic end. This principle precludes manipulation of the loved one and necessitates respect for the person's free-will.

We must begin by giving ourselves unconditional love. Without this we cannot truly love another. This means that we must eliminate the perfectionist pattern of loving ourselves only when we have measured up to some unattainable standard of perfection. We must love ourselves exactly as we are now, with all our warts and frailties, knowing that we are exactly where we need to be for our own growth.

An important step in the expression of unconditional love is the realization that we *are* a source of love. It is a dramatic and liberating insight for people to "get" that they do not have to sit around feeling sorry for themselves while they wait for someone else to love them; that they have the power within themselves to *initiate* the expression of infinite unconditional love, and thus to become Love.

We often fear loving another person because we believe it is a sign of weakness or that we may get ripped off in some way. We need to learn that "coming from Love" is the strongest place to come from, and that the power of love to transform a difficult situation is often nothing short of miraculous. When we relate to a person from love, we are supporting their essence or Creative Center, and thus we are more likely to evoke the person's best qualities. In unconditional love there is no fear; instead we are sustained by the spirit of peace within us. If we are to eliminate war in its many manifestations, we must learn that we have the power to choose peace and develop methods to help make this choice a more common one.

Thoughts which Violate Freedom of Will

We can violate the auric field of a person in many ways, including the holding of strong negative thoughts about that person. Such violation is an infringement upon the free will of the person, particularly when it involves a subtle form of manipulation which is not fully conscious to the individuals concerned. The extent to which we manipulate one another

through emotional weapons such as guilt, fear, and conditional love is not fully appreciated.

The laws of creative synthesis require that we protect our own auric field and respect that of other persons. We can protect ourselves by taking responsibility for the fact that we create our own subjective states, and by avoiding exposure to situations of violence — whether this violence be physical, emotional, or mental. If we refuse to play a victim role, we do not need to be angry or resentful. Simple communication skills can be taught for doing this without making the other person "bad." The keys lie in acknowledging both our own power and our own vulnerability, and in assuming the other person's goodwill. When one person takes responsibility to observe the laws of "right human relations," this supports the best interests of both parties. We need to realize that we are not doing people a favor by allowing them to manipulate us and, in so doing, to harm themselves.

Integration of the Personality Holon within the Self Holon

When the personality is sufficiently differentiated as an integrated holon in its own right, it can be included as a cooperative part in a higher-order holon. The organizing principle or Creative Center of this more inclusive regnant nexus is called the "Self" in psychosynthesis. It corresponds to the spiritual essence recognized by most religions and known by such names as the "soul," the "atman," or the "higher Self." When the personality is sufficiently integrated to serve as "materia" or as a vehicle of expression for the Self, the higher-order nexus gradually becomes dominant over the more self-centered nexus of the personality. As the person's sense of identity shifts "upward," the consciousness and sphere of influence is expanded, and the person becomes concerned with service from a more global perspective.

A Higher-Order Creative Center Beyond the Self Concerned with Planetary Purposes

There is reason to believe that yet another organizing center or holon comes into play in the case of more evolved human beings. Certain metaphysical systems speak of such a center as the "monad" or the "universal Self." It may be that we experience this center (or the highest order Creative Center we are able to contact) as God.

It seems reasonable to hypothesize, by extrapolation, that such a center would express itself through vehicles of more refined substance (substance at a higher vibratory level) than that of the personality vehicles, though it would subsume the latter. As a person becomes capable of responding to these subtler energy fields beyond the Self, he/she begins to attune to higher orders of planetary will, love, and intelligence. At this point the person usually experiences a sense of unfolding vocation or "calling" and senses that he/she has a unique and necessary part to play within the planetary purpose — much like being a cell within the planetary body. As a cell the person then joins with other cells in the creation of more complex structures to accomplish their common ends. Such structures (need we add?) must be organismic if they are to carry the "high voltage" of planetary purpose without being shattered.

Though we will not speculate further here on this subject, it seems important to be aware of higher-order Creative Centers as we begin to study the planet as an organism.

The Archetype of the Creative Center: Methods of Study

Though science has not yet demonstrated the tangible existence of a "Creative Center" at any level of organization, much less its mode of operation, there are many clues now available from diverse disciplines which point in the same direction and may eventually produce a breakthrough.

We have indirect evidence bearing on the existence of a Creative Center at various levels from introspective data and from the testimony of religious experience. The depth imagery of the unconscious as found in myth, ritual, religious and alchemical symbolism, dream, art, and guided imagination, provides many useful insights into the archetype of the Creative Center. There are also fascinating clues to be found in the cosmic imagination as we see it reflected in such phenomena as DNA, black holes, resonance effects, the laws of harmony, and the phenomena of electro-magnetism. Work

in the new physics such as the research on sub-atomic group structures and David Bohm's ideas about the "enfolded" and "unfolded" universe, may also help us to refine our understanding of the Creative Center.

Some of the most promising data now seems to be coming in through the discipline of General Systems Theory, as well as through certain lesser-known developments in modern formal logic. For example, the class of formalisms known as combinatory logic enables us to study the foundations of logic itself and to handle phenomena such as paradox which have frustrated traditional logic. In addition, the new meta-discipline of logic called epitheory can generate an infinite variety of logics appropriate to the various "perspectives" from which we can usefully view the world. It is my hunch that through the convergence of such disciplines we will find essential insights into organismic process.

Properties of Organismic and Non-Organismic Systems

Both organismic and non-organismic systems are constructed of various hierarchical levels through which communication and control in the system are carried out. The various elements in both types of system interface with one another to contribute their skills to the task of the system.

In a mechanical or non-organismic system the components are ordered in a deterministic fashion and must respond in a preordained way. In an organismic system, each level of the living reality is an evolving, self-organizing process in itself with a built-in principle of free will. Thus constraints or organizing principles imposed upon a lower-order Creative Center from the next level up, act more as an invitation or a "calling" than a machine-like order. In a human being the influence of the higher-order system may be experienced as controlling when the personality is not yet established as an autonomous entity. This illusion is a major source of resistance to the higher Self.

The constraints for a lower-order Creative Center are developed by the higher-order center through a combination of four variables: the universal principles of creative synthesis, which operate at all levels; the logic inherent in the realm of "materia" concerned; the particular formative or organizing principles required to guide the next step in the lower-order entity's development; and the constraints on this development which render it compatible for integration within the higher-order system. These four variables are combined by the higher-order Creative Center to form a "steering program" for the lower-order center which expresses the purpose or intentionality of the higher-order center.

The lower-order Creative Center must be able to identify with the more inclusive purpose of the higher-order Center in order to freely cooperate with it. Thus the purpose of the higher-order Center must be experienced as something to be "embraced" rather than as something imposed. The lower-order organism finds its will "attracted" to the more inclusive purpose through the principles of "love" and "intelligence" as defined in our postulates. In the case of a human being, the love and intelligence aspects (the emotional and mental "bodies") may have developed at the same rate or one may be more highly evolved than the other. In persons of a more emotional nature, embracing the higher-order purpose ("the will of God") may be experienced as a mystical marriage. Hence the term "bridal chamber mysticism" used by certain historians. In the case of persons whose mental development is dominant, the alignment of wills comes about primarily through understanding of the principles involved. In order for a complete union of wills to take place, all the "bodies" of the lower-order entity (the personality) must be "in resonance" with the higher-order field. This implies integration within and among themselves.

In non-organismic systems, the component parts are manufactured in series and are replaceable by another component of the same type. Their behavior is relatively predictable. In organismic systems, each component is unique and irreplaceable. Its behavior is unpredictable. When organismic components have differentiated as self-responsible entities, they discover that they have a unique and necessary part to play within a larger matrix. In order to find fulfillment of their life purpose, human beings need to express their uniqueness.

They need to do what is theirs alone to do. They will either resist violently or suffer spiritual death when treated as cogs in a machine.

In non-organismic systems, the various levels of organization are governed by the logic inherent in the space-time manifold — i.e., the logic of mathematics. There may be a variety of formal structures in the system, within the overall context of this logic. Thus in a computer system, we may have the following levels and formal structures.

Levels	Formal Structures
circuit components	physics
circuits	engineering circuit theory
logic circuits	boolean algebra
programming	effective processes

As we move from the lower level (components) we find increasingly complex elements being coordinated to carry out more complex processes. These elements, however, all conform to the logic of mathematics.

In the living universe we find, by contrast, various dimensions as well as levels of reality. The dimensions are characterized by different logics. Within a dimension there is a continuity of logics, though different levels within the dimension may have different formal structures. Between dimensions there is discontinuity in terms of their logic. There is thus the need for a particular type of interface processor to connect the "logic" of discontinuous realms. Such is the role of the Self in the human organism. It has the function of interfacing our four-dimensional world of space and time with another-dimensional order in which space and time as we know them are no longer relevant. Thus persons who have had certain kinds of mystical or near-death experiences report a sense of timelessness where everything seems to exist simultaneously.

How an Organismic System Learns

An organismic system is a self-organizing process. This also means that it is a learning process. A self-organizing process is one which, in response to experience, constructs an evolving structure. Increased skills are developed in the process. Thus, the self-organizing system "learns."

In operation, the Creative Center must, like Janus, "look" in two opposite directions. It must be cognizant of the entities within its own domain — i.e., the sub-entities comprising the entity which it (the Creative Center) is organizing. It must also be aware of the requirements it must satisfy as part of a larger whole.

A Creative Center is the principle of intentionality or will within an organismic system. It is learning to express its will according to the laws of creative synthesis within a particular domain. These laws are meta-principles. How they operate at a given level depends on the logic and "materia" of that level. Thus a Creative Center must learn how the laws of creative synthesis operate at the level with which it is concerned and must develop methods for wielding these laws effectively. In the case of the "I," for example, the "materia" of its domain is the physical, emotional, and mental bodies. Learning, for the "I," means discovering the principles and techniques for integrating the personality vehicles into a harmonious and differentiated whole.

Cybernetic Relations Between Self and the "I"

The relationship between the Self and the "I" is similar to the relationship shown in the diagram below for an adaptive cybernetic system.
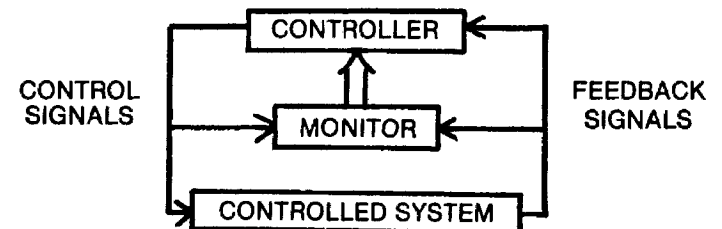
If we left out the monitor we would have a simple cybernetic system. By placing the monitor in the system, the monitor can observe system performance and send information to the controller for changing the performance of the system.

The Self corresponds to the monitor; the "I" to the controller. As a higher-order Creative Center tuned to a different logic, the Self cannot function at the same level as the "I." Nevertheless, the Self is learning and evolving through its experience with the "I."

The "I" learns by doing and by getting feedback on what it does. This feedback is of two kinds. It gets feedback from its interactions with the environment. This may take diverse forms from "a punch in the nose" to successful completion of a project or experiment. The "I" also receives feedback from the Self. This feedback may be inaudible when the "noise" in the system is too great. The feedback from the Self to the "I" is usually experienced as a positive or negative feeling tone. In the practice of Ignatian discernment, this is referred to as "consolation" and "desolation." When the "I" is receiving positive feedback, the experience is generally characterized by a sense of inner peace, joy, or lightness. In the case of negative feedback, there is an experience of guilt, anxiety, oppression, or heaviness. There is a particular quality to this "still small voice of conscience" which differentiates it from imposter voices, such as neurotic guilt or "should's." The feedback of the Self functions to increase awareness of the laws of creative synthesis.

Early in life, the inexperienced "I" faces the problem of survival. Lacking the power to survive on its own, and the child develops skills and techniques which reflect its dependency. If the child succeeds, its success can validate the implicit belief structure, which may then be carried into adult life. The most common dysfunctional patterns of adults are built around beliefs constructed by an immature organism — e.g., that the source of love, power, and wisdom lies outside oneself, and that it is necessary to manipulate other people to get one's needs met. These beliefs must be transformed by feedback from the environment and from the Self.

The "Language" of the Self: Abstract Pattern

The native language of the Self seems to be that of the abstract mind — a transpersonal dimension of our nature which mediates our perception of higher-order context and meaning. This is a language of abstract pattern, structure, and relationship. Unlike the concrete mind, which is concerned with immediate concrete fact, the abstract mind is concerned with organizing principles.

The abstract mind appears to be the mental vehicle of the Creative Center beyond the Self which we shall call the Monad. The intentionality of the Monad is concerned with higher orders of integration within the planetary purpose. Thus the abstract mind is the repository of the true "leading edge" ideas or the emergent paradigms at any point in the cultural evolution of the planet. This realm has been called by such names as the "noosphere" (Teilhard de Chardin), the "planetary field of mind" (Elmer Green), and the "raincloud of knowable things" (Patanjali). It underlies the notion of "an idea whose time has come," and would explain the fact that different people at a given point in history simultaneously discover the same ideas. Thus, Liebnitz and Newton independently developed the calculus.

When the abstract mental vehicle of a person is sufficiently developed, the Self communicates by conveying a sense of pattern or structure which is registered in an immediate "right brain" kind of way. The logic of the structural relationships must then be worked out by a more linear type of processing that we have come to associate with the "left brain." (The question of hemispheric specialization, however, is more complex than this.)

Complete mental development brings the ability to use both the concrete and abstract mental vehicles effectively, as well as the ability to coordinate them. The bridging skill is necessary in order to translate abstract principles into practical action in the world. When a person has not yet developed the abstract mental vehicle, the Self communicates in language which appears to be indirect and metaphorical. It is obliged to use less precise modes of communication because its native language is not accessible to the person. In such cases it uses the language of imagery and feeling tone to communicate emergent patterns. This imagery can be of various kinds, with visual and kinesthetic imagery being the most common. The language of imagery and archetypal symbolism, if studied in a meditative way, can be a useful way to develop

our pattern recognition function. It is necessary, however, to seek the abstract or formal structure behind the concrete image, which otherwise can be misleading.

An interesting technique called "experiential focusing" has recently been described by Gendlin, based on the use of kinesthetic imagery. It involves contacting an "organismic awareness" of emergent process through focusing on one's "felt sense" of this. A "felt sense" includes an aspect of physical sensation and an aspect of feeling, though it goes beyond both to a more holistic kind of awareness.

The Self also communicates "symbolically" through the patterns of events in our lives. The phenomena of synchronicity or meaningful coincidence are widely discussed. The "laws of karma," as Eastern philosophy calls them, are now recognized as a pattern behind the pattern by many Occidentals as well. It appears that the laws of karma act in such a way that, when we violate value principles, the universe fills in our blind spot through a balancing process.

Our "Internal Guidance System"

The Self, like other Creative Centers, operates through a cybernetic process. This process provides an "internal guidance system" which functions to optimize the path of the "I's" evolution. When we grasp the significance of this process, we know ourselves to be totally supported by the universe.

Learning to Communicate with the Self: The Role of Education

Most of us receive little help from our cultural institutions in learning to "read out" the information we are receiving from the Self. Although the Self "tries hard," much of its effort is wasted because of our lack of basic literacy in this most important human language. How can education help? Perhaps the basic attitude with which education might concern itself is teaching people to value their internal experience — to find it interesting, to pay attention to it, to take it both seriously and playfully. Educators could help students to establish what Carl Rogers calls an "internal locus of valuation" — taking

ponsibility for their own choices and their own mistakes. Skills pertaining to exploration of value principles could be taught. These might include techniques such as "experiential focusing," visualization, guided imagination, meditation, and study of areas such as archetypal symbolism and abstract principles in all the fields of knowledge. Application of the principles and techniques of self-creation to one's own life, however, is the most important laboratory for this type of learning.

Organismic Listening: The Method of Invocation and Evocation

Conscious communication with our source of inner guidance requires a particular kind of attitude, an "organismic" kind of listening. This means that as a Creative Center of organismic intention, we are reaching out to a higher-order Center of organismic intention. We can assume that the higher-order Center "desires" to communicate with us, providing we ask the right question and are willing and able to respond wisely. This attitude requires a kind of reaching out with "active receptivity" — a paradoxical state of volition which is simultaneously a thrusting forward and a patient waiting. This attitude, which has been called "invocation," involves a joint activity of will, heart, and mind. The focused intentionality of the invocative attitude evokes a response from the internal guidance system. The techniques of invocation and evocation will no doubt become an important field of study when organismic process is more widely understood.

In order to discern the voice of guidance, we need to quiet the clatter of the many other voices within us. Without this, "noise in the system" may distort the message or render it inaudible. The major sources of "noise" are emotional turbulence, negative attitudes, and attachments to preconceived ways of doing and thinking. It has been well said that if a room is full of clutter, it leaves no room for the Lord to enter. We must "clean house" before we turn toward a higher-order Center. We must be open enough to perceive patterns that are different from those we are accustomed to and which may

even obey a different "logic." And we must have enough flexibility to experiment with new ways of being and doing in response to the promptings of the life principle within us. When we learn to stand without attachments and committed to "Thy will be done," it is as though a powerful vortex were created, drawing down inspiration and guidance.

APPLICATIONS OF THE ORGANISMIC PARADIGM TO SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Human Evolution Requires a Change in Social Forms

We have reached a point in human history where, for the first time, it seems possible to create social structures of a new kind. The social structures we have had in the past have reflected the general level of human development at that time. Average humanity, until quite recently, has been at a quite immature stage of organismic development. Most people were caught in survival patterns and primitive forms of defensive behavior. They were far from having attained the status of self-responsible differentiated entities. They lacked the basic knowledge and skills required for personality integration and were not particularly interested in the subject. The times have changed. In recent years we have seen a proliferation of human development and "consciousness" programs, teaching skills for self-responsibility, meditation, intuitive development, non-manipulative communication, and other assets for enlightenment. There is a widespread popular interest today in such subjects in diverse sectors of the culture, including many people from the corporate sector and from government. Today we may have a "critical mass" of persons who have reached an evolutionary level where they are capable of and *will demand* more life-responsive forms of social organization.

Beyond Anarchy and Totalitarianism: "Cooperative Autonomy"

In the past, our experiments in social structure have tended toward anarchic freedom or totalitarian constraint. Both of

these alternatives represent a distortion of the differentiation/integration balance required for organismic structure. In the totalitarian pattern, individual freedom and uniqueness are lost in "mass consciousness." In the anarchic pattern, there is a lack of integration within a higher-order context which could coordinate and give life meaning to the separate individuals. Anarchy is like a pendulum swing reaction against the tyranny of totalitarian control. (Note: the term "totalitarian" as used here transcends conventional political notions of "right" and "left," and may include much of what is considered "democratic" practice. It refers to a structure which violates the principle of free will, either directly through force or indirectly through manipulation.)

Today the time has come to consider an organismic alternative: that of cooperative autonomy. This paradigm is based on a different kind of order from the totalitarian order. It is based on the order of the living universe. An understanding of the principles of organismic order can give us a ground to stand on in building social forms for the future. Without this understanding, we risk being led by a legitimate fear of chaos to impose a totalitarian order which cuts off the life breath of the social structure.

Building an "Artificial Organism"

In considering how we might build organismic social structures, we are faced with the problem of creating an "artificial organism." A corporation or government is not a natural organism in the same sense as a human being. Clearly we will need some time to experiment with organismic social structures before we can answer with some degree of confidence questions such as what the "nervous system" and other essential "organs" of such a structure might be, and how to set up an "internal guidance system." Nonetheless, we can begin to look at some of the parameters that would be involved, building on the principles of organismic process that have been set forth in this paper. We have described an organismic structure as a self-organizing process in which the laws of creative synthesis provide the organizing principles. Such a process has the following properties:

1. intentionality, will, or purpose;
2. an organizing center (the "Creative Center" of the system) which is the agent of its intentionality;
3. "hierarchical heterarchy" — i.e., each level of the system is a "holon;"
4. "love" and "intelligence" (as defined in our postulates) as organizing principles of its intentionality;
5. dynamic equilibrium between the principles of differentiation and integration.

"Intentionality" of a Social Structure

The closest concept to organizational intentionality in current usage is that of the organization's "purpose" or "mission." However, in order for an organization to function as an organism, we must look beyond the sense in which these terms are generally used. The purpose of a "living" organization must be compatible for integration within the purpose of a higher-order organism. In this case the higher-order organism is the planet. (Of course, the lower-order purposes of sub-entities such as states and nations must also be considered. However, political and bureaucratic sub-entities at the present time are not organismically designed and are inadequate Creative Centers for planetary purpose.)

In order for an organization's purpose to be compatible for integration within the evolutionary purpose of the planet, it must consider the broader context within which it operates. Clearly, much of current attitude and practice within our collective life must be transformed to fulfill these conditions. Many of the behaviors of our political and economic institutions resemble the primitive defense mechanisms of immature organisms who have not yet discovered their Creative Center. They are based on fear and insecurity, on the belief that one must use force or manipulate in order to survive, on competition rather than cooperation, and on lack of trust in a supportive universe. Defensive patterns such as these spring from insecurity. They create an illusion of security, though it has no real foundation. In order to relinquish primitive defenses, we must discover the source of our only true security: cooperation with the evolutionary process and with the laws of

creative synthesis which govern it. Both as individuals and as collective entities we need to make the fundamental discovery that the universe is a living process. The corollaries to this are: that the universe supports activity which is in harmony with these laws; and that it eventually destroys those patterns which oppose them. Thus, lifeless structures without will, heart, or true intelligence cannot undergo creative transformation.* They are doomed instead to violent shattering or a slow death by suffocation.

Some of the more obvious "counter-evolutionary" practices which have come to public attention are: rape and pillage of the environment; wasteful competitiveness; manipulative publicity; built-in obsolescence; energy inefficiency; the use of war and violence to obtain one's ends; insensitivity of organizations to the evolutionary needs of employees and of the public; calculation of the "bottom line" in terms of financial profit alone; and social injustice generally.

In addition to the more obvious scourges on our collective life, we must concern ourselves with the less apparent problems which derive from the lack or organismic structure and ideology in our collective institutions.

Let us return to the question of organizational purpose. If this purpose is compatible with universal principles, it will be a purpose which offers inspiration and life meaning to the persons associated with it. It will be a purpose which gives them a sense of participation in a larger purpose — a purpose which resonates with their own deepest human values. Thus it would inspire a level of commitment well beyond the motivating power of a paycheck alone. The most profound need of any human being is to feel that his or her life makes a difference in the world, in terms of intrinsic human values. Conversely, it is a basic human need to avoid participation in that which violates one's own standards of integrity. Participation in structures which violate fundamental values produces negative feedback from the participant's "internal guidance system." It can produce "dis-ease" at both physical and emotional levels, and is a major cause of stress and

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*c.f. Ilya Prigogine's work on dissipative structures.

"demotivation" within our unhealthy social structures. It would surely bring a great release of commitment and creativity if we could learn to tap the deep human drive for life meaning and purpose. Yet, much of current management practice still relies on subtle manipulation by extrinsic reward rather than intrinsic motivation.

A corollary to aligning with a higher purpose is to make this purpose known to the participants in the organization. The purpose must be clearly articulated and communicated so that those who are joined as "co-creators" of the organization can be inspired and contribute their best efforts.

The "Creative Center" of an Organization

Now we need to ask, "How would such a purpose be formulated and by whom?" This is not an easy question to answer. As we have said, an organization is at best an "artificial organism." It may not have an obvious "Creative Center." A "Creative Center" would need to be identified or formed to function as the primary agent of intentionality within the organization. (Other lower-order "Creative Centers" could, of course, be established on the same principles.) It is likely that such a Center for a collective entity would best be formed by a group of persons. However, an individual with appropriate qualifications and counsel might, under certain circumstances, be the proper candidate for this role.

What would be the qualifications for membership in such a "steering council?" Most important would be the attunement of the members with cosmic order and with the organization's particular purpose within society. (Granted, this may not be simple to define.) Such persons would have a balanced development of the abstract and concrete mind, as well as the capacity to bridge between the two levels of mind. This would render them capable of grasping abstract organizing principles and of applying these in a practical way to the problems of the concrete world.

Attunement to the particular purpose of the organization would require an alignment of the will as well as certain kinds of knowledge. The person would need to feel "connected to" the particular purpose of the organization and feel an alignment of his or her individual purpose with that of the

organization. The person would also need to be knowledgeable about the field of enterprise, its particular challenges, and how it interfaces with the broader environment. Such expertise would generally be more easily obtained with a team of people having complementary backgrounds. If a team approach were used, it would be desirable to balance other characteristics of the group members as well, so that requisite variety and complementarity in all relevant ways would be assured. In this way, each person could contribute a different piece to the total picture. (It seems premature to spell out what these characteristics would be. However, this might be a fertile field for management research in the future.) It would be important that the team members be strongly established in their sense of individual identity so that they do not fall prey to "group think." They need to be aware of their own biases, with the strengths and weaknesses inherent in them. And they must be able to detach themselves from their biases — even as they defend the values in them — so that they can appreciate the values in other perspectives. The team members will also need to be well-grounded in the principles of cooperation and creative synthesis so that they can seek the higher unity behind their divergent viewpoints.

Procedures Used by a Collective Creative Center

A Creative Center of this type would need to develop effective procedures to carry out its task. These would surely include some forms of conventional data-processing and decision-making — hopefully with the aid of an improved information system (to be discussed). In addition, communication with a higher-order Center would need to be established. The methods of invocation and evocation might serve as the basis for this. Experiment would have to reveal the most effective methodologies. We, as yet, have little experience with such procedures at a group level. Various techniques of group problem-solving such as "Synectics" and the brain-storming approach are already widely used in organizational settings. However, they lack certain organismic properties. Probably more relevant are the methods used for group discernment by certain spiritual communities such as Findhorn, the Quakers, and the Jesuit order. (It is an interesting fact that the field of

spiritual discernment, out of fashion for some time, is recently attracting renewed interest in Church circles).

The same "caveats" which apply to individuals seeking higher-order guidance would, of course, apply to groups. Precautions would need to be taken to eliminate "noise" in the system, such as disruptive emotions and attachment to ideas and behaviors which are incompatible with organismic process. (This points to the need for certain personal characteristics in group members. These would include spiritual freedom, sensitivity to values, and an open mind.)

"Heterarchical Hierarchy" and Cooperative Autonomy

A living organization would have Creative Centers at the various organizational levels. They would be arranged as a "heterarchical hierarchy," with each sub-Center having its own domain of responsibility. The various levels and subdivisions within the organization, as well as the sub-entities — including the individuals — within these, would operate on the principle of cooperative autonomy. The differentiation principle would be respected at each level. Each unit — individual and collective — would thus feel the self-respect that comes from fulfilling a unique and necessary function within the whole.

Structuring "Organs" within an Artificial Organism

In order to achieve the goal of cooperative autonomy, it would be necessary in many cases to restructure the "organs" or sub-entities within the organization along more efficient and organismic lines. A notion borrowed from mathematics — that of "canonical functions" — is helpful here. The canonical functions of an entity are those which divide its tasks into sub-tasks such that no two subtasks overlap and that any given task can be accomplished by a combination of the subtasks. The well-known competition for "turf" among departments in an organization is largely a function of a non-canonical division of labor.

The "Nervous System" of an Organization

Another important requirement of organismic social structures is an information system with organismic properties. We now have the ability to construct the analogue of a nervous sytem in the form of distributed data processing. The popular notions about computers would make this seem unlikely. We live in a moment when computers seem to impose rigidity on office procedures. This rigidity is not a consequence of computers. It represents the failure of our own understanding in programming. Computer systems can be programmed to be adaptive and self-organizing. They could make diversity the rule rather than the exception.

Distributed data processing involves a system in which a multiplicity of diverse processors function together in a cooperative autonomy. Distributed data processing both provides a working model for developing our notions of organism and a method for implementing the nervous sytem of an artificial organism, such as a business. (Cf. Stafford Beers' *Brain of the Firm*)

The information processed by an artificial nervous system of this kind would include much of what is currently considered relevant "data." It would, in addition, include new forms of data which would be necessitated by the principle of "love" — the intrinsic valuing of the persons in the organization and the entities with which the organization interfaces in the environment. When employees are viewed as whole persons, much data of a "subjective" nature now become relevant — e.g., how people feel about their work and why, the quality of communications, etc.

Stress as "Information"

There is much information contained within "stress" — at individual and organization levels — that would be of great value to an organismic organization. Stress provides information about how human beings as total organisms are responding to a situation. There is thus a "holistic" quality to the information contained in stress that could be particularly useful

for monitoring conditions which violate basic human needs. It could thus provide clues for redesign of the organization along more organismic lines. And it is precisely by learning how to turn information such as this to a creative purpose that we will begin to find out how to build organismic social structures in the concrete world. At the present time, this type of information is frequently wasted. Stress is often "managed" by relaxation programs or other forms of anesthetization rather than being considered as a sign of imbalance crying out for adjustment. The "demotivated" employee may be viewed as a misfit rather than as an indication that something may be lacking which she/he needs in order to feel inspired.

The Need for a Requisite Variety of Processors in an Information System

Our present data-processing systems frequently fail to consider the differing needs of various Creative Centers within the organization for particular types of information. Variables such as different requirements in terms of level of abstraction, time frame, etc. are not taken into account. Thus, many managers are frustrated by the piles of worthless paper on their desks and are handicapped in their decision-making by lack of relevant data. This is a major source of executive stress that could be significantly reduced by an organismic information system. A related need of organizations is to provide managers having differing kinds of responsibilities with specific training appropriate to their data handling needs. These needs, incidentally, will include more "people skills" in the organismic organization. When the "organs" or subentities of an organization are more canonically defined, this will give us clearer criteria for differentiating the classes of processors re quired within the overall information system.

Organismic communication seems to include another principle of organization in addition to that of heterarchical hierarchy that of direct communication of all parts of a system with all other parts. Such a process is suggested by research coming in from various sources such as studies of cellular communication, non-locality, holography, and the etheric

web. As this principle applies to information flow within an organization, it suggests the need for communication channels going directly between any member of the organization and any other member. This could allow for appropriate information transfer under conditions when the usual channels would not serve the need. The notion that an invisible web of inter-connection may join all beings suggests the further possibility of making such a connection more visible. If people are joined in essence, acknowledgment of this interconnection may play a vital role in their experience of life meaning. Business organizations often tend to view employees as role-defined commodities instead of in their wholeness. If the climate of work life could support people in relating to one another "from center to center" (a definition of love given by Teilhard), organizations could tap an enormous resource — the whole person. Perhaps we will find that love, or intrinsic valuation of persons, is a key to morale and productivity.

Building Learning into the System

Our postulates stated that learning is a fundamental aim in the living universe. This learning was said to be of a complex nature, involving dimensions of "will," "love," and "intelligence," and resulting in wisdom rather than mere knowledge. We have examined how cybernetic processes within a natural organism, the human being, enable it to learn from experience, to acquire wisdom, and to undergo creative transformation. Let us consider how some principles of learning at the individual level may apply to social structures.

Most organizations function in a manner which provides poor support for organismic learning. This applies both to the learning of individuals and to the learning of the organization as a collective entity. When learning does occur, it tends not to be the complex and multi-valued learning which results in true wisdom. Most organizations have little appreciation for wisdom. They often fail to recognize it, do not reward it, and have no procedures for storing it. An organismic organization would need to devise processes to support such learning.

These processes must be relevant to the various aspects of learning which our postulates refer to as will, love, and intelligence.

The "will" principle is related to qualities such as responsibility, focus, self-mastery, and initiatory/creative action. To support learning which involves the will, an organization must encourage self-responsibility and establish clear lines of accountability. People must learn skills of goal-setting, self-management, action-planning, and related areas which are pertinent to effective self-direction. The will principle is undermined when emergent purpose for the indiviudal is stifled in the name of organizational priorities. Thus, the growth needs and special gifts of employees must be considered as much as possible in job assignment to bring alignment of individual and organizational purpose.

Learning which involves the "love" principle develops one's capacity for right relations with oneself and others. A manager whose learning includes the "love" dimension can draw upon intrinsic motivation in the orchestration of human resources. She/he can be of service in evoking unified and committed efforts toward a common goal.

In considering the learning process as it involves the dimension of "intelligence," we are concerned primarily with organizing principles. Intelligence provides the means to effectively fulfill a given purpose through understanding the principles involved. It implies development of the abstract mind and the ability to relate abstract principles to concrete situations in a practical way. To support those aspects of learning based on intelligence, organizations must accord a more central role to the philosophical basis of their activity. They need to develop a coherent framework of principles — to be continuously updated — which describe the organization's mission and values as well as existing procedures for their implementation. In a company, this might be included in the policy manual, and could also be addressed in face to face situations. It is interesting to speculate on the possible effects of a reward system which could acknowledge contribution to organizational "intelligence." It might be that encouragement to reflect on principles and methods to enhance learning within the organization, would prove to be a powerful impetus to creativity and commitment. An organizational "philosophy of activity" could provide the rationale for such an approach.

A major factor which enters in to organizational learning, and cuts across all aspects of it, is the need to develop more constructive ways of viewing error and experiment. In organizations, as elsewhere in our culture, the concern for being right has severely undermined creativity. We need to encourage what Donald Michael, in *Learning to Plan and Planning to Learn*, has called the "new competency." The new competency includes the capacity to embrace error and to admit uncertainty. To develop this kind of competency, a climate must be created where people feel safe to acknowledge error and are supported in doing so. Procedures need to be established to extract the value from error, to understand what created it, and to reflect on how it might be avoided in the future. We also need to encourage thoughtful experiment, as progress occurs and living organisms learn through the creation of new forms.

Conclusion: The Bottom Line

In the living universe, the bottom line is measured by criteria more diverse than those commonly used in human institutions. These criteria derive from evolutionary purpose. They are concerned with the organism's ability to increase value (profit, order, syntropy) through creative synthesis. The viability of a structure, in the long run, is a function of that structure's alignment with evolutionary purpose, which includes its capacity to adapt to emergent processes within that purpose. As we seek to develop more organismic structures for human society, we will need to expand our conceptions of value and the bottom line.

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Martha Crampton is a pioneer in the development of psychosynthesis in North America. She received an M.A. degree in Psychology from Bryn Mawr and studied with Robert Assagioli in Italy. She founded the Canadian Institute of Psychosynthesis in Montreal, which she directed for many years. In Montreal, she was a senior member of the Corporation of Psychologists of the Province of Quebec. Ms. Crampton is currently living in Redding, Connecticut, where, with Norman Hirst, she is cofounder of *Holodynamics,* an organization dedicated to research into life processes and to the fostering of creative synthesis in the various fields of human endeavor. Holodynamics offers counseling, educational and consulting services to individuals and to organizations.