ASPECTS OF THE SOCIAL PHILOSOPHIES OF JOHN DEWEY
AND REINHOLD NIEBUHR AS THEY RELATE TO EDUCATION

DISSERTATION

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To Jeffrey

for a better and brighter world
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INTRODUCTION

The twentieth century arrived in an atmosphere of hope and promise. It was then generally believed that relationships among peoples everywhere would be increasingly humanized and enhanced. But this noble hope was soon to be shattered. By mid-century man could look back upon two world wars, the psychic isolation of societies, totalitarian revolutions and their concomitant dehumanization of social relations, and poverty and squalor juxtaposed with opulence and waste. It is small wonder that the minds of many men turned from their former optimism, engendered by a belief in the inevitability of progress, to that of apprehension, doubt, and distrust. "Some find refuge in a fanatical faith and in reliance upon infallible leaders of the people; others seek evasion of responsibility in simplifying and comforting panaceas; many are simply wary and have given up the attempt to understand and to act."¹ Many false prophets have arisen, meanwhile, ready to present a multitude of solutions. But these have not eradicated the causes of disorder and, in consequence, anxieties have worsened when false panaceas have been exposed. An ominous realization has grown among us that

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¹Hans Kohn, The Twentieth Century, preface.
the "grounds of our civilization, of our certitude, are breaking up under our feet, and familiar ideas and institutions vanish as we reach for them like shadows in the falling dusk." Imminent danger was never more disquieting, even as the promise of our age was never greater.

From out of these pressing necessities, America has sought the solution to her problems, basically, by aligning with one or the other dominant trends of thought in our age. The unified approach, found in the writings of John Dewey, who has been America's greatest exponent of this position, offered the scientific method of problem-solving, the reorganization of human experience, and the development of human values in a naturalistic setting. The other approach is dualistic, appealing for cosmic support as it seeks the resolution of human problems. In America, Reinhold Niebuhr, the widely known Christian theologian, has met the challenge with a persuasive political realism buttressed by a Christian orthodoxy. Throughout his writings he re-interprets Christian ethics for social and political life in the perplexing twentieth century, since he recognizes the failure of Christianity in the past to deal with the social scene. Niebuhr, with Randall, acknowledges that the predominant credence once given so freely to the religious approach has waned considerably since the Middle Ages. "All in all, the

2Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Vital Center, p. 1.
outstanding religious phenomena of the century has been not so much the fading of faith, as its transfer from a theological and cosmic to a human and social object.\(^3\)

These two writers embody, within a delimited social locus, the predominant directions our culture takes in aspiring to bring about a better world. The writer assumes, however, that Niebuhr and Dewey, though they present two greatly divergent philosophic positions, are concerned with similar problems and, at times, share somewhat similar conclusions of great significance. The purpose of this investigation, then, is threefold. First, it will investigate the divergent philosophic positions of these social critics, to bring out any and all fruitful similarities. Second, it will analyze selected aspects of the complex problems of social and political life in America as these are reflected within these social problems. Third, it will explore the implications of the social and political climate in American life, as seen by these social critics, as these bear upon public education as a social institution within a pluralistic culture.

There are four major chapters, each composed of three major parts. Sections I and II of each chapter present expository statements of the basic ideas of Dewey and Niebuhr

\(^3\)John H. Randall, Jr., *The Making of the Modern Mind*, p. 539.
on the particular subject of the chapter. Section III of each chapter is a discussion of these ideas.

Chapter I deals with the basis of social relations. It considers the nature of man, the way in which he becomes social in habits and outlook and, finally, analyzes the communicative process to discover how social relations are made meaningful.

Chapter II is concerned with the problems of social justice. The relationship of formal law-making and organizational processes of society to the need for human freedom is examined.

Chapter III considers the powers of state in relation to voluntary groupings and primary social relations. Different levels of community relations are explored through a consideration of the use of social power. Finally, the possibilities of forming an international community, and the persistent obstacles that impede progress in this direction, are discussed.

Chapter IV applies the findings of the first three chapters to the problem of uncovering the social role of American public education within the context of a dynamic, complex, and presently disturbed society.
CHAPTER I

THE BASIS OF SOCIAL RELATIONS

Introduction

This chapter endeavors to bring to the fore some significant assumptions concerning human nature and social relations. The problem of man's relationship to his fellows has raised fundamental questions that men have confronted for years; yet the questions still need further and renewed consideration. Among the questions that need further study are: What are the potentials of human beings in achieving a higher level of life? How does the need arise to converse and interact with one's fellows? What are the possibilities for creativity and growth?

In the writings of John Dewey and Reinhold Niebuhr we find major and divergent philosophic systems that deal profoundly and persuasively with this subject. Their divergent outlook leads them into different channels of thought, and the resulting consequences provide some fruitful contradictions in respective points of view that need serious consideration. It is the purpose of this chapter to inquire into their systems in order to illuminate this perennial problem.

Throughout the history of philosophy and the social sciences, scholars have speculated on the nature and limits
of man that derive from natural and acquired potentials, and how these potentials or basic capacities are used to establish and further social relations. There have been a profusion of theories advanced depicting man in many diverse ways: from that of extreme depravity to that of infinite perfectability, with most scholars, writers, and students of human nature falling somewhere between these extremes. By first postulating man's basic nature, social theorists have moved forward deductively to the nature of society and social control. If man were viewed as essentially depraved and corrupt, greater and more stringent social controls and less individual freedom were needed. If man were basically altruistic, beneficient, and selfless in his pursuits, society would have to take an entirely different form. Many of these views on man's nature were speculative, related in no way to an attempt to observe and study human behavior. Present-day theories, such as Niebuhr's and Dewey's, however, take into consideration the latest empirical findings of the social sciences and related fields.

The problem of this chapter is to discover the process by which man becomes a social being by developing a concept of self and others. The uniqueness and individual character of man will be examined within the framework of social institutions and agencies in which he is actively engaged. One of the chief problems of this analysis centers around man's emergence and development out of the cultural matrix of his
world. From this beginning we can move later into the complex social problems that both encounters and invents.

Section I: Reinhold Niebuhr

A. The Nature of Individuality

Niebuhr opens his analysis by explicating some dominant conceptions of man in Western thought and pointing to the weaknesses of these conceptions. He then presents his own interpretation of the Christian conceptions of man. In treating these prevailing philosophic systems, and in demonstrating how they fall short of depicting man in his full stature and complete dimensions, Niebuhr has endeavored to lay the groundwork for the validity of the Christian position. Niebuhr does not find the traditional interpretations of the Christian conception of man as beyond criticism, however. Instead, he develops his own interpretation to further the understanding and elucidation of his position. Niebuhr thus lays the basic foundations for envisaging man in the social order. As a result, subsequent discussions of the social and political scene will have a foundation upon which to stand, as well as a basis for proposals that may be offered.

Three major philosophies are delineated in The Nature and Destiny of Man. These philosophies are naturalism, idealism, and romanticism, all of which are held to fall short in some aspect of their respective philosophic systems.
One of the great shortcomings that these philosophies share lies in their inaccurate portrayal of man in his multi-dimensions of selfhood. Each philosophic position shares some basic and common weaknesses. These modern views of man, besides their confusions and inconsistencies, fail to give a satisfactory solution to some major problems, particularly those of individuality and of evil. Though all three views claim to hold individuality in high regard, they offer no place for it in mind or in nature.

The problem of individuality is transmuted by the approach of idealism and naturalism. Individuality is projected into a wider universal core by these philosophies and, in consequence, there is a loss of differentiation and distinguishability. Both philosophies look for an all-explaining principle by means of which the universe can gain intelligibility and meaning. Through the ages philosophers have sought to find an all-embracing principle that would explicate and order all the other phenomena that came under the purview of the particular system. Idealism and naturalism are no exceptions to this tendency. Captured within these two philosophic perspectives is the dilemma of our age.

Modern man, in short, cannot determine whether he shall understand himself primarily from the standpoint of the uniqueness of his reason or from the standpoint of his affinity with nature; and, if the latter, whether it is the harmless order and
peace of nature of her vitality which is the real clue to his essence.¹

Thus, according to Niebuhr, modern concepts are in conflict with one another and there is some doubt whether they can be resolved by the presuppositions of modern culture. The inadequacies of these views are found in the over-development of a single substance, thing, or aspect of the universe as the ultimate and highest character of all existential objects. This highest quality is capable of securing a vantage point above the flux of time (as in idealism), or it can act as the ongoing panorama of inexorable, unfolding, natural laws (as in naturalism). By perceiving the universe in terms of an all-embracing universal, the perspective of the viewer is clouded by the inherent character of the universal itself; hence all subsequent speculations are seen in the light of the ordering principle of this universal.

Within the context of these systems there is a need to portray man's place in the scope of things. If man is a distinctive creature who possesses the potential for ordering his destiny, then man as a unique creature among all living things cannot be ignored. This uniqueness and creativity possessed by man must be carried to the individual level of thought and action if each person is to realize his distinct

place in the cosmos. Not all philosophies recognize the ultimate and inalienable individuality and distinct uniqueness of each person.

There is no place for individuality in either pure mind or pure nature. As the idealists lose individuality in absolute mind, so the naturalists lose it in "streams of consciousness" when dealing with the matter psychologically, and in the "laws of motion" when thinking sociologically.²

Idealism does not seem to recognize to what degree finiteness is a basic characteristic of human spirituality. The self has a wide perspective of spiritualness, but this is obscured in idealism when the self is submerged in the rational process. "In idealism the self is lost in the breadth of its view; and the breadth of its view is identified with ultimate reality. Idealism conceives the self primarily as reason and reason primarily as God."³ Thus, spiritual destructiveness is inadmissible and untenable, as a result of the identification of reason or logos with God. Naturalism, on the other hand, loses individuality. It misapprehends the self quite as does idealism, though for a different reason.

Naturalism loses the individual because it does not view life in sufficient depth to comprehend the self-transcendent human spirit. This spirit is a reality that does not fit into the category of natural causality which is naturalism's sole principle of comprehending the universe.⁴

²Ibid., pp. 22-23.
³Ibid., p. 76.
⁴Ibid., p. 81.
The natural vitalities and creative aspects of romanticism offer a unique and worthy approach in a study of man and his individuality. Christian thought manifests, and is in sympathy with, the creative dimensions of romanticism. Romanticism conceives the natural unities and forms as sources of order and virtue. "But romanticism does not recognize to what degree the freedom has entered into the natural vitalities which it extols and to what degree nature's unities and cohesions are subject to necessary revision by human freedom."  

The romantic destruction of individuality is conducted by relating the individual in an unqualified fashion to the eternal source of meaning. Rationalism inevitably recoils from the grandiose self-deification by seeking the larger self which is usually found in the nation. Thus, the nation goes on to supplant the individual as the source of meaning in the existential world.  

What is needed, according to Niebuhr, is "a principle of interpretation which can do justice to both the height of human self-transcendence and the organic unity between the spirit of man and his physical life." The Christian view of man, which is based on an ultra-rational presupposition is always endangered when rationally explicated.

\[\text{5} \text{Ibid., p. 28.} \]
\[\text{6} \text{Ibid., p. 83.} \]
\[\text{7} \text{Ibid., p. 123.} \]
for reason which seeks to bring all things into terms of rational coherence is tempted to make one known thing the principle of explanation and to derive all other things from it. Its most natural inclination is to make itself that ultimate principle, and thus in effect to declare itself God.8

The problem set for Christian thought is to develop a place for individuality that is not absorbed into a universal sphere, and to account for man's unique dimensions as a finite creature and transcendent self. According to Niebuhr, only the Christian conception of man can retain genuine individuality. A religious perspective is needed which can do justice to the involvement of man in the organic forms and social tensions of history, "while yet appreciating its ultimate transcendence over every social and historical situation in the highest reaches of its self-transcendence."9 A place for genuine individuality and personality is found only through a faith that transcends the antinomies and canons of rationality, particularly the antinomy between mind and matter, consciousness and extension. But faith in God as will and personality depends upon faith in his power to reveal Himself.

The Christian faith in God's self-disclosure, culminating in the revelation of Christ, is thus the basis of the Christian concept of personality and individuality. In terms of this faith man

9Ibid., p. 23.
can understand himself as a unity of will which finds its end in the will of God.\textsuperscript{10}

One of the identifying characteristics of human life is the discreteness and uniqueness of man. These characteristics flow from nature as well as spirit. Nature supplies particularity, but freedom of spirit generates real individuality. Man, as distinguished from animal existence, has a center beyond himself.

Man is the only animal that can make itself its own object. This capacity for self-transcendence which distinguishes spirit in man from soul (which he shares with animal existence), is the basis of discrete individuality, for this self-consciousness involves consciousness of the world as "the other."\textsuperscript{11}

This basis of self-transcendence is also the basis for human freedom and individuality. The nature and consequences of this capacity is seen by recognizing that

Human consciousness not only transcends natural process but it transcends itself. It thereby gains the possibility for those endless variations and elaborations of human capacities which characterize human existence. Every impulse of nature in man can be modified, extended, repressed and combined with other impulses in countless variations. In consequence no human individual is like another, no matter how similar their heredity and environment.\textsuperscript{12}

Thus, according to Niebuhr, theories of modern culture, whether they be idealism, naturalism, or romanticism, fail

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., p. 15.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., p. 55.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
to grant ultimate recognition to the personal uniqueness and diverse variations within each individual. The human spirit cannot be restricted within the bounds of natural necessity or rational prudence—it yearns for the infinite. It is only in a prophetic religion, such as Christianity, therefore, that individuality can be maintained. Since Christianity takes history seriously, it affirms the distinctive character of historical existence within the tensions of history. But since it interprets history from the eternal (i.e., it sees the source and end of history beyond history) it gives the individual a place to stand, even though the movement in which he is integrated should fail completely.

B. The Dimensions of the Self

A study of the dimensions of selfhood is needed in every critical analysis of human nature, even though this analysis of self may not be attacked directly in many cases. In developing a concept of the individual, the nature of the self needs full consideration, i.e., a study in terms of the way we come to view ourselves and place ourselves in relation to others. Our notion of self colors the notion we have of others and tends to define the way we see ourselves in relation to others. The relationship of our conception of self to the total environment is a means or way of perceiving the emergence from the individual to the social aspects of our existential life.
Some fundamental questions need to be asked at this point. In what way does the individual self find connectiveness and meaning with other selves? How is communication carried on? How does one's conception of self tend to alter the perspective that surrounds the communicative process when we view other selves? These are a few questions that help to shed some light on the complex problems of human selfhood.

Niebuhr approaches an analysis of self in terms of a three-fold dialogue projected against the backdrop of the self as a creator and creature of the dramas of history.

Niebuhr attests to the uniqueness of the human self by referring to three dialogues in which it is involved. These dialogues have an affinity with the Hebraic, rather than with the Hellenic, description of the self. Thus, according to Niebuhr, "the self is a creature which is in constant dialogue with itself, with its neighbors, and with God, according to the Biblical viewpoint."\(^{13}\) The tri-partite nature of the self is developed and explicated through a full account of these activities of the self and its unique dimensions. The internal dialogues of the self is a process that is only found on the human level of behavior.

We may safely say that the human animal is the only creature which talks to itself. It maintains a rather constant internal dialogue in which it approves or disapproves its actions, or even itself. Its accusations and defenses

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\(^{13}\)Niebuhr, *The Self and the Dramas of History*, p. 4.
of itself are quite different from those in which it engages in its external dialogues. The self pities and glorifies itself as well as accuses and excuses itself. It could not carry on this dialogue without using its "reason"; for the dialogue means that the self in one of its aspects is making the self, in another of its aspects, the object of thought. It uses conceptual images for this procedure.\(^1^4\)

Thus, the self is able to view its many-sided aspects by using its reason to conceptualize a picture of what it is by objectifying itself. The mistake of philosophers is to equate the self, as subject, with mind, and the self, as object, with body or some form of the creatureliness of self. Actually, there are not two distinct selves involved in the process but only two focal points of the same self.\(^1^5\)

Throughout life, whenever the individual is able to view himself and judge the purposes for which he strives he is encouraging the development of what is commonly called 'conscience'.\(^1^6\) It must not be mistaken that the reflective process, however, is somehow identical with the operations of conscience. The self controls reason for its own use and is not subjected to its demands. Reason, alone, can promise a more reflective survey of the activities of the self, but reason is incapable of comprehending the transcendent nature of the self. Reason is an attribute of the self that enables

\(^1^4\)Ibid., p. 6.
\(^1^5\)Ibid., pp. 6-7.
\(^1^6\)Ibid., pp. 12-13.
it to criticize and disapprove of objectionable features, and approve, sanction, and perpetuate that which seems desirable. The self possesses another dimension that transcends reason alone.

By its memory and foresight it transcends the given moment and is therefore trans-temporal in one dimension of its being. It is also spaceless in one dimension. The self-consciousness of the self proceeds in a particular organism. But the self is, in one dimension, non-spatial. Its imagination is free to rove over the boundaries of time and space to which it is bound. But it is more important to note that self-consciousness is ultimately non-spatial.17

The self is not limited by its body. The self can take an objective view of its body as well as its mind. But the self recognizes the distinctive relationship that it holds to its body. The relationship of the body and the soul needs explanation. "The self is 'soul' insofar as it has an experience of the unity. But it is more than soul insofar as it can think of its body as an object even while it is an inner experience of the bodily organic unity."18

An understanding of the self is incomplete until the relation of the self and others and the relation of the self to God, are grasped. The self is an independent entity within its own internal dialogue and in its sense of knowing its multi-dimensions. The self needs the connectedness of a

17 Ibid., p. 23.
social nature, however, when it is no longer content with an isolated existence within itself. The self gains a further magnitude of the communicative level when it engages in dialogues with others. These dialogues may be casual or permanent in nature.

While these dialogues represent a dimension of selfhood which is usually intended by the definition of the self as a "social animal", they are not in the category of social life as usually defined. They move above the level of social cohesion which may be observed objectively. They are dramatic elaborations of these social cohesions. ¹⁹

The dialogues in which the self is involved with others are transmuted into dramas whenever action on a social level is aroused. The form taken by these actions is that of dramatic patterns. These patterns determine subsequent actions for the self and involve it in further dialogues with others. There are certain dramatic patterns that each self engages in as it moves forward in its activities with others. These patterns are focused and stabilized around the more constant factors in the culture, e.g., climatic conditions, geographic locale, topography, age and sex of the individuals. There are further constancies drawn from the culture that have been established over a temporal period in the lives of past individuals. They lie within the historical realm that has culminated by embodying the culture with a distinct character of its own. The self is engaged in dramas with others

¹⁹Ibid., p. 30.
against the shield and backdrop of these constancies. This backdrop determines the existential limits of the mode of operation in which the self functions.

The self is a creature and creator of history. It is caught up in the web of historical events and it cannot remain indifferent to these events. The self as a creator of history is borne out by visualizing its freedom over natural events.

Both its memory of past events and its capacity to project goals transcending the necessities of nature enable it to create the new level of reality known as human history. But the self is not simply a creator of this new dimension, for it is also a creature of the web of events, in the creation of which it participates.²⁰

Even though the self possesses a freedom to express itself in conscious efforts to determine the historical drama, it does not necessarily do so. Only a few gifted souls truly are endowed with the ability to alter the stream of historical events. The majority of individuals, although possessing the advantages of this expression, find that they fall short of their ideals of statesmen, generals, and molders of historical destiny. Whether an individual's unique response will fashion new historic patterns is largely beyond his grasp, since the future will determine the answer of every bold attempt to create new patterns.

²⁰Ibid., p. 41.
The relationship between the self and God is in the form of a dialogue and the dialogue is determined by "previous historic 'revelation,'" which is an event in past history, discerned by faith to give a key to the character and purpose of God and his relationship to man." The self is an independent entity in Niebuhr's view, an entity that possesses the capacity to make itself an object. But man is not complete within himself. His relationships are what make "completedness" possible.

Love and brotherhood are the law of his existence. Furthermore there are no natural limits of brotherhood. The law of love is universal. There are indeterminate possibilities of realizing a wider brotherhood in history. But the natural limits are never completely transcended.

C. The 'Will-to-Live' and the 'Will-to-Power'

The basis of man's urge to survive is compounded in the "will-to-live." This is a fundamental drive in all individuals, although it finds different representations and expressions in each person.

The will is in fact the self organized for the attainment of either a short range or long-range purpose. This organization requires a rational analysis of ends in view, a comparison of the relative merit of those ends either from the standpoint of some inclusive system of value. The will is operative on all levels.

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21 Ibid., p. 68.
22 Niebuhr, Discerning the Signs of the Times, p. 90.
On every level of action the will utilizes reason in determining its goals and its plans for approaching these goals. Yet the consistency with which a self pursues its immediate ends and subordinates them to an ultimate end is not an intellectual achievement. Consistency is the achievement of the self rather than of its reason, because there is no power in reason as such to compel consistency though it may have the power to detect inconsistency in the pursuit of goals.\textsuperscript{24}

The 'will-to-live' is a natural tendency for each individual. This 'will-to-live' is not as simple and unaffected as it may first seem. Whenever one strives to perpetuate his earthly existence, he is striving in some measure against other wills which have the same inclination. This is the point at which the will is no longer simple and unaffected. Instead, it surveys the situation to discover how it can increase its ability to continue in existence. This frequently involves a conflict with other wills that are dominated by self interests and peculiar motivations. Even though the will of the individual may recognize the rights of other wills, there is always a tendency for each individual to push forward his interest. This act frequently tends to upset other wills and, thereby, sets up a struggle among competing wills for power, prestige, and status. This tendency is labeled by Niebuhr as the "will-to-power." Man is beset by an egotism that commands him to act in contrast to the interests of others, in many instances, in order that

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid., pp. 12-13.
he may not be denied the right to gain position and prestige. Each individual, no matter how uncorrupted his vision may be, is possessed of an inordinate display of egoism which invariably diverts his nobler pursuits and ideals.

This egoism is stronger in men than in beasts precisely because man is the only finite creature who knows that he is finite and he is therefore tempted to protest against his fate. One form that this protest takes is his imperialistic ambition, his effort to overcome his insignificance by subordinating other life to his individual or collective will. He naturally seeks the consent of his own conscience and the acquiescence of his victims by hiding his own interests behind universal values.\(^2\)

This tendency, it should be noted, of the individual to hide his own interests behind universal values or those values which are endeared to the community, enables him to gain dominion and yet still play the role of an upright person and loyal citizen.

Man's initial struggle is to preserve his life. But this does not satisfy him. He fights for eminence beyond himself and to gain a recognized place in the social sphere. The initial impulses of survival and defense are thus combined within each individual in a curious and strange fashion.

The economy of nature has provided that means of defense may be quickly transmuted into means of aggression. There is therefore no possibility of drawing a sharp line between the will-to-live and the will-to-power. Even in the emotions, 

\(^2\)Niebuhr, *Christianity and Power Politics*, pp. 156-57.
attitudes of defense and aggression are so com-
pounded that fear may easily lead to courage, and the necessity of consolidating the triumph won by courage may justify new fears.\textsuperscript{26}

When we examine these emotions it may not appear so strange that the 'will-to-live' is quickly and readily transferred into the 'will-to-power,' nor that fear may cause these impulses frantically to revert back to their starting point and initial interest. Reason, itself, is not much aid among men in helping to overcome this pattern. The will-to-power uses reason, as kings use courtiers and chaplains to add grace to their enterprise. Even the most rational men are never quite rational when their own interests are at stake.\textsuperscript{27}

No one is exempt from grasping for rights and power with too much vigor, thrust, or self-assertion. This is the point wherein man overestimates his finiteness and limited nature. Man is guilty of pride and presumption that, by his very nature, he is not warranted in claiming. Whenever men inflates his ego, his sense of importance in the scheme of things, he is guilty of pride. This pride is the Christian idea of sin; since man, through his actions and assertions, no longer recognize his finite character and, thereby, attempts to aggrandize inordinate power and prestige which

\textsuperscript{26}Niebuhr, \textit{Moral Man and Immoral Society}, p. 42.

\textsuperscript{27}Ibid., p. 44.
is not rightfully his. Through this pompous display, man asserts his tendency to play God. He no longer recognizes the limit and scope of his nature. He endeavors to take on that which is beyond his range of existence.

Sin is occasioned precisely by the fact that man refuses to admit his "creatureliness" and to acknowledge himself as merely a member of a total unity of life. He pretends to be more than he is.  

There is always a tendency to identify our own desires and the concomitant action with that which is deemed 'desirable' by others in the community or nation. This tends to demonstrate to all that our cause is a righteous and just one. "We, on the other hand, as all 'God-fearing' men of all ages, are never safe against the temptation of claiming God too simply as the sanctifier of whatever we most fervently desire." This predominant tendency among men acts to give them support and backing in carrying out their acts. It also serves to avoid criticism of what the individual is doing, and, thereby, causes his new inroads upon another's domain to become justified in the eyes of the public. On all levels of behavior, the creative and egoistic aspects of human nature are curiously compounded in such a way that the more talented individuals in society can alternate these creative and egoistic aspects and disguise them under the

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Veil of creative selflessness and genuine interest in other's rights. Niebuhr suggests that what is needed is the ability to laugh at ourselves by recognizing our foibles and conceit in order that we may become contrite and humble in the face of God.\textsuperscript{30}

What is funny about us is precisely that we take ourselves too seriously. We are rather insignificant little bundles of energy and vitality in a vast organization of life. But we pretend that we are the very center of this organization. This pretension is ludicrous; and its absurdity increases with our lack of awareness of it. The less we are able to laugh at ourselves the more it becomes necessary and inevitable that others laugh at us.\textsuperscript{31}

Thus, it is seen that human life inevitably seeks its own interest and strives to magnify its importance in the universal scheme of events. Yet the self has sufficient transcendence over natural events to obviate its ascription to natural necessity. The finite point of view of the self encourages a limited and distorted perspective. The self invariably perceives values from its own standpoint.

What each self needs is the ability to rise above nature through religious faith and envision a universe where human personality is an ideal to be eternally cherished. In this way a sublimation of the admixture of these two wills—to live and to gain power—may occur.

\textsuperscript{30}Niebuhr, \textit{Discerning the Signs of the Times}, pp. 120-121.

\textsuperscript{31}Ibid., p. 120.
But this religious sublimation of the will-to-live must be balanced by a qualification of that will-to-live by which men are persuaded to sacrifice themselves for each other, that they may save themselves from each other and realize their highest self. Love is a natural fruit of religion but not an inevitable one. A high appreciation of personality ought to issue in a reverence for all personalities and in a qualification of the tendency to self-assertion for the sake of other personalities.\textsuperscript{32}

D. The Individual and the Social

Some individuals become so engrossed in social affairs that they identify themselves with the group and thereby lose some measure of individuality; others, however, lead relatively isolated lives and treat contacts with others as nothing more than the necessary means for their daily existence and survival. Somewhere between these extremes is found the average individual. But what is the reason for man's association with others, outside of assistance to the 'will-to-live'? Of course, as the 'will-to-live' is expressed, motives, as we have noted, are curiously compounded in reactions of defense and aggression. The 'will-to-live' can be quickly transmuted into the 'will-to-power', as man's repulsion and rebellion in recognizing his finite character is realized. By observing this tendency we may visualize man's inevitable and inherent proclivity to sin as he orders his life in disproportionate perspective. But what are the

reasons for that development of social bonds among men which bring them together? And what are the reasons for the ultimate distinction between individual behavior and that behavior which is characteristically social? In his analysis of these questions Niebuhr sets forth the distinction between the individual and the social planes of life.

In ethical religion the absolute is defined in moral terms, for instance, in the ideal of love. From this ideal it "becomes the moral obligation to affirm all life rather than the life of the ego, and to subject the self to the demands of life per se."\(^{33}\) But the individual ego is guilty of grasping too eagerly for those possessions and privileges which are not rightfully his. The egoistic elements in man cause him to sin. Man disorts his essential importance in the framework of human events and affairs. Viewed from a universal perspective man is never as adequate as his ego imagines. Man is a distinct individual but he is not self-sufficing. "The law of nature is love, a harmonious relation of life to life in obedience to the divine center and source of his life."\(^{34}\) The problem of living together harmoniously, however, is not the only problem that man faces. Two other fundamental problems face every normal individual: "that of

\(^{33}\)Niebuhr, Reflections on the End of An Era, p. 114. (Italics in original.)

\(^{34}\)Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, I, 16.
developing the multifarious forces of his personality into some kind of harmony and unity and that of asserting the dignity and worth of human personality in defiance of nature's indifference and contempt."35

This is a problem that all men share and must confront. It is because man cannot live within himself alone that he finds the cultivation of personality a social affair. The final and ultimate cultivation of the ultimate facets of his distinct personality cannot be completed without a regard for other personalities. As noted earlier, Niebuhr says:

The structure of man, for instance, is such that he cannot complete himself within himself. Love and brotherhood are the law of his existence. Furthermore there are no natural limits of brotherhood. The law of love is universal. There are indeterminate possibilities of realizing a wider brotherhood in history. But the natural limits are never completely transcended.36

The universal ideal of brotherhood offers unseen horizons of mutual accord by which individual egoism and social power can be transmuted into the spread of love in the world. The fact that the ideal has not been realized makes it effective none the less, since the seeming impossibility of achieving it engenders an eternal and permanent end for mankind to pursue.

36 Niebuhr, Discerning the Signs of the Times, p. 90.
Niebuhr makes a sharp distinction between the individual and the social. This distinction is needed to demonstrate the pronounced difference in the moral characteristics of the two realms.

The individual looks down upon the community because he is, as it were, higher than it is. It is bound to nature more inexorably than he. It therefore clings to its life desperately and may sacrifice every dignity to preserve its mere existence. The highest moral ideal to which it can aspire is a wise self-interest, which includes others in its ambition for security. Looking down at the community from his individual height the individual is embarrassed by the difference between the moral standards of the community and his own.³⁷

The individual possesses a higher and nobler degree of moral potential than the community, and it is the capacity of the individual to survey the strivings of the community for perpetuation. The individual is distinct from the community by virtue of the moral character he possesses. The type of moral actions that distinguish the individual from the community needs consideration.

Individual men may be moral in the sense that they are able to consider interests other than their own in determining problems of conduct, and are capable, on occasion, of preferring the advantages of others to their own. They are endowed by nature with a measure of sympathy and consideration for their kind, the breadth of which may be extended by an astute social pedagogy. Their rational faculty prompts them to a sense of justice which educational discipline may refine and purge of egoistic elements until they are able to view a social situation, in which their own interests are involved, with a fair measure of

³⁷Niebuhr, The Self and the Dramas of History, p. 35.
objectivity. But all these achievements are more
difficult, if not impossible, for human societies
and social groups. In every human group there is
less reason to guide and to check impulse, less
capacity for self-transcendence, less ability to
comprehend the needs of others and therefore more
unrestrained egoism than individuals, who compose
the group, reveal in their personal relationships.38

Social groups are always afflicted with a morality in­
ferior to that of individuals. Society is unable to create
a rational social force which is powerful enough to cope with
the natural impulses by which groups achieve cohesion.
Individual egoism is united in a collective egoism that gains
a more cumulative effect than when impulses express them­
selves separately and discretely.

The individual can lose his moral sense of proportion
by identifying himself with the activities of groups. A per­
sonal morality is always compounded of less egoistic elements.
The individual is threatened by the duplicity of groups and
the influence of collective egoistic action. Niebuhr sug­
gests that

In pure morality society ought to recognize
the individual as an end in himself, and ought
to leave him free to find his life by losing it
for social ends which appeal to his conscience.39

Human morality, therefore, is always within danger of
distortion and perversion whenever man decides that group
organizational structure is the best medium through which to

38Niebuhr, Moral Man and Immoral Society, Introduction.
achieve his goals. Coercive pressures imposed on man that continually lead him to identify himself with group and collective activities tend to disorganize the life process. Man must be free, therefore, to organize his life goals through the cultivation of his own creative insight without interference from collective enterprises.
Section II: John Dewey

A. The Individual and Society

To gain an understanding of the basis of the conception of social relations in the writings of John Dewey, it is necessary to consider those factors shared by all men which encourage and bring about conjoint activity. Discussions of human nature have resulted in lasting controversies throughout philosophy. Political thinkers customarily have begun their formulations of a desirable political order in terms of a speculative account of human nature. The way in which man is conceived invariably determines the designs of the political arrangements. From this beginning the type of political system that should be established necessarily follows.

If man is inherently greedy, selfish, brutish, and avaricious it is necessary to form a government that places stringent checks and controls on these rampaging impulses. On the other hand, if human nature is conceived as essentially noble, altruistic, benevolent, and kindly, the character of government will be entirely different. Men who are motivated by good works and kind thoughts need few restraints: they may be expected to act from good motives, with no need to be checked by governmental controls.

Philosophers and social scientists have searched for isolated characteristics of human behavior to supply the key to the mystery of 'why man acts as he does.' The key was to
be found, so it has been held, by discerning the predominant trait, impulse, or 'instinct' that governed the behavior of all. Students of human behavior have named it differently, as they have claimed to find it—among other names, we find competitiveness, the sex drive, the urge for power, pugnacity, the desire for pecuniary gain, and the gregarious instinct. Given a trusted first principle everything falls into order neatly. Dewey has noted how men have appealed to a dominant instinct to account for human behavior and the basis of social relations.

Appeal to a gregarious instinct to account for social arrangements is the outstanding example of the lazy fallacy. Men do not run together and join in a larger mass as do drops of quicksilver, and if they did the result would not be a state or any mode of human association. The instincts, whether named gregariousness, or sympathy, or the sense of mutual dependence, or domination on one side and abasement and subjection on the other, at best account for everything in general and nothing in particular. And at worst, the alleged instinct and natural endowment appealed to as a causal force themselves represent physiological tendencies which have previously been shaped into habits of action and expectation by means of the very social conditions they are supposed to explain.¹

This effort to discover the basis of human relations has been misleading, according to Dewey. A significant revision in our method of analysis is needed.

We must also introduce intelligence, or the observation of consequences as consequences, that is, in connection with the acts from which they proceed.2

The fault of many students of human behavior has been their search for an all-embracing impulse that will explain once and for all time the cause of human actions.

The point is that appeal to certain alleged human motivations in a wholesale way, such as "initiative" "independence," "enterprise," at large, obscures the need for observation of events in the concrete.3

Other fallacies common to students of human nature are committed when the individual is taken as supreme and cultural factors are negated, or vice versa. In the individualism of the eighteenth century, the individual was endowed with considerably greater importance than the existing cultural factors. Other views reduce the human factor to insignificance, as Marx did in explaining conditions and framing programs exclusively in terms of cultural conditions. It is erroneous, in endeavoring to determine the basis of social relations, to explain events "as if one factor or other in the interaction were the whole thing."4

It is at least as true that the state of culture determines the order and arrangement of native tendencies as that human nature produces any particular set or system of social phenomena so as to obtain satisfaction for itself. The problem is to

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2 Ibid., p. 12.
4 Ibid., pp. 75-76.
find out the way in which the elements of a culture interact with each other and the way in which the elements of human nature are caused to interact with one another under conditions set by their interaction with the existing environment.5

Another fallacy in studying human nature is to look for one predominant human motive as a cause for social ill. The impulse is sought out as the generating tendency that underlies and controls all undesirable human motivations.

In itself, the impulse (or whatever name be given it) is neither socially maleficient nor beneficial. Its significance depends upon consequences actually produced; and these depend upon the conditions under which it operates and with which it interacts. The conditions are set by tradition, by custom, by law, by the kind of public approvals and disapprovals; by all conditions constituting the environment. These conditions are so pluralized even in the same country at the same period that love of gain (regarded as a trait of human nature) may be both socially useful and socially harmful.6

Dewey thus calls attention to the important need of examining the culture and the social activity that takes place within its context. Philosophic speculation in the past has often taken one element of reflective analysis in experience and considered it as primary; thereby distorting the subject matter of experience. Naturalistic empiricism undertakes to avoid these inadequacies by requiring two fundamental changes in approach:

First, that refined methods and products be traced back to their origin in primary experience,

5Ibid., p. 18.
6Ibid., p. 111.
in all its heterogeneity and fullness; so that the needs and problems out of which they arise and which they have to satisfy be acknowledged. Secondly, that the secondary methods and conclusions be brought back to the things of ordinary experience, in all their coarseness and crudity, for verification.⁷

Many philosophers and social theorists conceive a distinction between the individual and the social. This distinction seems necessary to them as they attempt to determine at what point the evils of society arise. As mentioned earlier, there are those who consider the individual the sole moral agent, while conceiving society as the medium through which abuses arise and individual enslavement occurs. Others find in society the panacea for individual shortcomings, as opposed to individual efforts to subvert this 'good.' Dewey makes no distinctions of this type. To oppose the individual to society is to make an empty conceptual distinction. There is no mind or individual that measures itself as an independent entity against society.

The origin of this separation, however, is explained by Dewey.

A man may be one thing as a church member and another thing as a member of the business community. The difference may be carried as if in water-tight compartments, or it may become such a division as to entail internal conflict. In these facts we have the ground of the common antithesis set-up between society and the individual. Then "society" becomes an unreal abstraction and "the individual" an equally unreal one. Because an individual can be disassociated from this, that and the other grouping, since he need

not be married, or be a church-member or a voter, or belong to a club or scientific organization, there grows up in the mind an image of a residual individual who is not a member of any association at all. From this premise, and from this only, there develops the unreal question of how individuals come to be united in societies and groups: the individual and the social are now opposed to each other, and there is the problem of "reconciling" them. Meanwhile, the genuine problem is that of adjusting groups and individuals to one another.\textsuperscript{8}

The problem then is not to locate some arbitrary and artificial distinction between 'the individual' and 'the social.' This serves merely to obscure what it is that the observer should be examining, the character of human association and the ways in which these associations can be enhanced.

There is no mystery about the fact of association, of an interconnected action which effects the activity of singular elements. There is no sense in asking how individuals come to be associated. They exist and operate in association. If there is any mystery about the matter, it is the mystery that the universe is the kind of universe it is. Such a mystery could not be explained without going outside the universe. And if one should go to an outside source to account for it, some logician, without an excessive draft upon his ingenuity, would rise to remark that the outsider would have to be connected with the universe to account for anything in it. We should still be just where we started, with the fact of connection as a fact to be accepted.\textsuperscript{9}


\textsuperscript{9} Ibid., p. 23.
Dewey is not suggesting, however, that this fact of association is beyond examination or that it should be ignored. Rather, he says, that

There is, however, an intelligible question about human association: Not the question how individuals or singular beings come to be connected in just those ways which give human communities traits so different than those which mark assemblies of electrons, unions of trees in forests, swarms of insects, herds of sheep, and constellations of stars. When we consider the differences we at once come upon the fact that the consequences of conjoint action take on a new value when they are observed. For notice of the effects of connected action forces men to reflect upon the connection itself; it makes it an object of attention and interest. Each acts, in so far as the connection is known, in view of the connection. Individuals still do the thinking, desiring, and purposing, but what they think of is the consequences of their behavior upon that of others and that of others upon themselves.10

B. Language and "Mindful" Behavior

The range of direct experience that each person can gain is limited. Limitations of time, energy, and resources, make it impossible for the individual to gain a great range of direct experience. The individual must supplement his knowledge greatly by indirect experience (i.e., meaningful experiences which other persons undergo and communicate one to the other). The way in which individuals may greatly increase their knowledge of the world is through indirect experiences that are imparted in the process of communication. The majority of our experiences are gained in this way.

10Ibid., pp. 23-24.
Every step from savagery to civilization is dependent upon the invention of media which enlarge the range of purely immediate experience and give it deepened as well as wider meaning by connecting it with things which can only be signified or symbolized.\textsuperscript{11}

Children learn the meaning of sounds by observing the actions which these sounds signify. They see the way older people use a thing, hear what they call it, try to repeat the sound and duplicate its use, and thus come to understand that the symbol stands for a specific object which is meaningful in terms of its use. That is, "the object becomes a sign of the activity into which it enters."\textsuperscript{12}

Individuals engage in shared experiences through the act of communication. Thus, things take on meaning through their use in common experience.

Understanding one another means that objects, including sounds, have the same value for both with respect to carrying on a common pursuit.

After sounds have got meaning through connection with other things employed in a joint undertaking, they can be used in connection with other like sounds to develop new meanings, precisely as the things for which they stand are combined.\textsuperscript{13}

But the ability to use language and share meanings with others is not as simple a process as it may seem. The infant, without access to the funded experiences of his society, 

\textsuperscript{11}Dewey, \textit{Democracy and Education}, p. 272.
\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., p. 18.
\textsuperscript{13}Ibid.
would hardly develop beyond a primitive person. Activities and past events take on meaning for the child only insofar as he utilizes some way of symbolizing these events and communicating these meanings to others. The acquisition and use of meaningful communication by children is a lengthy and arduous process. Adults of society deem communication to be the *sine qua non* to insure the transmission and reordering of the culture.

Not all living things can utilize the communicative process as humans do. Dewey clarifies these differences by distinguishing three basic levels under which all existing things may be classified. The level of non-living is termed the "physical." Dewey illuminates the difference between living and non-living things in this statement:

> Empirically speaking, the most obvious difference between living and non-living things is that the activities of the former are characterized by needs, by efforts which are active demands to satisfy needs, and by satisfactions.¹⁴

Dewey is not content, however, to let this statement suffice as an adequate distinction between the non-living and the living things. He elaborates his point at great length when he describes living things as having an organizational nature in which they tend to integrate their activities in order to continue to live. Dewey notes the organizational ability of plants on this level of living, saying:

The interactions of the various constituent parts of a plant take place in such ways as

to tend to continue a characteristically organized activity; they tend to utilize conserved consequences of past activity so as to adapt subsequent changes to the needs of the integral system to which they belong.\(^{15}\)

Non-living things demonstrate certain distinct characteristics; these, however, do not lift them to the level of living things.

Iron as such exhibits characteristics of bias or selective reactions, but it shows no bias in favor of remaining simply iron; it had just as soon, so to speak, become iron oxide. It shows no tendency in its interactions with water to modify the interaction so that consequences will perpetuate the characteristics of pure iron. If it did it would have the marks of a living body.\(^{16}\)

Dewey calls the level of animals and plants, "psycho-physical." This does not denote something physical and something psychial. By the use of the term "psycho" in the particular context and relationship, Dewey suggests only "that physical activity has acquired additional properties, those of ability to procure a peculiar kind of interactive support of needs from surrounding media."\(^{17}\) Plants and animals possess a peculiar kind of sensitivity. The activities of the various constituent parts of the organism arrange themselves in a way that proves more conducive to a patterned way of life. "Responses are not merely selective,\

\(^{15}\)Ibid., p. 254.

\(^{16}\)Ibid.

\(^{17}\)Ibid., p. 255.
but are discriminatory, in behalf of some results rather than others. This discrimination is the essence of sensitivity.  

More complex animals have feelings which cause them to direct attention along various channels of activities. Yet animals, even representatives of complex species, are unable to use language to symbolize occurrences of the past, ideas of relationship, and predictions of the future. Nonetheless, animals can extract meaning from currently confronted situations. These meanings must always be in terms of the tangible objects and things which are sensed, since animals are incapable of symbolizing that which is not a part of the present situation. One of the chief characteristics distinguishing homo sapiens from all animals which are on the "psycho-physical" level is their ability to use language. Given language, man may respond to objects which are absent and may bring them to bear upon the present situation. Dewey calls the level of man, "mental," in distinguishing its major characteristics from the "physical" and "psycho-physical" levels. According to Dewey, the most significant aspects of the "mental" level are the mind's activities and the function it serves.

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18 Ibid., p. 256.
of feeling become significant of objective differences in external things and of episodes past and to come. This state of things in which qualitative different feelings are not just had but are significant of objective differences, is mind. Feelings are no longer just felt. They have and they make sense; record and prophesy.  

The terms 'consciousness' and 'mind,' it should be noted, differ noticeably in the writings of John Dewey. It is possible that one can best reach an understanding of 'consciousness' in terms of its relationship to mind. Dewey interprets consciousness on the psycho-physical level as "the totality of actualized immediate qualitative differences, or 'feelings'." This is contrasted to the mental level. The mental level "denotes upon the plane of mind, actualized apprehensions of meanings, that is, ideas." Introspective psychology devoted itself to the study of consciousness, viewing all aspects of consciousness as mental. This early development in psychology began to study mental images, sensations, perceptions, and impressions as if they were cut off from the material world. Locke's psychology conceived the mind as the mass of incoming sensations which were changed to mental images upon entering the mind. Actually, however, all one could really know were the mental images. In this system there was no way to know the external world directly.

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21 Ibid.
In the final analysis, one did not know his self directly, but only secondarily through the mental images formed of one's self.

Dewey recognized that not all human activity operates at the mental level as he conceives it. Instead, considerable activity takes place on the level of reverie, immediate recognition, and habit. Only when meanings are exchanged is mind in operation. "Mind denotes the whole system of meanings as they are embodied in the workings of organic life; consciousness in a being with language denotes awareness or perception of meanings." Dewey further elucidates the distinction in the following:

The greater part of mind is only implicit in any conscious act or state; the field of mind—of operative meanings—is enormously wider than that of consciousness. Mind is contextual and persistent; consciousness is focal and transitive... Mind is a constant luminosity; consciousness intermittent, a series of flashes of varying intensities.

It is possible to become aware of consciousness by noting the changes in the succession of meanings through their shifts, modifications, and variations upon the mind. "Consciousness, an idea, is that phase of a system of meaning which at a given time is undergoing redirection, transitive transformation."

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22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
Throughout the annals of philosophic thought, mind has played an indispensable role in the efforts of philosophers to explain the meaning of the universe and to fit its constituent parts rationally into the total structure. Idealism has held that the basic character of the universe is mind or spirit. It is usually the case that 'body' or material substance will be found in an inferior position to mind in the idealistic outlook. Of course, some philosophers do not admit the existence of any material substance; however, even with those philosophers who grant extension an inferior place in the structure of reality the vital relationship between body and mind in the thinking process is not recognized. Dewey throws considerable light on this important philosophic and educational problem.

The exact and true determination of the location of the mind has greatly troubled thinkers for centuries. Dewey does not resort to separating the mind from nature (as was commonly done by earlier philosophers). He states:

The mind is within the world as a part of the latter's on-going process. It is marked off as mind by the fact that wherever it is found, changes take place in a directed way, so that a movement in a definite one-way-sense—from the doubtful and confused to the clear, resolved and settled takes place.\(^\text{25}\)

In the pragmatic conception of mind proposed by Dewey, the mind is never considered to be some sort of entity. Mind

and body dualisms are dissolved and the relation of the individual with his environment is conceptualized as an interrelationship. Furthermore, transcendentalism is ruled out—the mind can no longer be considered to exist in some extra-empirical realm. Human problems, according to Dewey, are not resolved by seeking prescriptions for human behavior in an ethereal realm of eternal verities.

The nature of the term, 'mental,' needs some clarification. Idealists consider sensations, themselves, as mental. The problem arises as to how the 'mental' can know the 'extra-mental.' The pragmatic solution for this problem, according to Dewey, is to recognize that

From a strictly empirical point of view, the smell that is known is no more merely mental than is the rose known. We may, if we please, say that the smell when involving conscious meaning or intention is "mental," but this term mental does not denote some separate type of existence—existence as a state of consciousness. It denotes only the fact that the smell, a real and non-physical object, now exercises an intellectual function. This new property involves, as James has pointed out, an additive relation—a new property possessed by a non-mental object, when that object occurring in a new context, assumes a further office and use. To be "in the mind" means to be in a situation in which the function of intending is directly concerned.\textsuperscript{26}

The way in which the organism is involved in the thinking process is clarified in the following statement by Dewey, one that has vital educational implications.

Hands and feet, apparatus and appliances of all kinds, are as much a part of it (the thinking

\textsuperscript{26}Dewey, \textit{The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy}, p. 104.
process) as changes in the brain. Since these physical operations (including the cerebral events) and equipments are a part of thinking, thinking is mental, not because of the peculiar stuff which enters into it or of peculiar non-natural activities which constitute it, but because of what physical acts and appliances do: the distinctive purpose for which they are employed and the distinctive results which they accomplish.27

It is possible to say that whenever these physical means are employed to bring about conscious meaning or intention, they become a vital part of the thinking process. Dewey outlines what he believes to be the distinctive function of the thinking process:

Thinking is instrumental to a control of the environment, a control effected through acts which would not be undertaken without the prior elements and an accompanying projection of possibilities—without, that is to say, thinking.28

The thinking process and ideas are interrelated. Dewey states that

Ideas are anticipatory plans and designs which take effect in concrete reconstructions of antecedent conditions of existence. They are not innate properties of mind corresponding to ultimate prior traits of Being, nor are they a priori categories imposed on sense in a wholesale, once-for-all way, prior to experience so as to make it possible.29

To elucidate the nature and function of ideas further and conclusively, Dewey adds: "Ideas and idealism are in

28Ibid., p. 30.
29Dewey, The Quest for Certainty, pp. 166-67 (italics in original).
themselves hypotheses not finalities. Being connected to operations to be performed they are tested by the consequences of these operations, not by what exists prior to them. “The origin of ideas is found in an empirical, extra-mental situation which generates ideas as patterns of response, while their meaning is found in the modifications they make in the extra-mental situation. “Their validity is in term measured by their capacity to effect the transformation they intend.”

30 Ibid., p. 167.
Section III: Discussion

Introduction

The basis of social relations is the problem under consideration here. The extended discussion dealing with philosophic matters in the preceding sections was necessary to establish the positions of Dewey and Niebuhr as to the nature of man in his social relations. Philosophic differences, per se, are not the concern of this dissertation. The philosophic differences between Niebuhr and Dewey should be quite apparent by this time. But the object at this point is to determine the divergence and convergence of these two philosophers as to the basis of social relations, thereby delineating the distinct conceptions of each man and drawing out the consequences these theories have for the broader and more inclusive relationships within society.

The principle underlying this chapter has been to see how two basic conceptions of man in a social context develop and impart meaning to our basic understanding of these relationships. It is in the light of this that we have examined this basic issue in the writings of both Dewey and Niebuhr. The way in which the treatment is handled and the consequences that accrue will be given serious consideration. The object is to see man in his basic social nature within a societal context. The assumption that underlies this examination is that the theories of man have considerable implication and
significance for the problems of freedom and authority and politics in the social order, and, hence, are vitally impor-
tant in establishing any type of educational system or program. An educational system is contingent upon those students, in the broadest sense, who constitute it. Furthermore, education is circumscribed, and the boundaries of its aims are defined and clarified, by a better understanding of the human potentials that are in the process of development. In this sense, the basic theory of conjoint activity on which the cultivation of individual and collective potentials rests is of vital importance in directing the educational process and achieving educational aims.

A. Human Nature

Niebuhr develops a concept of human nature that is both individual and social in character, although it is pre-
dominately individual, Dewey, by contrast, emphasizes the social nature of human living. The points of convergence and variance in their concepts will be the focus of atten-
tion in this section.

Niebuhr's concept of self reveals its tripartite dimensions: "the self is a creature which is in constant dialogue with itself, with its neighbors, and with God, according to the Biblical viewpoint."¹ Before the self can

¹Niebuhr, The Self and the Dramas of History, p. 4.
interact with others it must gain some meaning of its essential nature. The self enters into a dialogue with itself to impart direction and meaning to its conceptualizations. The internal dialogues of the self constitute the self in a unity of two focal points: mind and body. These are not two selves in action as some philosophers have speculated, but two foci of the same self. It is through the ability of the self to envision its multi-relations that it comes to develop a way of judging its tri-fold relationship, doing so by what is commonly known as 'conscience.'

The important point in this discussion is the relation of the self to others. The self is involved in dialogues with others which change to dramas whenever social action is aroused. The dramatic patterns that ensue help to determine the future relationships of the self and others and offer focal points of attention in relationships within the social medium. The basic cultural conditions; such as, language, geographic locale, customs, traditions, et al., go to make up the basic context under which these social patterns will be formed.

Dewey believes that the individual (self in Niebuhr's terminology) may be understood through the social relations in which he engages. Dewey would object to an analysis of the individual into a tri-partite system. Each individual, instead, is a unified organism, an integral part of the
immediate social environment which gains meaning and direction for the individual through his ongoing experience.

Not only do Niebuhr and Dewey offer diverging conceptions of human nature, but the potentialities they envision for man differ markedly. Man's ego involves him in the sin of pride, according to Niebuhr, encouraging him to seek that which is not rightfully his. Man is induced to sin by a society that glorifies power and group self-interest. Hope for man lies in recognizing his position as creature and creator in history. He may thereby mitigate the struggle between self and group interests by becoming aware of his limitations. Dewey, however, holds that there are possibilities for continuous and unending growth toward greater social consciousness within the framework of meaningful education. Niebuhr finds much to object to in Dewey's initial premises as we will soon see.

B. The Basis of Human Association

But what is the initial starting point for social relations? What causes people to come together, and what is the basis for this action? Niebuhr analyzes the necessity for human relations in terms of what he considers the absolute law of life—the law of love. "Man is an individual but he is not self-sufficing. The law of his nature is love, a harmonious relation of life to life in obedience with the
divine centre and source of his life."² At this point, Dewey would differ with Niebuhr in his mode of analysis. According to Dewey, the customary appeal to various instincts to account for social relations "... at best account for everything in general and nothing in particular."³ The shortcoming of this method is the tendency to emphasize hypothetical speculation and the failure to examine concrete cases and instances of human association in progress. Dewey holds that an understanding of human relations comes from an analysis of each social situation and the social consequences that flow from it. Fixed a priori principles are misleading in making sense out of the multiplicity of social arrangements found in today's world. Hypothetical frameworks are useful in understanding the social environment whenever they are related to experimental, empirical studies based on a scientific approach.

The problem for Niebuhr, however, is to frame human association in terms of an ethical relationship (the law of love). By showing evidence for the necessity of this relationship, he imputes some form of causation to the law of love. Niebuhr does not clarify how the law of love is embodied in each individual before the emergence of distinct and continuing human association. There appears to be a

²Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, I, 16.
great void in man until he completes himself by associating with others. This fact is brought out once again when Niebuhr states: "The structure of man, for instance, is such that he cannot complete himself within himself. Love and brotherhood are the law of his existence."^4

Dewey approaches the problem of human association differently. He claims that the fact of connectedness or human association is no mystery. It is only a mystery when we turn to some hypothetical instinct to account for human association. This appeal to instinct in a wholesale way obscures the fact that these so-called 'instincts' are physiological tendencies which have been formed previously by human association.

C. The 'Individual' and the 'Social'

Niebuhr reiterates a sharply defined distinction between the community and the individual in his consideration of the relatively moral desires of men and the distinctly less moral nature of collective relationships.

The individual looks down upon the community because he is, as it were, higher than it. It is bound to nature more inexorably than he. It knows nothing of a deminensions of the eternal beyond its own existence. It therefore clings to its life desperately and may sacrifice every dignity to preserve its mere existence. The highest moral ideal to which it can aspire is a wise self-interest, which includes others in its ambition for security. Looking down at the community from his individual height the individual is embarrassed by the difference between the

^4Niebuhr, Discerning the Signs of the Times, p. 90.
Niebuhr refers to the community as if it were a discrete entity existing independently but fearfully; whereas, at the same time the individuals who constitute the community are viewed as if they were existing outside of its boundaries in shocked dismay at the morality of the community. Of course, the community is more than the individuals which presently are a part of it—the forthcoming generations may also make up the community if it survives. The organization of the community may differ when new members take their place as citizens. But what is of importance here is Niebuhr’s emphasis on the respective roles of the individual. The self in its internal dialogue and in its relationship to God and to the eternal is playing roles that are more moral than those the self plays in its relationship to the community. This distinction in roles is of great significance in Niebuhr’s analysis. The roles of the individual are less corrupted when divorced from collective relationships, as it is in these relations that the will-to-power emerges. The only way in which communal relations can be made less immoral is through the development of greater justice and by the encouraging each person to minimize the sin of pride. No man is free from sin of pride, however; hence it is apparent

Niebuhr, *The Self and the Dramas of History*, p. 35.
that there are limits in effecting more adequate forms of justice in the community.

No historical progress can change the twofold relation of the individual to the community in the vertical dimension. The community will always remain both the fulfillment and frustration of the individual. . . . even the most democratic communities can not alter the tension between the individual and the community because it cannot alter the difference between the individual and the collective desires and ambitions of men. 6

Dewey recognizes the different roles that individuals play and sees this as the cause of the false dichotomy between 'the individual' and 'the social.' An individual may play an entirely different role as a student than he does as an officer in a club. The same thing can be said of other roles each individual plays. Different roles impose divergent demands and exact diverse expectations of the individual. These differences between roles may be viewed as self-contained, non-interactive or overlapping, thereby setting up the division between society and the individual. The individual can be disassociated from these groups, agencies, and institutions, encouraging the conjecture than an individual may not hold membership or play an active role in any organization.

From this premise, and from this only, there develops the unreal question of how individuals came to be united in societies and groups: the individual and the social are now opposed to

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6 Ibid., p. 36.
each other, and there is the problem of "reconciling" them. Meanwhile, the genuine problem is that of adjusting groups and individuals to one another.\footnote{Dewey, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 191.}

The foregoing statement is more applicable to the distinctions between society and the individual in the political philosophies of Locke and Rousseau than it is to Niebuhr's position. Niebuhr would not deny the naturalness of human association, but would interject the discrepancy between the morality of collective behavior and that of individual conscience. Even though there are a multitude of individual consciences that constitute collective behavior, the fact remains that the will-to-power must achieve an object to conquer and control Niebuhr envisages pride, after its initial focus on the individual who is generating the pride, as it focuses on social organization, as the medium for individual display and aggrandizement. The seeming distinction between the individual and society is brought about through the social nature of pride. Man pretends that he is not limited by his very constitution of finitude and seeks to increase his dominion where it will bear fruit and render the desired satisfactions—i.e., in social and organizational relationships. The distinction of individual and social morality is thus rendered plausible by Niebuhr by projecting the sin of pride in a social context. The sin of pride, therefore, seems to become an actuality when man engages in...
'collective' relations. Through these collective organizations man sets-up his empire to rival and deny the eternal and infinite character of God. The basic immorality of man's inexorable will-to-power in social relations abuses his individual conscience and discredits him in the sight of God.

Dewey claims that morality has been conceived too narrowly as one of conventions, traditions, etiquette, etc. Dewey does not invest morality with an individual sphere and a transcendental sphere; instead, he sees morals as essentially social in the broadest meaning of the term.

As a matter of fact, morals are as broad as acts which concern our relationships with others. And potentially this includes all our acts, even though their social bearing may not be thought of at the time of performance. For every act, by the principle of habits, modifies disposition—it sets up a certain kind of inclination and desire. And it is impossible to tell when the habit thus strengthened may have a direct and perceptible influence on our association with others.8

For Niebuhr, there are three moral spheres: self, others, and God. Dewey, on the other hand, asserts that "The moral and social quality of conduct are, in the last analysis, identical with each other."9 In view of our original problem of the engagement of the individual in his social relations, we find that Dewey, in distinction to Niebuhr, does not find society as necessarily the place where the

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9Ibid., p. 415.
will-to-live is subverted to the will-to-power. Dewey looks, rather, to the consequences of conjoint activity and the results that it effects in concrete situations to bring about improved social living. Dewey, as we have seen, would object to the explication of man's behavior in terms of certain pre-dominant traits, such as the will-to-live and its inevitable subversion into the will-to-power. These traits generalize and oversimplify man's complex, social behavior. They envision all human strivings from a single frame of reference that limits the development of a more complete perspective and obscures the importance of social events in their concrete occurrence.

Niebuhr has depicted a striking antagonism between the individual and society in terms such as "moral man and immoral society." That is to say man is essentially more moral as an individual than he is as a member of social groups. The will-to-power subverts man's relationships with others, and this will-to-power finds as its object the various groups and institutions of society. It does not come into operation until man engages in social interaction. The will-to-power is a by-product of the sin of pride. Niebuhr does not explain how man can be moral in an individual state, i.e., morality needs an object and this object has to be some form of social relationship. How an individual can be more moral as an individual, divorced from social relations, than he is as a member of a social group is a mystery.
Niebuhr does not clarify. Individuals do not exist as discrete entities apart from the social groups that fashion their development. The individual, existing alone in a more moral relationship to himself and God than his moral connection to social groups, appears as mythical as the doctrine of 'natural rights.'

Niebuhr, in explicating the internal dialogues of the self and its dialogues with others, recognizes the value of the internal dialogues and the accompanying solitude of the individual but does not view the internal dialogues as contingent upon the dialogues with others. Yet it would appear, in fact, that our concepts of ourselves and the world are developed in communication with others. "You praise this man and denounce that one; you like this man and dislike that one; you accept this article of religious faith and reject that—and, if you think about these evaluations and preferences, you will be forced to the conclusion that practically all your standards and criteria have been socially created."¹⁰ Each individual, in his early development, needs to be associated with others to gain a concept of self, and after this concept is first formed (the individual will have had a considerable experience before it is) it is constantly being shaped by one's social transactions. Mead demonstrates in his writings that one cannot develop a

¹⁰Landis, Social Control, p. 66.
concept of self without engaging in meaningful social relations. He points out two general stages in the development of self:

At the first of these stages, the individual's self is constituted simply by an organization of the particular attitudes of other individuals toward himself and toward one another in the specific social acts in which he participates with them. But at the second stage of full development of the individual's self that self is constituted not only by an organization of these particular individual attitudes, but also by an organization of the social attitudes of the generalized other or the social group as a whole to which he belongs.\textsuperscript{11}

One's solitude and what the individual does with this solitude, or the internal dialogues of man, are highly contingent upon social relations and the consequent emergence of a concept of self. Without social relations the individual possesses no individual identity or idea of his distinctiveness. Until each person sees himself as others see him and then can look at himself as an object or "generalized other," as Mead would phrase it, he will be incapable of gaining meaning or coherence from his internal dialogues or solitude.

The long held conception which separates the individual and society is untenable according to Dewey. His position receives support from Cooley, who holds that the basic relationships of all societies are the simple, face-to-face relationship of primary groups. Man is born into a social group and directs his life within the framework and

\textsuperscript{11}Quoted in \textit{Readings in Social Psychology}, Newcomb and Hartley (eds.) taken from George H. Mead, \textit{Mind, Self and Society}. 
activities of these groups. In discussing the implications of his theory of primary groups, Cooley says it

... simply means the application at this point of the idea that society and individuals are inseparable phases of a common whole, so that wherever we find an individual fact we may look for a social fact to go with it.\(^\text{12}\)

To make distinctions between the individual and the social character of his actions is to encumber social inquiry with unnecessary obstacles. "Men have always lived together in groups. Whether mankind has a true herd instinct or whether groups are held together because this has worked out to advantage is of no importance. Certainly the wishes in general are such that they can be satisfied only in a society."\(^\text{13}\) The real question for study, then, is social behavior and the ways by which this behavior may be enhanced and refined. Thus, according to Dewey:

There is a peculiar absurdity in the question of how individuals become social, if the question is taken literally. Human beings illustrate the same traits of both immediate uniqueness and connection, relationships, as do other things. No more in their case than in that of atoms and physical masses is immediacy the whole of existence and therefore an obstacle of being acted upon by and effecting other things. Everything that exists in as far as it is known and knowable is in interaction with other things. It is associated, as well as solitary, single... The significant consideration is that assemblage of organic human beings transforms sequences and coexistence into participation.\(^\text{14}\)


\(^{13}\) Landis, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

D. Communication and Social Behavior

In the earlier part of this discussion we examined Niebuhr's interpretation of the self and its dialogues. This analysis showed that the self engages in three types of dialogues and traced the various dimensions of these dialogues as they affect the self. Niebuhr does not enlighten the reader as to the problem of communication in developing, furthering, and insuring the process of social transactions. How does language help the individual to become a part of the culture and, thus, become more human? What are the basic relations between communication and social organization? Niebuhr does not answer these questions, but they are of such magnitude in understanding social behavior that any discussion dealing with the basis of social relations would be incomplete without it. Dewey has written at length on this problem, and it may be well to turn to him at this time.

Dewey describes the process of communication as "sharing," "participation," and as "a wonder by the side of which transubstantiation pales."\(^\text{15}\)

When communication occurs, all natural events are subject to reconsideration and revision: they are re-adapted to meet the requirements of conversation, whether it be public discourse or that preliminary discourse termed thinking. Events turn into objects, things with a meaning. They may be referred to when they do not exist, and

\(^{15}\text{Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 166.}\)
thus be operative among things distant in space and time, through vicarious presence in a new medium.  

The process of communication has not always been understood by either transcendentalists or empiricists. Transcendentalists, failing to see the naturalistic status of language, have identified language with logos or mind which was conceived supernaturally. Logic was held to have its basis beyond human conduct; in consequence, a separation of the "physical" and "rational" resulted. Empiricists, on the other hand, have treated language as a mechanical part of social interaction used to convey thoughts, ideas, and observations that have a prior and independent existence. Language is given no credit for transforming thought and shaping social relations. It is treaded, rather, in a mechanical and artificial sense. The use of signs in creating reflection is neglected by the empiricists. As a consequence of this theory, the relationship among ideas and physical occurrences has been overlooked.

Language is the human process by means of which meanings are exchanged, concepts modified, and behavior fashioned and re-fashioned.

Not only is social life identical with communication, but all communication (and hence all genuine social life) is educative. To be a recipient of a communication is to have an enlarged and changed

\[16\text{Ibid.}\]
experience. One shares in what another has thought and felt and in so far, meagerly or amply, has his own attitude modified. Nor is the one who communicates left unaffected.17

The person who is communication with another, especially if his experience is somewhat complex, must get outside himself to see the experience as others would see it if he is to render it intelligible and meaningful to the other person or persons. To formulate an experience, the person must see it in relation to the objects and people who were involved in the experience, whether directly or indirectly.

Language is more than just an agency for economizing human energy. "It is a release and amplification of energies that enter into it, conferring upon them the added quality of meaning. The quality of meaning thus introduced is extended and transferred, actually and potentially, from sounds, gestures, and marks to all other things in nature."18 Whenever sounds have meaning they are more than mere occurrences; they are at this point objects that have implications for the further flows of behavior.

The especial contribution made by Dewey in his examina­tion of communication is the resulting conception of the nature of intelligence he sets forth. Dewey does not con­ceive intelligence, as some philosophers have done, as existing above the 'flux of things'; instead, for Dewey,

intelligence is always social in character. It comes into action when meanings are exchanged and problems are confronted by the individual. This fact is important to remember when considering the basis of social relations.

Meaning is not indeed a psychic existence; it is primarily a property of behavior, and secondarily a property of objects. But the behavior of which it is a quality is a distinctive behavior; cooperative, in that response to another's acts involves contemporaneous response to a thing as entering into the other's behavior, and this upon both sides.19

For Dewey, communication is always a cooperative process by means of which persons share in the ideas and activities of each other, and in which the activity of each is shaped and modified by the partnership. As was noted earlier in this chapter, social intelligence is not operative on the "psycho-physical" level, but comes into operation when meanings are exchanged and social problems are confronted. By the communicative process acts are made intelligible and purposeful. "Possession of the capacity to engage in such activity is intelligence. Intelligence and meaning are natural consequences of the peculiar form which interaction sometimes assumes in the case of human beings."20

Language is used in a social context and the participants in the process are involved in a social transaction.

19 Ibid., p. 179.
"Language is always a form of action and in its instrumental use is always a means of concerted action for an end, while at the same time it finds in itself all the goods of its possible consequences." Within social transactions communication is used to develop cooperative activity and inquiry and, by increasing the exchange of meanings, to enhance and modify the social intelligence of the parties involved involved in the transaction.

In summary, we may conclude that Dewey has given a sounder basis for social relations than has Niebuhr. This is revealed when this question is raised of Niebuhr's social philosophy: why are people more immoral in an individual state (whatever this may mean) than as participants in society? The position either assumes that man has an existence separate from society, or prior to his membership, or that man has motives which are more just, less sinful and corrupt when he is not subject to the unhealthy coercive forces of modern societies. From what Niebuhr says (supra. Section I, pp. 26-31) it would seem that he bases his position on the latter assumption. Each individual has the potentials for greater justice and better control over his pride; the coercive factors in society, however, militate against his essential morality and degrade him. The question may be raised, of course, "Who created society"? The answer

\[21\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 184}.\]
is not necessarily the individuals who presently constitute it. Society existed prior to their birth, even though during their lifetime certain social arrangements, such as folkways or even some basic customs may have been modified or superseded. If these individuals did not cause many of the immoral social relationships existing in society today, then it seems evident that preceding generations were more corrupt than those of today. Here, then, is why we have moral man and immoral society (to overstate and oversimplify the problem). If individuals are more moral today, why, we may ask, is it that they have not rectified many social wrongs? Niebuhr contends, of course, that all societies must have some forms of coercion for their maintenance and stability. Coercion is a necessary evil. The problem is to develop greater justice in the use of these coercive measures so that society will be moral in its institutions and organizations. The problem of justice, therefore, becomes uppermost in Niebuhr's analysis. A functional system of justice is needed to offset man's basic self-interest and the coercive force of the group.

In the second chapter we shall examine how Dewey and Niebuhr deal with problems of freedom and authority, justice and security, which individuals confront in American society. After looking at man's basic nature in this chapter, the question now becomes how man's nature may be expressed within a social framework in such a way that the good of the
individual and the good of society will be realized. The problem of human freedom and an analysis of its scope and limits will be explored. Finally, a study of how these social critics treat the problem of justice in order to establish the corrective mechanisms utilized by society in conflicts involving human freedom will be made.
CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEMS OF FREEDOM AND AUTHORITY IN
AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

Introduction

The annals of human history are testimony that man has not always been in a position to demand freedom for himself and his loved ones. Ancient civilization reveals that the majority of the people were in a state of subjection and servitude, fully under the control of the rulers. The masses of people could not command sufficient power to break through the barriers authoritarians had created. Even in democratic Athens, democracy was limited to citizens, which meant that the majority of the populace, not recognized as citizens, were slaves. The Middle Ages created decentralized societies in which social relations were defined unambiguously and with extreme exactness. Only with the Reformation and the later rise of science and technology do we find recurrent attempts by the masses to achieve greater freedom and justice in their daily lives. The emphases then shifted from social stability, attained through the acceptance societal structure, to the quest for greater individual freedom.
The more authoritarian social structures, with their hierarchies of privileged classes, crumbled under these emphases and, in fact, they are no longer accepted or even tolerated in certain areas of Europe and America. The fact remains, however, that the twentieth Century has witnessed a challenge to this persistent dream of free men, a challenge thrown by the modern-day dictator and the emergent monolithic and totalitarian state. How this challenge is to be met, how the tide running against our historic heritage of freedom is to be reversed, are questions the answers to which are still in doubt. One thing is certain: We dare not assume that the free life will prevail simply because we may call it good.

Throughout human history, and within many diverse cultures, people have sought stability and security along with freedom and liberty. They have not left social relations, through which life's necessities are gained, to chance. Problems arise, however, when men organize societies to promote this combination of values. Hence, the problem of striking a balance between freedom and security, between established authority and rampart liberty, has always troubled mankind, and but few societies, in confronting the problem, have attained a reasonable, fair, and equitable system of justice.

Today, more than ever, a renewed assessment of freedom and authority needs to be made. Men the world over confront
the conflicting claims of an intriguing heritage whose promise of freedom has been sufficiently realized to capture the imagination of those who yet struggle to ground it deeper within their lives and of a seductive newcomer, totalitarianian, whose promise of security obscures the eventual loss of freedom its realization would entail. Reinhold Niebuhr and John Dewey faced this problem in their writings and within these we may discover fresh insights.
A. The Problem of Human Freedom

Niebuhr is sensitive to the problem of man's freedom in the social process of daily living, yet he views it, also, against the backdrop of man as creator and creature in history. This backdrop, as we saw earlier, is designed to illuminate the dual nature of man. Man is a creature within the unfoldment of the historical process by his enclosure within, and obedience to, the inexorable laws of natural necessity. Yet man, by virtue of the characteristics that differentiate him from the animal kingdom, is capable of transcending the flow of history by creating new patterns and processes.

This dual nature of man should be kept to the forefront when considering human freedom. Man requires freedom in social organization in order that his capacity for "indefinite transcendence" will not be suppressed. It is this social freedom which enables man to make history and construct endless varieties of social patterns. Human spirituality is preserved through freedom and individuality. In short, human freedom is sharply distinguished from animal existence "by the measure of human freedom and the consequent degree of discrete and unique individuality in man."¹

¹Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, I, 56.
The intelligent use of freedom praises problems for man, however. These arise in the most primitive and the most complex societies, with the expressions of freedom taking many diverse forms. Freedom causes man to rebel against nature's necessities. In his ambitious quest for power there is always an imminent danger that man will disrupt the basic social harmonies within the culture. Man's indeterminate ambitions render pure communism or pure democracy an impossibility. "This unique freedom is the generator of both the destructiveness and the creativity of man. Most of the efforts to manage the historical process would actually destroy the creativity with the destructiveness."\(^2\)

History reveals that men have achieved some measure of freedom over the ages, otherwise tribal communities would not have developed into empires and nations. "But there is no absolute freedom in history; for every choice is limited by the stuff that nature and previous history present to the hour of decision."\(^3\) Unfortunately, however, modern man is guilty of holding a false conceptions of his freedom and, as a result, cultures have built faulty perspectives on the basis of these conceptions. Modern man is found by Niebuhr to be in defiance of nature's laws, as he only interprets his nature from the point of view of his unique rationality. He

\(^2\)Niebuhr, The Irony of American History, p. 84.

\(^3\)Niebuhr, The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness, p. 54.
fails to recognize the possibilities of the human spirit that transcends both nature and reason. Similarly this problem is reflected whenever a "culture which underestimates the problem of freedom and necessity in nature is bound to depreciate the reality of freedom in man."\(^4\)

Man is still not certain of the real nature of his freedom even though serious and extensive study has been given the problem. The history of philosophy reveals the arguments of determinists and voluntarists on this subject. Determinism holds that all the facts in the physical universe, and also in human history, are dependent upon and conditioned by their causes. Voluntarists opposed determinists by asserting that the human will, or something analogous to it, is the primary stuff of the universe, and that purposive impulse is real in nature. Philosophers, as they have dealt with the question of human freedom, have speculated on the nature, limits, and scope of choice. Modern cultural anthropologists, however, have corrected the claims of some of the combinations of voluntarism and determinism which underestimated the freedom of man who is to be managed, as well as the finiteness of man who is to manage others. But, according by Niebuhr, they have done so "by protecting an even more absurdly consistent determinism, according to which all men are the prisoners of their respective cultures.

with no opportunities to exhibit characteristically universal traits."5 Modern man, once again, has failed to recognize the multi-dimensions of selfhood.

The problems of human freedom are seen wherever communities become inordinate in their desire for order, as well as when the various forces in the community display their passion for freedom. It is necessary to "preserve a proper balance between both principles, and be as ready to champion the individual against the community as the community against the individual."6

Any definition of a proper balance between freedom and order must always be at least slightly colored by the exigencies of the moment which may make the peril of the one seem greater and the security of the other therefore preferable. Thus even the moral and social principle which sets limits upon freedom and order must, in a free society, be subject to constant re-examination.7

B. The Christian Interpretation of Freedom in History

The Christian interpretation of freedom in history endeavors to give meaning to the incomprehensible maze of man's daily life. The position finds the vantage point to characterize the origin of sin by examining the nature and consequence of human freedom. Sin arises in the improper use of this freedom. Man's faulty perspective of his nature

5Ibid.
7Ibid., pp. 78-79.
is seen in his failure to recognize the dimensions of his unique role as creator and creature in history. The final form that this error takes can be seen in the modern belief that man eventually will become the unequivocal master of historical destiny. This error persuades modern man to reject all biblical concepts of divine providence as no longer relevant to his position of strength and power. Modern man, therefore, has not only exaggerated the degree of growth in human freedom and power but, along with this error, he "added the second mistake of identifying freedom and virtue."8

Man can be seen in the biblical interpretation of history in his true stature, possessing a dual dimension of creature and creator.

Man transcends nature, time and history sufficiently to be able to develop rational structures of meaning for his individual and collective life. But insofar as he is involved in the flux of time and history, the flux of history must have some other meaning than that which he can give it, as a creature involved in it.9

It is necessary, therefore, to look beyond the natural realm of occurrences and causations. Naturalism has framed human freedom within the backdrop of nature but, in so doing, it has ignored the fact that man is capable of rising above the world of natural necessity. The ultimate question raised by

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8Ibid., p. 69.
9Ibid., p. 57.
the problem of freedom and necessity in history is how freedom is related to the patterns of historical existence.

If human freedom were absolute, human actions would create a realm of confusion. If the patterns and structures, whether natural or historical, were absolute, human freedom would be annulled. The uniqueness of human freedom makes it impossible to regard the structures and sequences of pure nature as the basis of the pattern of meaning for life.10

The biblical interpretation of freedom in history also accounts for evil in the world. Nature does not limit human freedom as much as modern thinkers are led to believe, as human freedom possesses the capacity to transcend the framework. But even this framework man can elaborate a multiplicity of social arrangements. It would be erroneous to view man as imprisoned within the necessities and contingencies of nature. Evil arises in human history as a consequence of man's wrong use of his unique capacities. The wrong use is always some failure by man to recognize the limits of his power, wisdom, or virtue. Man continually forgets that he is not simply a creator but also a creature of history. And it is man who must bear the responsibility for sin. Sin accompanies every creative act, though it is not a part of the creativity. Instead, sin is the "consequence of man's self-centeredness and egotism by which he destroys the harmony of existence."11

10Ibid., p. 56.

11Niebuhr, Beyond Tragedy, pp. 165-66.
How can man find meaning in the confusing maze of historical events? Christianity provides intelligibility to the whole of history by viewing it in its universe of meaning. Christianity knows by faith of some events in history in which the transcendent and panorama of the whole stream of history is revealed. This faith understands the sense of meaningless that enters history through the corruption of human freedom.

But it does not come to the despairing conclusion that history is merely a chaos of competing forces. It has discerned that the divine power which is sovereign over history also has a resource of mercy and love which overcomes the rebellion of human sin, without negating the distinctions between good and evil, which are the moral content of history. The revelations of God in history, are, in fact, according to Biblical faith, evidences of a divine grace which both searches out the evil character of human sin and overcomes it.¹²

C. Justice: Its Obstacles and Fulfillments

The problem of social living is intricately and inextricably connected with justice and law within the community. Whenever people come together in order to satisfy their daily needs more completely, there is a need for a method of arbitrating disputes and resolving conflicts. If a working system of justice is not cultivated, there is strong likelihood that society will not survive. Principles of justice grant order and meaning to daily life and establish social

¹²Niebuhr, Faith and History, p. 22.
relations that can be relied upon. Justice insures fairness in man's dealings one with the other. It assures men also, that as long as they associate fairly and justly they can continue to enjoy human relationships.

Progress in resolving disputes and constructing an equitable system of justice, however, has not been rapid. Men over the centuries have not learned to live together without compounding their vices and seeking those goods to which they are not rightfully entitled. No matter how greatly human ingenuity increases the treasures which nature provides, these provisions are never sufficient to satisfy human wants. For man is "... gifted and cursed with an imagination which extends his appetites beyond the requirements of subsistence. Human society will never escape the problem of the equitable distribution of the physical and cultural goods which provide for the preservation and fulfillment of human life."13

Not only is man cursed with an acquisitive imagination that exceeds his needs, but the problem of justice is aggravated by an inordinate distribution of goods and services in society. Control of goods and services by a limited number of people sets up power factions that have characterized man's relationship to man throughout long centuries. "The disproportion of power in a complex society ... has

perpetuated social injustice in every form through all the ages.\textsuperscript{14} History is replete with examples of seemingly the most honorable of men whom the use of power has corrupted. The literature of all ages is filled with rational and moral justifications for the inequalities that power brings—but most of the arguments are specious.

If superior abilities and services to society deserve special rewards it may be regarded as axiomatic that the rewards are always higher than the services warrant. No impartial society determines the rewards. The men of power who control society grant these perquisites to themselves.\textsuperscript{15}

Steps must be taken by society to control the use of power. Power needs to be reduced to a minimum, and that power which remains should be brought under the strongest measure of social control. Those forms of power which are less amenable to social control should be destroyed. "For there is no ethical force strong enough to place inner checks upon the use of power if its quantity is inordinate."\textsuperscript{16}

Sound measures of social control can be brought about by establishing an impartial body, that has the welfare of society at heart, to judge the disputes over the use of power. Success in the operations of such a body will help in the mitigation of injustice. The insuperable task is to find men of vision who are capable of remaining impartial.

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., p. 9.
\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., p. 8.
\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., p. 164.
and dispassionate in the face of power clashes. "But if the issues reach deep enough into the very foundations of the society upon which the court rests, its judgments become interested judgments." 17 Even on a broader scale the courts cannot remain completely impartial. When litigations involve unions and trusts, for instance, the litigants occupy such an important position in society that the members of the courts are in contact with, or are in some way a part of, the activities of these vital centers of society. Hence, under these circumstances, impartiality cannot be assumed.

Even though the courts cannot remain impartial in many cases, there have been some attempts among democratic nations to bring power into the service of justice. According to Niebuhr, this has been done in three ways:

(a) They have tried to distribute economic and political power and prevent its undue concentration. (b) They have tried to bring it under social and moral review. (c) They have sought to establish inner religious and moral checks upon it. 18

Coercive measures must also be used to bring power into the service of justice. These measures must be employed because of the inability of man to transcend his own interests and desires sufficiently to envision sympathetically the needs of his fellow man. "But the same force which guarantees

17Niebuhr, Discerning the Signs of the Times, p. 9.
peace also makes for injustice. . ."¹⁹ The evils of coercion, or control, are tolerated, therefore, because greater evils would beset society otherwise. Society, then, is faced with the problem of making coercion less unjust.

In the final analysis, justice deteriorates wherever men fail to develop reverence for all personality. Any method of reorganizing the existing program of justice should be based on the affirmation of the nobility of all personality. Justice will be fulfilled when each individual respects all persons.

Reverence for personality qualifies the individual's will-to-power so that his life can be integrated with other lives with a minimum of conflict; and it saves society from sacrificing the individual to the needs of the group.²⁰

Religion not only urges us to respect all personality but, also, it helps to create the type of human personality that deserves reverence. Men cannot live together without genuine respect for one another, and they cannot develop this respect without a sincere appreciation and understanding of the Christian conception of human nature. An ethical and just life tells man

... to respect human personality because the universe itself, in spite of some obvious evidence to the contrary, knows how to conserve personality; and to create values in a world in which values are not an effervescence but a reality. Religion is in short the courageous logic which makes the ethical struggle consistent with world facts.²¹

¹⁹Niebuhr, Moral Man and Immoral Society, p. 6.  
²¹Ibid., p. 50.
Section II: Dewey

A. The Nature of Human Liberties

The basis for the conflict between freedom and authority can be found in history. The rigid control and organization of authority in the Middle Ages by the Catholic church, and the later authority of national monarchs, has left modern man generally with a distrust of strong external controls. The authoritarian and oppressive character of earlier controls denied men those liberties needed to insure a full development of human potentiality. The rise of science and its consequent discoveries provided mankind with the opportunity for a less burdensome and toilsome life. Science helped give the common man, in short, the opportunity to revolt against authority. As this opportunity was seized, the desire spread among diverse peoples, often taking the form of an open attack.

It is a striking fact that the protagonists of liberty in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were those who identified themselves with revolutionary movements. Those who fought for liberty were no longer on the defensive. They openly engaged in an offensive effort to further their cause. Today, however, many protagonists of liberty claim that liberty is best protected by existing institutions, by the status quo, by the maintenance of the present political order. Change, for many Americans, is looked at askance, as
if it were in some way representative of a deceptive and
dangerous doctrine. And, when institutions that have been
associated with man's quest for freedom are viewed in rela-
tionship to institutions appropriate to totalitarian cultures,
the reason for this seeming conservatism is not far to seek.
Change and stability, under these circumstances, are depicted
as abstract ideals in which inhere the innate qualities of
'good' or 'bad', with the later associated with change.
Particular acts are seldom judged in their concrete form by
assessing the possible consequences for individuals and
society that will follow from them. Yet, as Dewey notes,
liberty is not just an abstract principle.

It is power, effective power to do specific things,
There is no such thing as liberty in general;
liberty, so to speak, at large. If one wants to
know what the condition of liberty is at a given
time, one has to examine what persons can do and
what they cannot do. The moment one examines the
question from the standpoint of effective action,
it becomes evident that the demand for liberty is
a demand for power, either for possession of
powers of action not already possessed or for
retention and expansion of powers already possessed.¹

The use of effective power by an individual or group at a
given place or time always stands in relation to the distri-
bution of power that exists at the time.² Liberty thus
arises in relationship to specific situations, a fact that
rules out any assumption of a directing absolute liberty.

This relationship

¹Dewey, Problems of Men, pp. 111-12.
²Ibid., p. 112.
also necessarily means that wherever there is liberty at once place there is restraint at some other place. The system of liberties that exist at any time is always the system of re­
straints and controls that exist at that time. No one can do anything except in relation to what others can do and cannot do.  

On the basis of this theory, liberty may no longer be considered, either as idea or action, in strictly individual­istic terms. It has to be examined, rather, if its meaning is to be found, in a social context. This fact demands that we attend to the specific functional nature of each social context. Thus, the liberties that individuals possess depend upon the distribution of power to act within given social situations. Liberties of the individual are contingent upon the social framework of transactions in which he takes part at any given moment.

Liberty has been interpreted in various ways, of course. It has been thought, for instance, to originate in a transcendent realm, untouched by natural event. This natural world was viewed by Christendom as not only being subject to the evil men create but, also, as being subject to natural necessity of a binding nature. The sensuous, impulsive, and mundane world was considered too confining and limiting to grant man the full range and scope of freedom his soul deserved. It was, therefore, only in a flight to an ethereal and timeless realm, completely separated from the

3 Ibid., pp. 112-13.
world of natural necessity, that man could hope to find freedom. As Dewey has said, however,

> Even if the flight could be successfully accomplished, the efficacy of the prescription may be doubted. For we need freedom in and among actual events, not apart from them. It is to be hoped therefore that there remains an alternative; that the road to freedom may be found in that knowledge of facts which enables us to employ them in connection with desires and aims. 

Men have fought under many banners in the name of liberty. Then what is it men have been fighting for? Basically, liberty consists of three elements:

(i) It includes efficiency in action, ability to carry out plans, the absence of cramping and thwarting obstacles. (ii) It also includes capacity to vary plans, to change the course of action, to experience novelties. And again (iii) it signifies the power of desire and choice to be factors in events.

Few men would relish a high amount of choice in action if the resulting consequences were certain to be monotonous. "Those who have defined freedom as ability to act have unconsciously assumed that this ability is exercised in accord with desire, and that its operation introduces the agent into fields previously unexplored." Efficiency in carrying out acts cannot be overlooked in this analysis. The individual needs a reasonable freedom of operation when he makes choices among the diverse alternatives he confronts. And


5Ibid., pp. 303-4.

6Ibid., p. 304.
actions can be advanced by study and the use of foresight. The individual must use intelligence to discern unforeseen and unanalyzed obstacles to progress as he proposes plans of action to reach the goals of his choice. Thus, "intelligence is the key to freedom in act." Freedom from oppressive legal and political measures is thought by some to constitute freedom; unless critical intelligence is employed, however, to gain control of, and to alter, the baneful forces in society, freedom will be short-lived. Freedom, then, is associated with the development of insight into more effective means of realizing choices through the critical use of intelligence.

B. Liberty and Natural Rights

Advocates of liberty in the natural state have made severe attacks on all forms of authority. This school of thought envisions liberty as one of man's inalienable right, possessed by him in his original state of nature. This so-called natural or 'original state' finds man, of course, in direct relationship with his natural surroundings. Yet, despite this fact of relationship, man is assumed to be free from external restraints and pressures which would limit and restrict his freedom. Since man is thus free to do whatever he wishes, there are no conceivable limits to his freedom except, perhaps, those acts which are beyond his capabilities.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{7}}\text{Ibid.}\]
Men, of course, soon discovered the penalties assessed when they attempted to violate nature's laws. Every transgression has been punished by the operation of natural consequences which, had he reflected upon them in advance of action, could have been foreseen.

Thus, through direct experiences man gained a greater understanding of his natural habitat and of the potentiality of his own power. According to the 'natural rights' theory, when man began to organize large and complex social arrangements, he automatically limited his natural rights. Corruptness and depravity spread and multiply with the increasing complexity of social arrangements. The complex societies of the twentieth century, therefore, virtually assure the diminution and the eclipse of natural rights. Centers of authority build up through the deliberate efforts of those who are able to grasp some form of power. This centralization of social authority inevitably confines and withholds the natural rights to which all men are entitled. In consequence, all forms and types of authority are to be viewed as encroachments on man's freedom.

From this concept of natural rights the assumed sharp and irreconcilable conflict between freedom and authority arose. A dichotomy between the two is pictured, the one is thought to be antithetical to the other. This conflict shaped the construction of political systems, leading for
many centuries to an apparently irremedial conflict between
freedom and authority in political thought.

The genuine problem is the relation between
authority and freedom. And this problem is
masked, and its solution begged, when the idea
is introduced that the fields in which they
respectively operate are separate. In effect,
authority stands for stability of social orga­
ization by means of which direction and support
are given to individuals; while individual
freedom stands for the forces by which change is
intentionally brought about. The issue that
requires constant attention is the intimate and
organic union of the two things: of authority
and freedom, of stability and change.8

Undoubtedly, individualistic philosophy erred in
placing authority and stability in opposition to each other.
It was mistaken, also, in seeing in each establishment of
some form of authority an unwarranted infringement on indi­
vidual rights. It was not mistaken, however, in perceiving
that institutional embodiments of authority are frequently
alien, conflicting with new wants and purposes. Actually,
it was not a conflict between authority and freedom that
had been posed; rather, the problem, the dichotomy it pre­
sumed to solve, arose from the impact of liberating and
innovating factors on the stronghold of custom and tradition.
The need to harmonize new thoughts with established ways of
behaving after the Reformation impressed itself on men's
minds was later intensified immeasurably as scientific
inquiry came to the fore.

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8Dewey, Problems of Men, p. 94.
C. Stability and Change

Habits that are engrained in the individual are not considered oppressive and outmoded. They are accepted with a fair measure of equanimity. The individual comes to identify himself with the existing social order, indeed, it is in this initial identification that he comes to be a person. The social order appears to make possible the achievement of the goals which aim at the desirable and worthy things of life. Thus, those who question the function of social institutions and their consequences are looked upon as outsiders or rebels who wish to destroy 'our' cherished way of life.

It is the general tendency for individuals to prefer authority and stability to innovation and change, life is simpler this way.

Some who readily accept authority view authority as an essential part of the natural process, the world of events. Authority exists as an inherent part of the universe and on the basis of human nature. This concept of authority was originally stated by Aristotle and reinforced by the Stoics. Other forms of authority found a supernatural realm for its allegiance. Authority was imparted through the will of God and men established their societies with supernatural authority as its guiding force. If one were in doubt he could appeal to God's messengers to interpret His will for the general public. It was seldom that any citizen needed to ask a question regarding his acts; as all accepted forms
of behaving were embodied carefully in the existing social institutions. It was easier to live in those days, as one's acts were channeled into suitable outlets and forms of expression. The choices men made were dictated by a higher authority; hence, they could concentrate with greater care and intensity on fulfilling their prescribed roles in society.

Even with the rise of dynastic states and their challenge to the church for the reigns of authority, the same principle held. The only difference was that the state and monarch were supreme. The divine monarchs could question even allegiance of the church. When new economic classes developed in Europe, economic theories were proposed that eventually established a new type of authority. The physiocrats claimed to apprehend the absolute laws of the economic process by means of which society operates and survives. Adam Smith and his colleagues envisioned these laws and emphatically claimed that the economic wheels of society would operate in an efficient manner only as they were followed.

The point is that new forms of authority followed earlier ones and, thereby, generated for each society a shift in the arbiters of social acts. There is a pronounced tendency for men to seek out fortifying agents of authority. New agents that hoped to gain authority, therefore decried established form of power, pointed to the abuses this power
led to, and endeavored to gain the allegiance and devotion of the masses.

Liberalism, as it came upon the scene, rejected most all forms of authority as an infringement on the natural rights of men. Early liberalism espoused unqualified freedom and independence for man. This new philosophy, as we have previously noted, depicted freedom and authority as inevitably in conflict. While derogating the principle of authority in the social order, the new philosophy

... erected the wants and endeavors of private individuals seeking personal gain to the place of supreme authority in social life. In consequence, the new philosophy, in the very act of asserting that it stood completely and loyally for the principle of individual freedom, was really engaged in justifying the activities of a new form of concentrated power—the economic, which new form, to state the matter moderately, has consistently and persistently denied effective freedom to the economically underpowered and underprivileged.9

There is a false issue in viewing freedom and authority as if they existed in separate spheres. What is needed is a conception that recognizes the interpenetration of the two.

We need an authority that, unlike the older forms in which it operated, is capable of directing and utilizing change, and we need a kind of individual freedom unlike that which the unconstrained economic liberty of individuals has produced and justified; we need, that is, a kind of individual freedom that is general and shared and that has the backing and guidance of socially organized intelligent control.10

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9 Ibid., p. 100.
10 Ibid., p. 101.
"Every question of freedom and authority, liberty and organiza-
ination needs to be viewed in this new light. Every such
question is to be judged not on the basis of antecedent
theory but on the basis of concrete consequences." We
appraise the activities of institutions and agencies in terms
of the results they effect in human experience. If they help
to set the stage for more meaningful experience for the indi-
viduals concerned, they will have a share in providing the
social media for individuals to reconstruct their experiences
in an effort to impart added meaning to subsequent experience.

There are resources open to society that will help to
improve and enhance human living that has not been tried on
a sufficiently wide plane.

The resource that has not yet been tried on any
large scale in human, social relationships is the
utilization of organized intelligence, the manifold
benefits and values of which we have substantial
evidence in the narrower field of science.12

The reasons why the scientific method has not been tried are
many. They will be discussed in Chapter II, together with
the efficacy and values of the method. A broader perspective
on this problem can best be gained by viewing it in the
social and political context to which it would be applied.
This social and political context focuses around the centers
of authority and control in society.

A. Justice and Coercive Measures

John Dewey and Reinhold Niebuhr have focused their attention on the problem of human freedom in American culture and, even though they have seen the problem in somewhat different perspectives, they express common grounds of concern in many key places.

Niebuhr develops the position that man, in his dual role as creator and creature of history, is endowed with a greater share of freedom than any living creature. Man errs because he fails to recognize the distinctive nature of this freedom, its potentials and limitations. Man, as a creator of history, often fails to recognize the dimensions of his spiritual nature that transcend natural necessity and create new patterns of human history. Yet man is equally a product of history and must stand and fall on the shoulders of past events. His freedom is circumscribed within the framework of this heritage. In other words, Niebuhr, imposing a consistent determinism whenever he views man as a creature of history, contends that all men find their free choice limited whenever they pretend to be more powerful and intelligent than they really are. And it would appear, oddly, that this happens wherever they try to change the determining conditions. Yet his is a social interest.

Dewey concludes, also, that there can be no absolute freedom. Whenever certain rights are achieved, some system
of authority is established to see that these rights are exercised justly. Within our increasingly complex societies of today, the ramifications of authority become exceedingly complex. Both Dewey and Niebuhr are cognizant that to over-emphasize either freedom or authority at the expense of the other leads to inaccurate and distorted social conceptions of man's rights and limitations. Both writers are in general agreement that the major problem we now face is how to maximize human freedoms by establishing a well-ordered system of controls to coordinate them. The major divergence between Dewey and Niebuhr arises at this point. There is little unanimity as to the nature of power and its uses. Both writers concur, however, that the quest for freedom becomes a demand for power—either to increase one's freedom and ability to act or to retain powers already possessed.

Niebuhr contends that the will-to-live is inevitably transmuted into the will-to-power. Power becomes disproportionate in society and this leads to injustice. This disparity in the use and control of social power in diverse cultures is verified through the annals of human history. Power begets power and leads to social injustice in diversified forms. Man is never content to rest with the mere rudiments of power but, instead, strives continuously for greater power. Underlying the writings of Niebuhr is the assumption that power inevitably leads to diverse and sundry forms of injustice. Power, itself, is inherently evil in the hands
of mortal man. The crucial and formidable problem that all
societies must face is how to establish a system of justice
that will insure the proper use of power and, at the same
time, check and abolish abuses of power as these arise.

Man has not yet learned to handle, with any fair
measure of success, this most critical problem of his time.
Those who hold an inordinate share of social power must, of
necessity, be endowed with the largest measure of ethical
self-control. This is the idealistic goal that society should
seek, a goal we are still quite far from attaining. This
does not obviate, however, the enormous task of bringing power
under the largest possible measure of ethical self-control.
"For there is no ethical force strong enough to place inner
checks upon the use of power if its quantity is inordinate."¹

Niebuhr is certain it will prove necessary to use
force or coercive measures to contain power. This is the
sacrifice man must make in order to maintain peace. Since
coercion always leads to some form of social injustice, the
resulting peace is sure to be a highly uneasy peace at best.
But Niebuhr leaves the reader only with the lesser of two
evils from which to choose. Actually, by all standards we
may question whether or not this is truly 'peace' or a dor­
mant disruptive condition that may soon burst the bonds of
planned suppression to wage a determined social revolution.

¹Niebuhr, Moral Man and Immoral Society, p. 164.
That the public, when fully aware of social injustice, will aspire to abolish the roots of these injustices through legislative, or perhaps, revolutionary means, is living proof that a free people will not tolerate abuses indefinitely.

Niebuhr holds that the inability of the human mind to transcend its own interests sufficiently makes a coercion a necessity. Neither rational suasion nor educational programs, although they may encourage and bring about greater selflessness, can produce a standard of justice essential to moral living. According to Niebuhr, therefore, coercive measures are a necessity if we are to curb man's inexorable quest for power. They are the lesser of two evils. Only by the cultivation of greater self-control can man escape the horns of the dilemma.

Dewey holds that force is not inherently evil in any sense of the word. If an understanding of the social results of force is to be gained, it is essential, in specific situations in which force is employed, to examine the resulting consequences, for individuals and for society. Dewey's is an empirical approach that takes into consideration the qualitative distinctions in the various social situations in which force is used. For instance, when the state is accused of using power and, thereby, bringing about social abuses it is well to remember that "The serious charge against the State is not that it uses force--nothing was ever accomplished
without using force—but that it does not use it wisely or effectively."

Traditionally, there have been two major arguments as to the use of force. There is the "Tolstoian" argument that all force is violence and all violence is evil. This can be contrasted with the customary sanctioning and glorification of the use of force against the enemy during war. Dewey calls attention to the fact that force is utilized in many different roles.

Sometimes it is energy; sometimes it is coercion or constraint; sometimes it is violence. Energy is power used with a eulogistic meaning; it is power of doing work, harnessed to accomplishment of ends. But it is force none the less—brute force if you please, and rationalized only by its results. Exactly the same force running wild is called violence. The objection to violence is not that it involves the use of force, but that it is a waste of force; that it uses force idly or destructively. And what is called law may always, I suggest, be looked at as describint a method for employing force economically, efficiently, so as to get results with the least waste. If this theory is sound, it leaves a further question unanswered,

\[\text{Law, then, guards against energy going to waste. It is "a plan for organizing otherwise independent and potentially conflicting energies into a scheme which avoids waste, a scheme allowing a maximum utilization of energy. Such, if I am mistaken not, is the true purport of all law."}^{4}\]

\[\text{Dewey,}\ \textit{Characters and Events, II, 787.}\]
\[\text{Ibid., p. 637.}\]
\[\text{Ibid., p. 638.}\]
however—namely, what is the moral direction for the more effective utilization of energies which law brings about? Dewey goes on to clarify this point by noting that the consequences of force should be viewed when determining moral direction in a situation. Energy becomes violence when it frustrates or defeats the purpose for which it was intended. Coercive force occupies a middle position between power as energy and power as violence. "Constraint or coercion, in other words, is an incident of a situation under certain conditions—namely, where the means for the realization of an end are not naturally at hand, so that energy has to be spent in order to make some power into a means for the end in hand."\(^5\)

Dewey terms the organization of force "efficiency." In his analysis nothing is found to demonstrate that force, alone, is inherently evil. Reason cannot be substituted for force, but force becomes rational when it operates in an organized manner instead of in an isolated and uncontrolled fashion. The so-called problem of 'moralizing' force turns out to be a problem of intellectualizing its use. "In no case, can antecedent or a priori principles be appealed to as more than presumptive: the point at issue is concrete utilization of means for ends."\(^6\) In evaluating the employment

\(^5\)Ibid., p. 784.

\(^6\)Ibid., p. 789 (italics in the original).
of force in any social situation, therefore, it is necessary to ascertain the efficient organization of the energies used and the means employed to effect the desired ends; that is, the organization and energy and the means used are evaluated in terms of the social consequences that result.

Once again the conflict between the interpretations of Dewey and Niebuhr lie in Dewey's insistence on the need to examine the particular situation in terms of its social consequences. In contrast, Niebuhr assumes certain fixed, a priori principles that are to be used in judging all human acts. For Niebuhr, one fixed principle is that men who possess a small measure of power will continue inevitably to grasp for more power than they truly need for daily living. The possession of power, and the accompanying reach for more, tend to subvert man's noblest aspirations, with a resulting sinful reaction of inordinate pride. Society is then forced to use coercive measures, as the lesser of two evils, to control this power.\(^7\)

Dewey would contend that an appeal to a dominant motive to explain man's behavior explains nothing. The problem of why man behaves as he does in specific social situations remains, and further, the only way to understand man is through a study of the specific conditions in specific situations to discern why man is motivated by them to behave

\(^7\)Niebuhr's position, at this point is reminiscent of Alfred Adler who held that the primary motivating factor in all men is the quest for power and prestige. From this analysis Adler was able to account for man's lesser motivations as stemming from the quest for power and prestige.
as he does. Dewey, in short, would apply the scientific method in the analysis of social problems. An appeal to fixed, a priori principles may seem, at first glance, to account for and explain each human act; actually, however, such principles explain nothing. If we say that man will always and invariably seek power, we explain little, in fact. No explanation is given as to why this supposed urge to power is so vital to man. All we know from this analysis of power is that all men, by their very nature, seek it. We still do not know why they seek power. If we state that men seek power because they wish to deny to themselves their finitude, we have only pushed the argument back one step without gaining further enlightenment. Niebuhr claims that man loves himself too strongly and desires more than his limited nature can utilize in the necessities of daily living. In other words, self-love is a universal trait that induces widespread social harm. But this emphasis on self-examination only leads away from social situations in which conditions that might be changed do in fact exist.

8 The impossibility of the Christian ethic of affirming all human personality does not make its imperative nature any less valid. The absolute nature of the commandment only makes it appear nearly impossible. Niebuhr claims that pride and self-love stands in the way of realizing the Christian ethic. Eric Fromm in his work, The Art of Loving, claims that man must be capable of loving himself before he can love others. Fromm's pronouncements would conflict sharply with Niebuhr at this point. Niebuhr's repudiation of aspects of modern psychiatry can be found in Human Nature and Destiny.
Dewey insists throughout that fixed principles do not provide the keys to an understanding of man's behavior. Man, rather, must be viewed in terms of his own actions within a social framework. It is only through the study of concrete cases of human behavior and conduct that we gain an insight into man's social behavior. Thus, he would necessarily contend that Niebuhr's view of power and self-love, serving in his analysis to illuminate the basic problems of social justice, are based on fixed principles that do not hold true for all men. There is considerable evidence in contemporary studies of human behavior and social life that contradict Niebuhr's axiom that all men are motivated by the will-to-power. Cultural anthropology shows that the will-to-power is a learned social pattern. This social pattern, as well as those of strivings for love, security, recognition and new experience, is learned. Each society values different behavior patterns more highly than others. Margaret Mead studied the cannibalistic Mundugumors and found that males of the society were submissive, docile, and retiring. The will-to-power was not, generally in evidence among the men. Among the Arapesh people the child is shaped into a responsive and non-competitive, placid and contented, un-aggressive and non-initiatory individual. There is, in short, much evidence to demonstrate that the will-to-power described by

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9See Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies.
Niebuhr is a result of cultural conditioning. Erich Fromm, in *Escape from Freedom*, outlines the behavior patterns of many people in our society who turn away from opportunities to acquire power and reject social responsibilities by submerging their personalities within the group. They are not looking for responsibility within the group; instead, they seek security through submergence of personality and anonymity. This is in line with the general criticism that modern man is becoming an exponent of conformity.

There is a body of experimental findings, therefore, that would reject Niebuhr's assumption of a universal will-to-power. If we accept the principle of the will-to-power, then the system of social justice proposed by Niebuhr, in its chief assumptions, is valid. If we do not accept it, and it is difficult to accept in the face of evidence to the century, then Dewey's theories are more in accord with the results of the studies of the ways in which cultures influence the shaping of character.
CHAPTER III

POLITICS AND THE SOCIAL ORDER

Introduction

Machine age technology overtook social life in America during the latter half of the nineteenth century and sent sweeping reverberations throughout the population. This revolution was felt, moreover, throughout the world. There were no patterns in history to grant prescience to civilizations embroiled in the upheaval of the industrial revolution and few men involved in it would have believed that within a relatively short time another revolution of tremendous magnitude would sweep the world. The changes wrought by the industrial revolution were too far-reaching to lead men to imagine that science and technology would bring about another revolution before the changes they then confronted were accepted and integrated into daily life.

Man now finds himself in a nuclear age that has made much of science fiction a reality and widespread modifications of existing institutions have occurred with such rapidity that methods man had perfected to deal with social, economic, political, and international problems are outmoded and obsolescent. Civilizations have faced many crises
throughout history, but never before have these crises appeared in such close proximity in time nor have been of such magnitude.

Problems of politics and the social order arise in local, national, and international terms. Yet the world has shrunked so in the past half-century, as a consequence of modern scientific advancements and discoveries, that all problems now have repercussions beyond local and national boundaries. Rapid transportation and communication have made the problems of one people the problems of all people. In spite of these, however, the peoples of the world have achieved little success in erecting an effective international government to arbitrate differences, settle disputes, and help bring about amicable relations among nations.

John Dewey and Reinhold Niebuhr are sensitive to the gravity and complexity of present world conditions and, as a result, both social critics have developed a system of political thought that attempts to render the world picture intelligible and give direction to new forms of socio-political action. Both Dewey and Niebuhr focus on what each believes to be the most vital areas of political life having the greatest consequences for America's social and economic progress. In this chapter, therefore, the attempt is made to set forth their respective positions and present the major aspects of their political philosophies.
Section I: Niebuhr

A. The Process of Group Organization

Embodied in Niebuhr's concept of justice is the organizing principle for social control. In Niebuhr's political philosophy this concept is essential to the achievement of a well balanced and orderly society. There are some fundamental questions, however, that need consideration: What are the ways that social groups become organized? What are the many forms of power in the political arena? What are the possibilities in effectual control and organization of these powers for the good of society? The former question will be examined first.

Niebuhr sees the coercive factors of politics as necessary and inevitable to the maintenance of stability and order within a democratic society. Democracy as a method is suitable not alone to virtuous men; it is applicable, also, to those who follow their special interests to the detriment of society. Democracy has made legal provisions for many forms of human conduct and, hence, cannot be said to be limited in its application to a select group of subjects.

There must of course be a minimal inclination for justice to furnish a base of community. For if groups and individuals merely pursue their interests without a measure of self-restraint, no political restraint, short of a tyrannical and oppressive one, could preserve the unity of the community.¹

Man always sees the interests of the community through the lenses of his own interests, even though he may not consistently follow the latter in preference to the interests of the community. The proclivity of all men in this direction, however, necessitates the use of coercive agents to insure social stability and justice. "All social co-operation on a larger scale than the most intimate social group requires a measure of coercion. While no state can maintain its unity purely by coercion neither can it preserve itself without coercion."

Coercive factors in society, frequently covert when individuals act through mutual consent, are never entirely absent. Niebuhr recognizes this by noting the characteristics of a democratic society from the point of view of its genesis and the resulting shift in its localization of power.

Democracy is thus, in one sense, the fruit of a cultural and religious pluralism created by inexorable forces of history. The seventeenth century was in some respects the culmination of a long historical process which began with the first disintegration of the uniformity of the primitive tribe. In primitive life complete uniformity is a necessary prerequisite of communal unity. The more the imagination develops, the more it becomes possible and necessary to allow life to express itself variously within one community. However, the peril of disharmony from such variety is always so great and the pride of a dominant group within any community is so imperious, that some effort is always made to preserve a coerced unity, even after the forms of history have elaborated multifarious forms of culture.

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Coercion is deemed necessary by the class in power to preserve its interests. For Niebuhr, the political arena is the realm in which the will-to-live is transmuted into the will-to power. The thirst for power leads men to try to deny power or rights to others who endeavor to rise in the social scale. Niebuhr sees man as wholly incapable of gaining an impartiality and disinterestedness in social life. Even when the individual is encouraged to give his service to a worthy cause, the will-to-power remains.

Even a conscious attempt to eliminate dishonest and ambiguous motives is no perfect guarantee against hypocrisy; for there is no miracle by which men can achieve a rationality high enough to give them as vivid an understanding of general interests as of their own.\(^4\)

In consequence, democratic forms of life must maintain coercive elements to prevent persons pursuing their own interests to the detriment of society. Therefore, "it is a rather pathetic aspect of human social life that conflict is a seemingly unavoidable prerequisite of group solidarity."\(^5\)

In Niebuhr's earlier writings during the depression years (1932-37), he pointed out that in modern capitalistic society "the significant social power is the power which inheres in the ownership of the means of production; and it is that power which is able to arrogate special social


\(^5\)ibid., p. 48.
privilege to itself." Inequalities of privilege inhere in the disproportionate holding of power; not always, but usually, economic power. These disproportions signify "that inequalities of social privilege develop in every society, and these inequalities become the basis of class division and class solidarity." Each individual, from the basis of Niebuhr's conception of human nature, invariably seeks to gain as much power as possible. Although man may be influenced and motivated by rational suasion and moral ideals, he is basically incapable of viewing the needs of community and society with a sufficient measure of impartiality. Man projects his interests into social processes and then imagines that he possesses a greater measure of selflessness than he is actually capable of achieving. Man, nevertheless, is undoubtedly more moral than are communities. The collective desires of men are compounded of ambitions and yearnings for power and prestige. These collective ambitions aid men in denying their insignificance and finite, limited existence. The strivings for power show each man that he can create a larger share in the scheme of things and publicly abnegate his insignificance.

B. The Use of Political Power

Political power in every society is intricately tied-up with non-political power. The groups holding political

\[7\text{Tbid.}\]
power in any society are those which hold the most significant types of non-political power. Non-political power in societies may take the form of economic ownership, control of technological and industrial processes of the community, or prestige from military or priestly functions. The governing group will be able to win the consent of the community if it is "able to add to this possession of power an implicit confidence in itself as the rightful government." This confidence can be maintained through the cultivation of high morale among the people.

The exact way in which the individual or group comes to acquire or to seize power is not explicitly stated by Niebuhr. The only clue is found by examining individuals who possess basic skills that can be employed in a new social capacity. But skills, to be effective as power centers, must be more than individualized—power groups must join forces to employ these skills for particular purposes. In examining contemporary society, Niebuhr usually points to the economic realm as the one in which a cluster of skills are jointed in a collective enterprise to wield forms of economic power.

Every skill, or every organization of skill, in industry or trade, is a form of social power. Every such social power seeks to enhance or to stabilize itself by the acquisition of property. If economic power becomes great enough, it seeks to transmute itself into political power. Whenever

8Niebuhr, Reflections on the End of an Era, p. 51.
a power, which is generated in specific functions, becomes strong enough to make the step possible or plausible, it seeks to participate in organizing the community.\(^9\)

This newly-gained power is not disinterested in its considerations of the needs of the community and the welfare of the people. Those who wield power are invariably partial to the perpetuation of their own interests, even if they may act to the detriment of others. Thus, "the individual or the group which organizes any society, however social its intentions or pretensions, arrogates an inordinate portion of social privilege to itself."\(^10\) The injustices of power are many and its abuses are far-reaching. One may ask, therefore, why this aggrandizement of power is tolerated so openly by society?

All through history one may observe the tendency of power to destroy its very raison d'etre. It is suffered because it achieves internal unity and creates external defenses for the nation. But it grows to such proportions that it destroys the social peace of the state by the animosities which its exactations arouse, and it enervates the sentiment of patriotism by robbing the common man of basic privileges which might bind him to the nation.\(^11\)

The dominant groups who exercise great power in society develop intricate and finely conceived plans for their use of power. These dominant groups not only endeavor to convince the public that they are especially suited to hold positions of authority by measure of their intellectual fitness, but


\(^{10}\)Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, pp. 6-7.

\(^{11}\)Ibid., p. 11.
"frequently they justify their advantages by their claim of moral rather than intellectual superiority."\(^2\) Dominant groups use other persistent methods of justifying their actions and disproportionate rights.

Perhaps a more favorite method is to identify the particular organization of society, of which they are the beneficiaries, with the peace and order of society in general and to appoint themselves the apostles of law and order. Since every society has an instinctive desire for harmony and avoidance of strife, this is a very potent instrument of maintaining the unjust status quo.\(^3\)

Many methods are used by these groups to insure and maintain their position. Whenever less-privileged classes desire more rights, dominant groups employ symbols of power and virtue to assure their status and still uphold their reputation with the rest of society.

Even when no anarchy is threatened and no violence is used by the classes which seek a more equal share in the processes of government and in the privileges of society, it is always possible for the privileged groups to predict anarchy on the score that the ambitious and advancing classes are unfit for the exercise of the rights which they desire.\(^4\)

The privileged classes further maintain their position by discouraging criticism that may call attention to their injustices. "Even those tendencies toward self-criticism in a nation which do express themselves are usually thwarted by

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 123.
\(^3\)Ibid., p. 129.
\(^4\)Ibid., p. 138.
the governing classes and by a certain instinct for unity in society itself.**\(^{15}\)**

Lastly, privileged classes frequently are able to identify their policy as deriving from a revered religious belief or as an expression of ethical and religious action.

Nations and classes, cultures and civilizations are usually able to use religion, not to reveal the imperfection and partiality of their life and values, but to give the prestige of the absolute to what is relative and tentative.**\(^{16}\)**

People are easily deceived into believing in the inviolable principles of the privileged classes. The masses are prone to accept the symbols that justify the authority wielded by the ruling class. The masses endeavor to extend their security through the vested power groups, and they try to find a secure harmony in life by supporting the supposed virtues inherent in the prized activities of those who command the greatest power. It is not surprising, therefore, to find many false prophets extolling the virtues of the way of life they offer. These false prophets encourage the masses to trust this newly-found security in their proposals. But this is a false security for the people because "they do not see to what degree the security of power leads to both injustice and pride."**\(^{17}\)** Whenever an individual is motivated by pride he grants a disproportionate importance to his own interests

\(^{15}\)Ibid., p. 88.


\(^{17}\)Niebuhr, *Beyond Tragedy*, p. 100.
at the expense of his neighbor. Man then is no longer able to view himself in his true perspective. He offends not only against himself but against other life which has a rightful existence in the 'harmony of the whole.'

'Harmony of the whole' is a difficult perspective to attain, not only by the individual but also by associated individuals at the political level. Many political theorists have viewed the function of the state as the harmonizing or unifying agent of society. But the power of the government alone is inadequate to bring about this harmony without some core of ethnic homogeneity. Communities also possess a unique cultural heritage which facilitates unity. Governmental authority is frequently derived from the same history from which the community gains its unity.

The unity of a nation is usually strengthened in wartime by arousing citizens to direct their energies into a common cause in their opposition of a common foe. Governments are in a strategic position to marshal public opinion by employing vivid symbols of patriotism. There is a certain dishonesty among governments who resort to ennobling the particularity of values within the community as universal in their scope and application. Governments that are successful in this enterprise find this measure to be highly effective in marshalling united public support of wartime political policies. The ruling class is usually most vociferous in
urging peace within the nation, but is easily provoked in joining issue in martial combat with other nations.

Sometimes specific economic interests prompt their bellicose ardor; at other times they find it convenient to strengthen their rule at home by permitting the fever of war and the resultant hysteria of patriotism to confuse their interests with the general welfare more perfectly than would be possible in a sober nation. More than one ruling caste has saved itself by an opportune war.18

It is not to be assumed that the American democratic process is lacking in ethical growth and direction. On the contrary, there are always those men who rely upon reason when viewing the issues before them. They always see the issues more clearly than the unreflective patriot and act with more disinterest than do members of the ruling classes. The size of this group varies from nation to nation. This group may at times place a check upon the more extreme types of national self-seeking, it is usually not powerful enough to affect national attitudes in a crisis. The British liberals could not prevent the Boer War; American economists have recently inveighed against a suicidal tariff policy in vain, and German liberals were unable to check the aggressive policy of imperial Germany.19

If political issues really presented unbiased questions which citizens could debate and decide on their merits, the process of voting could be viewed as educative. But, in reality, political issues are inevitably tied-up with

18Niebuhr, Moral Man and Immoral Society, p. 21.
19Ibid., p. 87.
economic issues that motivate people always to consider their self-interests. Comparatively few citizens can view a political policy objectively and, therefore, conflicting interests can never fully be resolved.

... minorities will yield only because the majority has come into control of the police power of the state and may if the occasion arises, augment that power by its own strength. Should a minority regard its own strength, whether economic or martial, as strong enough to challenge the power of the majority, it may attempt to wrest control of the state apparatus from the majority. . . .20

The technique of democratic government is based on the acquiescence of minorities to the will of the majority. Arbitration of differences in a democracy usually revolves around minor alternatives in governmental policy, with the assumption that minorities voluntarily will go along with or acquiesce in majority decisions. "If such acquiescence is withheld the majority is forced to use either police force or military power in subjugating the minority and a political struggle becomes a military one."21

The economic system in democratic societies is, of course, a major cause of concern. Classical liberalism has erroneously depicted the economic system as operating by a natural equilibrium, quite unhampered by governmental controls. But classical liberalism failed to realize that whenever a laissez-faire attitude is upheld in the economy the

20Ibid., p. 5.

strong devour the weak and monopoly displaces competition, or else competition breeds chaos.

The anarchy of competition in a modern situation of technical interdependence sometimes forces the community to encourage rather than destroy the unification of economic process (in public utilities for instance) in order to avoid the competitive waste. The tendency toward monopoly is obviously a concomitant of the general increase of interdependence in communal relations in a technical society.\(^2^2\)

There are ways in which the inordinate desires of those who hold economic power can be circumscribed in some degree. Marxists fail to realize this fact, when they contend that there is an irreconcilable conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Actually, there are other classes between these two extremes that hold a mediating position and, thereby, prevent class conflicts from assuming critical proportions. In democracies, for instance, the right of suffrage held by the poor is used to circumscribe the power of the propertied classes. The complexity of the class structure, on the other hand, may produce a confusion of forces that can immobilize a government which is caught within the vortex of this conflict.

Niebuhr is acutely aware of injustices arising from capitalism.\(^2^3\) Modern technical society is greatly in need

\(^{2^2}\)Niebuhr, The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness, p. 114.

\(^{2^3}\)Niebuhr, early in his writing career, was firmly convinced of the grave injustices inherent and active in American capitalism. From 1932-37, this emphasis was found in his works. There was a noticeable shift in emphasis, however,
of constraining economic power in order to minimize social injustice. But it is an idle and inane hope, in Niebuhr's view, to believe that economic overlords will relinquish gracefully some of their power for the good of society. Instead, they will use every conceivable means to maintain and strengthen their power, insisting, of course, that this is what is really good for society. It would be folly to imagine that a shift from capitalism to socialism will be brought about in a democratic fashion, akin to the way variant alternatives within the framework of capitalism are decided. The struggle for greater social justice is the most tenacious problem with which modern democratic societies are faced. There will always be some forms of social injustice arising from man's anarchic ego, but injustices can be greatly mitigated and society can be improved by a social change that promises technical skill rather than economic ownership to be the most significant social and political power.

C. Power Politics and the International Community

Both World Wars were fought to overcome advancing oppression and to restore peace in the world. Neither war, however, brought lasting peace or a reasonable balance of power. Although a few hardy optimists imagined that the end after the depression years. This change also moved Niebuhr away from earlier flirtations with Marxism to an emphatic pronouncement of its shortcomings.
of the Second World War represented an end to our troubles, but developments on the world scene, soon revealed this to be a false hope. Niebuhr has suggested that, instead of securing peace we discovered that we are living in an era between two ages.

It is an era when "one age is dead and the other is powerless to be born." The age of absolute national sovereignty is over; but the age of international order under political instruments, powerful enough to regulate the relations of nations and compose their competing desires, is not yet born. The age of "greek enterprise" when the new vitalities of a technical civilization were expected to regulate themselves, is also over. But an age in which justice is to be achieved, and yet freedom maintained, by a wise regulation of the complex economic interdependence of modern man is powerless to be born.\(^24\)

Steps have been taken to bring about a workable system of international law, but progress has not been nearly as great as the protagonists for a world community had hoped. We have endeavored to achieve a balance of power, following policies of the past; but, even though a temporary balance of power may develop, the doom of such a system can be foreseen. "No participant in a balance is ever quite satisfied with its own position. Every center of power will seek to improve its position, and every such effort will be regarded by others as an attempt to disturb the equilibrium."\(^25\)

\(^{24}\)Niebuhr, Discerning the Signs of the Times, pp. 39-40.

\(^{25}\)Niebuhr, The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness, p. 175.
The world is no longer made up of many large powers who, in some mythical way, may create a balance of political force on the international scene. There are fewer larger powers today, surrounded by many smaller powers with diversified interests and cultural backgrounds. Those who hope to establish a regulated international community must recognize that the issues involve the entire field of international life where power is exercised; it is only possible to solve the issues, in any sense of the world, by drawing the smaller nations into political deliberations and policy formation. Yet, even though the smaller powers gain a voice in these deliberations, it is evident that some centers of authority must be established if a conscious direction to international order is to become a reality; hence,

> . . . only the preponderant power of the great nations can be an adequate core of authority for a minimal world order. The vitalities of the world community are too diverse, the cultural and ethnic forces too heterogeneous and the elements of common tradition and experience too minimal to allow us to dispense with the policy of establishing preponderant collective power as the initial basis of world order.\(^2\)

For a considerable time to come, then, the international community will have few elements of inner cohesion or be able to benefit from a common base of culture or tradition. Instead, the international community

> . . . will possess only two minimal forces of cohesion: a common overtone of universality in

\(^{2}\)Ibid., pp. 177-78.
its moral ideals, and the fear of anarchy. The fear of anarchy will undoubtedly be the more potent of these two; but this fear is certainly not as powerful as the fear of a common and concrete foe.\textsuperscript{27}

There is a general appreciation among the great powers, however, of the peril of international anarchy. There is a chance that this appreciation (or fear) may preserve stability and give the nations time to create an international community.

But since the fear of anarchy is less potent than the fear of a concrete foe, the general tendency will be for war-time accords to be weakened rather than strengthened. The possibility of a merger of sovereignties between the great powers into a single center of authority must certainly be regarded as very remote.\textsuperscript{28}

It appears that an international community will not have the cohesiveness of a rational community.\textsuperscript{29} Except for the "force of fear and the sense of universal brotherhood, the universal community lacks the intermediate forces of togetherness which rational communities possess in their common language, culture, and tradition."\textsuperscript{30} Other difficulties arise from the effort to establish a just international community. The great nations desire to maintain world peace but, at the same time, they also desire to enhance

\textsuperscript{27}Ibid., pp. 168-69.

\textsuperscript{28}Ibid., p. 172.

\textsuperscript{29}Niebuhr does not explain how a community may be rational while its members are motivated by a 'will-to-power.'

\textsuperscript{30}Niebuhr, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 81.
their power and prestige. This is the pride of the powerful who do not wish to share their power. It is also an anxiety of weakness revealing an insecurity which undermines the common security which, in some measure, they seek.

The great powers have seen to it that political checks on their activities are minimal; whereas the small powers have been denied constitutional rights that are necessary for the full achievement of justice. The larger nations engage in rationalization to show that major checks are unnecessary, since they are peace-loving and just. This attitude of the great powers offers serious impediments to the establishment of a workable world government. "Perhaps the best that can be expected of nations is that they should justify their hypocrisies by a slight measure of real international achievement, and learn how to do justice to wider interests than their own, while they pursue their own."\(^3\) One of the reasons for selfishness among nations stems from a lack of direct contact with other communities. And without a direct perception of human need, nations develop little understanding and sympathy of one another's problems.

Most attempts to establish world government will fail, if Niebuhr is right, because they are based on faulty assumptions. The staunch advocates of world government...

\(^3\)Niebuhr, Moral Man and Immoral Society, p. 108.
who are supposed to have achieved community by codifying their agreements into law and by provid­ing an agency of some kind for law enforce­ment. This assumption ignores the historic fact that the mutual respect for each other's rights in particular communities is older than any code of law; and that machinery for the enforcement of law can be efficacious only when a community as a whole obeys its laws implicitly, so that coercive enforcement may be limited to a recalcitrant minority.  

The protagonist of world government frequently do not recognize the fallacies in their optimism. These fallacies are stated by Niebuhr in two basic propositions: "The first is that governments are not created by fiat (though sometimes they can be imposed by tyranny). The second is that governments have only limited efficacy in integrating a community."  

The unqualified optimism of many advocates of world government must be tempered by a political realism that envisions the actions of nations in the full multiplicity of their desires and strivings. Niebuhr concludes that

Ages of international constitutional struggles must intervene before the centers of power in the international community are brought under the same adequate checks which now exist in democratic communities. This struggle will be a long and tortuous one, partly because the self-righteousness of the great powers will resist the efforts at greater justice.

Niebuhr may not be a prophet of gloom; yet, on the other hand, he is no bringer of glad tidings! He sees that

32 Niebuhr, Christian Realism and Political Problems, p. 17.

33 Ibid.
the problem of the use and abuse of social power is at the center of the international controversy, as well as the major cause of conflict within nations. This problem complicates the situation at the international level. It is in this community that direct contacts and face-to-face relations of the peoples of the world become more remote. Man has not yet demonstrated the sympathetic imagination and understanding necessary to the realization of a greater application of justice through ethical control.
A. Political Pluralism

The need to make sense out of political problems was never greater than it is today. Politics frequently become confused by the public as a result of the intensive stratification of governmental functions and, also, as a result of occluded channels of communication surrounding political policies. During the twentieth century America has faced two devastating World Wars that have brought widespread changes and reconstructions in political practices and policies. Furthermore, an uneasy and disquieting peace followed each war. Despite the fact that we expected each war "to make the world safe for democracy," democratic ways of living are still under great threat. Some major problems of social living have been resolved in the past decade while others, of no less significance, have been aggravated. In spite of the fact that the use of mass communicative media are at an all-time high, the complexity of social and political relations has become more acute and less understandable to the public.

John Dewey has endeavored to illuminate the political scene by pointing up and clarifying the crucial problems America faces. His analyses examine dominant political tendencies in America and evaluate their consequences for some of the more recurring social relationships. In an effort to make sense out of the political scene, Dewey has
developed functional concepts of the state, of "the public," and of "the private" as he views these aspects of political pluralism.

There have been many theories as to the nature of the state in political thought. Problems as to the location of sovereignty, the resulting rights of citizens, and the extent of state power and its function in various types of governmental arrangements have concerned political theorists for centuries. Dewey approaches the problem from a pluralistic interpretation of socio-political activity. His approach is most important in determining the ultimate outcome of any system of political thought. Very much depends on whether we select our point of departure to tell what the state ought to be or what it is.

If we are too concerned with the former, there is a likelihood that we shall unwittingly have doctored the facts selected in order to come out at a predetermined point. The phase of human action we should not start with is that to which direct causative power is attributed. We should not look for state-forming forces. If we do, we are likely to get involved in mythology. To explain the origin of the state by saying that man is a political animal is to travel in a verbal circle.

Instead of looking for fictitious arguments of political causation, an understanding of the political scene can best be gained by examining the functional relationships that do take

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1See Krabbe, The Modern Idea of the State, Chap. 2.
place in society. The operations and functions of the state should be studied directly.

When considering private and public acts it is important not to confuse these acts with the 'individual' and 'the social' (Dewey's treatment of these concepts was considered in Chapter I). Private acts are not individual acts in contradiction to a social realm of behavior, as some theorists have contended. There is no real dichotomy between the individual and the social. Private acts are social in their consequences in many cases—they contribute to the welfare of the community or affect community relationships. When an individual purchases an article from a merchant, the individual may be buying it for his own, particular needs; nevertheless, the buyer establishes a social relationship between himself and the merchant. And certain changes, though not necessarily be major ones, are brought about in the lives of each. Thus, it may be said, in a broader sense, that "... any transaction deliberately carried on between two or more persons is social in quality. It is a form of associated behavior and its consequences may influence further associations." Many private businesses, works of art, scientific discoveries, and other activities conducted as private affairs are social in their outcome. Private acts can be either directly or indirectly beneficial in their outcomes. Many acts of private philanthropy have been of untold

\[^3\text{Ibid., pp. 13-14.}\]
benefit for many people, though no conscious intention to
effect widespread benefit motivated them.

Just as behavior is not anti-social or non-social
because privately undertaken, it is not necessarily
socially valuable because carried on in the name
of the public by private agents. The argument has
not carried us far, but at least it has warned us
against identifying the community and its interests
with the state or the politically organized com-
munity.¹

Each individual shares a variety of social interests.
These are not limited to the state alone; not can the state
satisfy all the needs and wants of the public. The state,
short, is neither the totality of human interests in a
society, nor does it administer to and assure the achievement
of all desired ends that the people, who constitute society,
would like to effect. Each individual possesses a variety of
social interests that are objectified in many groups, among
which the state is one. The range of social interests is a
matter of individual preference, but the important point to
be seen at this time is the diversity of allegiances and
interests manifested by individuals. Various fraternal
orders, for example, are established by individuals in order
to foster a mutual bond of friendship and brotherhood. Other
groupings, such as those of professional people, further the
diversity of human needs and interests more effectively than
could organized state activity. The multiplicity of organi-
zations and agencies points up the fact that the state, alone,

¹Tbid., p. 15.
is insufficient to satisfy the tremendous variety of allegiances and interests of modern man. The totality of these groups and agencies constitutes the backbone of society. The welfare of society, therefore, is not exclusively tied up with the state but, instead, extends to a multiplicity of voluntary groupings. There is no one group that assures the satisfactory and complete functioning of society; however, all groups whose activities promote the welfare of the people have a part to play and are contributory to its maintenance.

The grounds for the distinction between private and public are to be drawn on the basis of the "extent and scope of the consequences of acts which are so important as to need control, whether by inhibition or by promotion." Social consequences are broader in scope and affect more people when we consider the public as contrasted to the private. There are certain characteristics that bring a public into operation: "namely, the far-reaching character of consequences, whether in space or time; their settled, uniform and recurrent nature, and their irreparableness. Each of these matters involves questions of degree."

In seeking a clue to the nature of the state it is necessary to understand the nature of the public. As mentioned previously, it is futile to look for the state in terms

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5 Ibid.
6 Ibid., p. 64.
of direct causal factors. Instead, we need to examine "the enduring and extensive consequences of behavior, which like all behavior proceeds in ultimate analysis through individual human beings." Political theorists have searched too long for the state in the wrong places.

They have sought for the key to the nature of the state in the field of agencies, in that of doers of deeds, or in some will or purpose back of the deeds. They have sought to explain the state in terms of authorship. Ultimately all deliberate choices proceed from somebody in particular; acts are performed by somebody, and all arrangements are made by somebody in the most concrete sense of "somebody." Some John Doe and Richard Roe figure in every transaction. We shall not, then, find the public if we look for it on the side of the originators of voluntary actions.8

But, too often, political theorists have failed to look to specific acts and their consequences in developing a theory of the state. If we do not ask

... we are the conditions which promote and obstruct the organization of the public into a social group with definite functions, we shall never grasp the problem involved in the development and transformation of states. If we do not perceive that this organization is equivalent to the equipment of the public with official representatives to care for the interests of the public, we shall miss the clew to the nature of government.9

Whenever projection of consequences proceeds beyond the persons and associations directly concerned with them, the

7 Ibid., p. 17.
8 Ibid., pp. 17-18.
9 Ibid., p. 37.
consequences are of public concern and involvement. Organizing the public into a state is brought about by establishing special agencies to care for and regulate these consequences.\textsuperscript{10} The establishment of the state is effected not through primary groups or private activities, but through a public wherein consequences are widespread and affect more people directly.

For the essence of the consequences which call a public into being is the fact that they expand beyond those directly engaged in producing them. Consequently special agencies and measures must be formed if they are to be attended to; or else some new group must take on new functions. The obvious external mark of the organization of a public or of a state is thus the existence of officials. Government is not the state, for that includes the public as well as the rulers charged with special duties and powers. The public, however, is organized in and through those officers who act in behalf of its interests.\textsuperscript{11}

Thus, the most succinct and accurate statement that can be made about the relation of the state and the public is that "the state is the organization of the public affected through officials for the protection of the interests shared by its members.\textsuperscript{12} From this statement it is possible to develop a criterion for judging particular states: "namely, the degree of organization of the public which is attained, and the degree in which its officers are so constituted as to perform their function of caring for public interests."\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{10}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 39.
\textsuperscript{11}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 27-28.
\textsuperscript{12}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 33.
\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Ibid.}. 
The state frequently has been falsely identified with government. This identification leads to a false separation between rulers and people. A government does not persist by itself on its own account—it comes into operation through officials elected to represent the voice of the people. Thus, the bonds of associated activity among people go to make up the public; but the necessity for organization is effected through the activities of the state. "A public articulated and operating through representative officers is the state; there is no state without a government, but also there is none without the public. The officers are still singular beings, but they exercise new and special powers." The state represents an important though restricted social function. It acts only under special conditions.

If the consequences of a friendship threaten the public, then it is treated as a conspiracy; usually it is not the state's business or concern. Men join each other in partnership as a matter of course to do a piece of work more profitably or for mutual defense. Let its operations exceed a certain limit, and others not participating in it find their security or prosperity menaced by it, and suddenly the gears of the state are in mesh.\textsuperscript{15}

Thus, the state has a defined and recognized role to play. The officials elected by the public are active in formulating, interpreting, and enforcing the laws that constitute the government. Each elected official plays a diversity of roles as a part of the public, and these roles are entirely

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., p. 67.

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., pp. 28-29.
different from his role as an official. To be more explicit, officials may participate in private and public activities as well as perform their roles as officials.

This pluralistic concept of society does not set inherent limits for state activity. It is, rather, neutral as to any general, sweeping conclusions as to how far state activity may extend. Nor does it indicate a policy of public action. We need to look at the consequences of conjoint behavior to ascertain the necessity of state intervention. The value of social institutions and agencies is to be measured by the social consequences of their acts and consequences, of course, vary with concrete conditions. Thus, "at one time and place a large measure of state activity may be indicated and at another time a policy of quiescence and laissez-faire. . . . Their scope is something to be critically and experimentally determined."16

Then how do we determine when the state is a good one? The state should render desirable associations more coherent and clarify their aims and purge their activities. The state should protect human life by abolishing injurious groups and, thereby, grant the members of beneficial associations greater liberty and security. The good state should provide effective means whereby each individual's energies are not

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16 Ibid., p. 74 (italics in original).
dissipated protecting himself from the negative struggle against undesirable groups and individuals. The good state "enables individual members to count with reasonable certainty upon what others will do, and thus facilitates mutually helpful cooperations. It creates respect for others and for one's self."17

B. The Problems of Individualism

The problems of achieving sound, democratic relationships among the various groups that constitute the public are difficult ones. The problems facing American democracy have many origins, but they stem predominantly from a way of life that has not adjusted its value system to a new technological era. America shifted from a rural to urban life during the latter half of the nineteenth century and social relations became more mechanical and impersonal. Big business supplanted an agricultural economy and private economic gains were made frequently at the expense of the common man. In the face of change we fall back too readily on old slogans, creeds, and crusades to preserve the status quo. Manners and morals are not attuned to the times, with the majority of the public prone to accept existing customs and religious beliefs as unquestionably right. It is evident that the rapid industrialization of our civilization caught us unaware.

17Tbid., p. 72.
from them in fact, the more loudly we proclaim them. In effect we treat them as magic formulae. By repeating them often enough we hope to ward off the evils of the new situation or at least to prevent ourselves from seeing them—and this latter function is ably performed by our nominal beliefs.\(^{18}\)

Ironic as it may seem, no country possesses the instrumentalities America does which could be employed to bring about an equitable and stable society; the public in general, however, relies on older forms of authority as it attempts to achieve the good society. Many people who extol the virtues of democracy fail to act in accordance with them. There is a great need to create intellectual and moral integration out of present disordered conditions.

Splits, divisions, between attitudes emotionally and congenially attuned to the past and habits that are forced into existence because of the necessity of dealing with present conditions are a chief cause of continued profession of devotion to democracy by those who do not think nor act day by day in accord with the moral demands of the profession.\(^{19}\)

The actions of individuals in relation to other individuals are the factors that must be examined in America. The relationships of man to his fellows, together with the quality and character of these relationships, are the most vital forces that shape American democracy. It is here that we find the greatest threat to democracy, not the existence of totalitarian states.


\(^{19}\)Dewey, *Freedom and Culture*, p. 49.
It is the existence within our own personal attitudes and within our own institutions of conditions similar to those which have given a victory to external authority, discipline, uniformity and dependence upon The Leader in foreign countries. The battlefield is also accordingly here—within ourselves and our institutions.  

This persistent tendency of Americans to look only beyond their shores for the malevolent tendencies of totalitarian powers has diverted the attention of the public from the major problem: how can Americans bring about a greater share of democratic living for all citizens. Democracy is considered by some as merely a form of government. Actually, the full meaning of democracy is to be found in social relations—those relations in which each person is given the freedom and opportunity to develop his full potentialities under conditions that promote an abiding respect for human personality.

We live in an age in which material goods are highly prized; hence, we frequently place material gain ahead of human values. Dewey describes this situation thus:

We live as if economic forces determined the growth and decay of institutions and settled the fate of individuals. Liberty becomes a well-nigh obsolete term; we start, go, and stop at the signal of a vast industrial machine. Again, the actual system would seem to imply a pretty definitely materialistic scheme of value. Worth is measured by ability to hold one's own or to get ahead in a competitive pecuniary race.  

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20Ibid.

21Dewey, Individualism, Old and New, pp. 11-12.
Many Americans do not wish to recognize the inconsistency of extolling an ideal code of values while they live by another code. Furthermore, they are frequently duped and beguiled by politicians and industrial magnates. Notions of democracy are obscured and distorted in practice, and many good intentions of people go astray by misunderstanding how to put democratic relations into effect. The picture is further complicated by the absence of open channels of mass communication. Spurious issues are frequently propounded by those with vested interests in order to obscure the real issues from public vision and scrutiny. The industrialist extols the virtues of machine technology and the work-saving devices that this technology made possible. Technology is praised and lauded by the industrialist to the extent of upholding a form of reverence for the machine, itself, and what it can do. His whole theory is that man plans and uses the machine for humane and moral purposes. His idealism, in which he renounces gross materialism, is probably the most frequently professed philosophy anywhere in the world.

We praise even our most successful men, not for their ruthlessness and self-centered energy in getting ahead, but because of their love for flowers, children, and dogs, or their kindness to aged relatives. Anyone who urges a selfish creed of life is everywhere frowned upon. Along with the disappearance of the home, and the multiplication of divorce in one generation by six hundred per cent, there is the most abundant and most sentimental glorification of the sacredness of home and the beauties of constant love that history can record.22

22 Ibid., pp. 13-14.
Industry and business conducted for profit are nothing new, but the machine has given them a power and scope they never had before. Human associations, law and politics, frequently are reduced to the influences of the peculiar combination of the machine and money.

The spiritual factor of our tradition, equal opportunity and free association and inter-communication, is obscured and crowded out. Instead of the development of individualities which it prophetically sets forth, there is a perversion of the whole ideal of individualism to conform to the practices of a pecuniary culture. It has become the source and justification of inequalities and oppressions. Hence our compromises, and the conflicts in which aims and standards are confused beyond recognition.23

There is widespread destruction of individuality in American culture. "The problem of constructing a new individuality consonant with the objective conditions under which we live is the deepest problem of our times."24 All the distinct characteristics that point to the dissolution of individuality on a broad scale are in evidence.

The marks and signs of this "impersonalization" of the human soul are quantification of life, with its attendant disregard of quality; its mechanization and the almost universal habit of esteeming technique as an end, not as a means, so that organic and intellectual life is also "rationalized"; and, finally, standardization. Differences and distinctions are ignored and overridden; agreement, similarity, is the ideal. There is not only absence of social discrimination but of intellectual; critical thinking is conspicuous by its absence. Our pronounced trait is mass suggestibility.

23 Ibid., p. 18.
24 Ibid., p. 32.
The adaptability and flexibility that we display in our practical intelligence when dealing with external conditions have found their way into our souls. Homogeneity of thought and emotion has become an ideal.\textsuperscript{25}

The restoration of a new individuality applicable to the changing times must be faced, not circumvented. Some would like to believe that the only type of individuality which is valid is one that existed before machine technology and democratic forms of government. Yet an individuality of a bygone age, appropriate to a radically different form of society, is no more applicable than a theory which imagines present forms of society to be fixed and unchanging. A theory which finds its basis in the assumption of the permanence of present institutions is not geared to the transitive and dynamic character of American culture. The nature and direction of individuality in the modern age should be determined by means of critical thinking, experimental investigation, and scientific inquiry.

The first step in further definition of this problem is realization of the collective age we have already entered. When that is apprehended, the issue will define itself as utilization of the realities of a corporate civilization to validate and embody the distinctive moral element in the American version of individualism: Equality and freedom expressed not merely externally and politically but through personal participation in the development of a shared culture.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., pp. 23-24.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., pp. 33-34.
The shift to corporateness in America has submerged individuality in the process of mass production and in the operation of a powerful economic force. "The significant thing is that the loyalties which once held individuals, which gave them support, direction, and unity of outlook on life, have well-nigh disappeared. In consequence, individuals are confused and bewildered." Each person needs stable objects to which he may give allegiance and find certainty. There are, of course, objects of fundamental stability found in religious and social creeds; but unless this stability is attuned to present conditions and situations and refuses to offer antiquated and incongruous solutions to present problems, then there is little hope that either religious or social creeds can aid in getting at the root of our problems.

Many of our problems stem from vague indecision as to the meaning and purpose which industry and finance should serve. The captains of industry help shape economic forces, but they conceal many of their activities which endanger public interest. "Their reward is found not in what they do, in their social office and function, but in a deflection of social consequences to private gain." The actions which produce corporate and collective results lie outside the realm of social fulfillment and satisfaction. The entrepeneurs and

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27 Ibid., p. 52.
28 Ibid., p. 53.
managers do not find social satisfaction in their private monetary interests. A split develops between deeds that aid one's fellows and the pursuit of private enterprise. "No complete satisfaction is possible where such a split exists. Hence the absence of a sense of social value is made up for by an exacerbated acceleration of the activities that increase private advantage and power."²⁹ The business mind is not unified and this condition will continue so long as corporate activities are conducted in their present fashion. "Proof of the existence of the split is found in the fact that while there is much planning of future development with a view to dividends within large business corporations, there is no corresponding coordinated planning of social development."³⁰ The problem of unifying economic undertakings with the need for social planning and development is to be found in the development of a new spirit in corporate activity. "A unified mind, even of the business type, can come into being only when conscious intent and consummation are in harmony with consequences actually effected."³¹

C. A New Direction for Liberalism

Hopes were dispelled that a liberal movement could ameliorate the recurring problem of individualism in the

²⁹Ibid., p. 54.
³⁰Ibid., p. 58.
³¹Ibid.
social order when it was found that liberalism lacked any secure objects of allegiance.

The liberalism of the past was characterized by the possession of a definite intellectual creed and program; that was its distinction from conservative parties which needed no formulated outlook beyond defense of things as they were. In contract, liberals operated on the basis of a thought-out social philosophy, a theory of politics sufficiently definite and coherent to be easily translated into a program of policies to be pursued. Liberalism today is hardly more than a temper of mind, vaguely called forward-looking, but quite uncertain as to where to look and what to look forward to.  

Earlier liberalism of the Lockeian variety, sought to uphold and extend human rights. It held to the primacy of individual rights over those of the state. The notion of 'natural rights' arose to challenge authoritarian forms of government by asserting that each person possessed certain inalienable rights the state could not usurp. Later, liberalism held the belief that a natural antagonism existed between the ruler and the ruled. Not until the latter half of the nineteenth century did liberalism develop the notion that the government should be an instrument for extending the rights of individuals.

The new form of liberalism shifted from an exclusive emphasis on the political scene, and man's concomitant rights, to an emphasis on the values found in the economic market. Adam Smith's name is linked with this transformation.  

Ibid., p. 60.
Production was thought to be regulated by the natural economic law of supply and demand. The relationship of this theory to liberalism, considering its divergence from past liberal beliefs, is found in the support it gave to individual rights and values. The philosophy of utilitarianism, found in the school of J. S. Mill, tried to unite the ideals of individual freedom with the insistent demands for new forms of social organization. The scope and significance of freedom was immeasurably broadened and deepened. It became a problem of establishing a social order with a character and quality that would recognize the rights of each individual and safeguard his social relations. Mill's liberalism is in sharp contrast to the earlier liberalism. The values of earlier liberalism are "liberty, the development of the inherent capacity of individuals made possible through liberty, and the central role of free intelligence in inquiry, discussion and expression." 33

Earlier liberalism lacked an historic sense and interest. This deficiency was an especially valuable weapon when liberalism opposed those doctrines that continually appealed to the past for political direction and insight. In the end, however, this lack of historic interest blinded the eyes of liberals to the fact that their own special interpretations of liberty and individuality were, in themselves, historically

33Liberalism and Social Action, p. 32.
conditioned. They had no idea of historical relativity; consequently, they assumed that their liberal concepts were good for all time. What earlier liberals neglected were an examination of the social scene and the determination of practices based on social conditions then existing. Had they made such an examination they

would have recognized that effective liberty is a function of the social conditions existing at any time. If they had done this, they would have known that as economic relations became dominantly controlling forces in setting the pattern of human relations, the necessity of liberty for individuals which they proclaimed will require social control of economic forces in the interest of the great mass of individuals. Because the liberals failed to make a distinction between purely formal or legal liberty and effective liberty of thought and action, the history of the last one hundred years is the history of non-fulfillment of their predictions.

Early liberalism completed its work of liberating a group of individuals representing the new science and productivity from binding customs, traditions, and ways of thinking, but it was impotent to give direction to solving the problems of social living in a complex corporate society where new economic forces held control. Our times are in need of a new liberalism that will develop direction and planning in social, economic, and political life.

In short, liberalism must now become radical, meaning by "radical" perception of the necessity of thoroughgoing changes in the set-up of institutions and corresponding activity to bring the

34Ibid., pp. 34-35.
changes to pass. For the gulf between what the actual situation makes possible and the actual state itself is so great that it cannot be bridged by piecemeal policies undertaken ad hoc. The process of producing the changes will be, in any case, a gradual one. But "reforms" that deal with this abuse and now with that without having a social goal based on an inclusive plan, differ entirely from effort at re-forming, in its literal sense, the institutional scheme of things. 35

The notion that organized social control of economic forces is contrary to liberal policy is a remnant from the laissez-faire form of liberalism innovated by Adam Smith. This form of liberalism places the individual and society in opposition and eventuates in a lack of social planning. "The thing which now dampens liberal ardor and paralyzes its efforts is the conception that liberty and development of individuality as ends exclude the use of organized social effort as means." 36 The new liberalism must seek to envision individual rights in functional social relations within the context of a vastly more complex society than the one in which earlier liberalism emerged. The problem for the new liberalism is to develop radical policies of social action that will assure a more equitable distribution of the goods and services of society. "The problem of bringing into being a new social orientation and organization, is, when reduced to its ultimate, the problem of using the new resources of production, made possible by the advance of physical science, for social ends, for what Bentham called the greatest good of the greatest number." 37

Section III: Discussion

A. Introduction to the Political Scene

Dewey and Niebuhr are cognizant of the many social problems that arise from political conflicts, and each social critic addresses himself especially to the political unrest of the twentieth century. Their approaches lead them along divergent paths of inquiry; there are times, however, when their concerns converge long enough to give the reader a clearer understanding of their comparative positions.

Dewey focuses on the nature and scope of state activity and its operational relationship to a multi-group society. He claims that the formal political body known as the state is not sovereign (as usually considered), since individuals exhibit a multiplicity of human allegiances in diverse organizations, with each organization exercising a unique social control. Through this analysis the various social, economic, and political aspects of society are envisioned in a new functional perspective.

Niebuhr does not direct his attention to any formal consideration of the role and scope of the state and its activities. Instead, his analysis focuses on the use of political and economic power within society and the consequences that flow from particular uses. Niebuhr holds that the uses of economic and political power create the most serious problem that society must face if it is ever to be successful in developing a satisfactory system of social
justice. Dewey and Niebuhr state at the outset, therefore, different political themes on which their thinking will focus. Instead of examining divergencies of outlook exclusively, this discussion will endeavor to concentrate on the critical junctures and convergences of their thinking.

Both Niebuhr and Dewey recognize that American society is undergoing considerable change—both domestically and internationally. These changes make imperative a reappraisal of the dominant social and political problems facing this country. The long term results of social reforms are not easy to predict, however, even for trained observers. Frequently, the social reformer finds his proposals encountering unforeseen obstacles, or his reforms engender a state of social disorganization that may far outweigh any social benefits that may accrue. Many proposals for social advancement go astray by failing to recognize the impact and long-range consequences of social forces already at work. Both Dewey and Niebuhr endeavor to survey the multiplicity of social contingencies entering and impinging upon the present scene. This awareness tends to make their analyses more acute and penetrating; thereby resulting in the formulation of broad social perspectives rather than narrow and limited ones.

But what are these vital social problems with which America is faced, and how do Niebuhr and Dewey deal with them? Both writers recognize that the distribution, use, and application of political power in America leaves much to be desired.
B. The Use and Abuse of Political Power

Some consider centralized political power evil and feel, therefore, that this concentration of power must be abolished. This outlook is found in Marxist and various anarchist doctrines. Yet, if these proponents were to examine the political structure in many different societies throughout the world they would be hard-pressed to find social and political arrangements in which a concentration of political power was non-existent. Society must have leaders to direct the division of labor necessary for social survival. Some one in each society must be granted responsibility for the coordination of the needed social activities that the society deems essential in the furtherance of their culture. Those who act as coordinators of socio-political power hold a commanding position that may be utilized to control others.

Focal points of political power are found in all societies; but the extent and concentration of this power varies according to the particular society. One thing is certain: political power of some nature is found in every society, even though the forms that it takes may show marked differences. Niebuhr and Dewey recognize that social and political power are here to stay. The point at issue is how power may be effectively and efficiently used to enhance democratic living. Niebuhr sums up the critical problem in these words:

Western culture will still have to find a social philosophy which avoids the pitfalls of rationalistic
utopianism on the one hand and a cynical glorification of power on the other. No new world order can be achieved without the social organization of power in economic, political, and military terms. If our fear of imperialism and political power is so great that we blindly insist on utopia as an alternative we will end by getting chaos.¹

We have seen that Niebuhr would endeavor to limit the use of power in society by bringing it under the highest degree of ethical control and under the regulation of social instruments of justice.² Those who possess excessive power are always in danger of succumbing to the corruption that this power brings. The collective egoism of power groups should be brought under ethical control, but only too frequently this egoism has become too entrenched to be checked by ordinary means. This is why society is forced to build an intricate system of legal restraints. Coercive measures are usually the most effective sanctions that law can apply against the force of inordinate power structures. Power groups in society are inevitable. The control of these power groups and the problem of channeling their activities into streams of social welfare rather than social disorganization is, according to Niebuhr, one of the most serious issues that all societies ultimately must face. Reason, education, and ethical suasion are all helpful but, unfortunately, their


²See Chapter II, Section I, of this dissertation for an elucidation of this problem.
efficacy has been overestimated. Niebuhr, therefore, argues for more stringent legal and ethical controls. The immediate outlook for the social control of political power is not an optimistic one, societies not having yet learned how to establish instruments of justice that will regulate the use of political power effectively.

The approach to social change, which a Christian faith presents mankind, encourages man to recognize his true stature as creature and creator in human history. By becoming aware of one's real stature within a universal dimension the individual will be able to check what Niebuhr has termed "the sin of pride" and restrict its expansive desires. It is reasonable to assume that some men, failing to understand their true stature, will always be guilty of the sin of pride. But if we are to overcome the collective egoisms within the power structure, a clearer recognition by all men of their true stature is a requisite. Only the religious perspective of Christianity, according to Niebuhr, will help man recognize his multi-dimensions within a universal framework.

Dewey holds that there is nothing inherently evil in power but insists, instead, that the use of power must be judged in terms of the social consequences that result whenever it is put into action. Dewey, would look to the social means through which power is put into effect, therefore as well as to the ends that result. Niebuhr, in contrast, would look to the quality of socio-political power and seek an
ultimate judicial system to check inordinate power and bring it under the greatest measure of ethical self-control. Thus, Niebuhr, though holding to a fixed end, would also turn to means.

It is Niebuhr's claim that dominant social interests will be furthered so long as these interest groups hold the greatest amount of power. Dewey suggests that

... dominant interest is never the exclusive interest that exists—not when there is a struggle taking place. The real problem is whether there are strong interests now active which can best succeed by adopting the method of experimental intelligence into their struggle, or whether they too should rely upon the use of methods that have brought the world to its present estate, only using them the other way around.³

Niebuhr implies that interest corrupts reason into a servant of power by impetuously seeking power for its own sake. "Rationalism divorces reason from impulse too completely and underestimates the tendency of impulse to defy and corrupt the dictates of reason."⁴ According to Niebuhr, reason is not entirely deficient in helping man achieve a better life, but man always overestimates its power by ignoring its tendencies to be corrupted by impulse.⁵

Dewey's proposals for social betterment differ at this point from those held by Niebuhr, and much of this difference


⁴Niebuhr, Reflections on the End of an Era, p. 113.

⁵Niebuhr tacitly conceives all forms of modern reason to be of the variety espoused during the Enlightenment.
is traceable to the concept of man that each holds. Dewey contends that some dominant interests of society can best succeed by adopting the method of experimental intelligence. In the past, social institutions were determined by oligarchial, political, ecclesiastical, and economic power, all using all manner of indirect and subtle means. "Habit, custom, and tradition have had a weight in comparison with which that of intelligence is feeble."7

In view of the influence of collective illusion in the past, some case may be made out for the contention that even if it be an illusion, exaltation of intelligence and experimental method is worth a trial. Illusion for illusion, this particular one may be better than those upon which humanity has usually depended.8

Intelligence formerly was held to be capable of resolving all existing social problems. At the dawn of the Enlightenment men believed that reason, alone, through the dissemination of knowledge, would open a new era for mankind. But this form of reason, though highly regarded, was isolated from positive action and substantial plans for social reform. This exaltation of reason frequently was used for restricted purposes, but, as Dewey notes, the fact that "intelligence in the past operated for narrow ends and in behalf of class interests is a reason for putting a high estimate upon its

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6See Chapter I for an elucidation of their differing views of man.

7Dewey, op. cit., p. 306.

8Ibid.
possible role in social control, not a reason for disparag-
ing it. The application of the experimental method to the
resolution of social problems and the initiation of social
planning and control has not been tried, Dewey notes, on any
wide scale. What he asks, simply, is that it be given a fair
trial.

C. Self-interest and Objectivity in Political Action

It would be axiomatic to say that political action is
always tinged with a mixture of self-interest. Attitudes
and acts stemming from self-interest are varied in kind. Some
political acts of self-interest are conducted for personal
aggrandizement; other acts seek to enhance the rewards one's
friends may receive. But it would be misleading to consider
all political acts and legislation to be of this nature.
Many political positions are taken by officials to improve
social conditions, and many political acts are designed to
promote the general welfare of the people.

Dewey urges the use of scientific thinking in political
affairs in order that decisions will become more impartial
and have a basis in fact. The use of scientific thinking
would employ rigorous inquiry to uncover all available evi-
dence that bears on particular decisions under consideration.

What the method of intelligence, thoughtful valua-
tion will accomplish, if once it be tried, as for
the result of trial to determine. Since it is

ibid., p. 307.
relative to the intersection in existence of hazard and rule, of contingency and order, faith in a wholesale and final triumph is fantastic. But some procedure has to be tried; for life is itself a sequence of trials. Carelessness and routine, Olympian aloofness, secluded contemplation are themselves choices. To claim that intelligence is a better method than its alternatives, authority, imitation, caprice and ignorance, prejudice and passion, is hardly an excessive claim. 10

Niebuhr, on the other hand, is not convinced of the efficacy of this prescription. Men continually overestimate their altruism and benevolence. Modern man has trouble recognizing his own self-interests; they become intricately enmeshed with the needs and interest of others. Man, thus, is inevitably caught in the web of self-deception through his social and political relationships and, in consequence, self-deception is part and parcel of contemporary life. Society frowns upon those who are motivated by self-interest; but American society fails to comprehend how remote and unrealistic their codes are for controlling human nature. Social conventions and sanctions render it imperative for man to transmute and disguise his self-interests. This type of social pressure sometimes brings about inner conflict. Frequently, man's facade to the world takes the form of a complex process of rationalization whereby his pose makes it possible for him to continue to pursue self-interest in the name of public welfare. And even though channels of communication may be open between officials and the public, they

serve often simply as a medium for the justification of political policies. There is little hope for any of us when public officials fail to see that their underlying self-interest would destroy all the noble intentions of which they proclaim. No man who has a distorted perspective of himself can make an objective appraisal of the needs of others. Thus, it is only through humbleness that man may recognize his lack of genuine understanding and begin to realize his finiteness. He will then envision his true dimensions in relation to himself, others, and God. Niebuhr tacitly assumes that through the cultivation of a contrite spirit man may recognize his true nature and, thereby, reorder his relationships with his fellows. Niebuhr's position does not offer a concrete plan for social amelioration at this point.

D. Social Changes and Political Problems Facing American Democracy

Each of these social critics recognize the change going on in American democracy, Dewey noting specifically that the strong individualism which once characterized American frontier life, with its accompanying spirit of independence, are not things of the past. They have been replaced by a growing social corporateness, a result that has altered the complexion of American social and economic life.

Changes in liberal thought also occurred during these years of transition. The whole temper of early liberalism was individualistic. It opposed organized social action.
Liberalism held to the primacy of the individual over the state and sought to safeguard the inalienable rights of individuals against the mounting threats of various forms of authority.

There still lingers in the minds of some the notion that there are two different "spheres" of action and of rightful claims; that of political society and that of the individual, and that in the interest of the latter the former must be as contracted as possible. Not till the second half of the nineteenth century did the idea arise that government might and should be an instrument for securing and extending the liberties of individuals.\footnote{Dewey, Liberalism and Social Action, pp. 5-6.}

This shift in the direction and emphasis of liberalism was a great transformation. The concern for liberty and its fruits in Lockeian liberalism continued, but this new emphasis gave it a different practical meaning. This shift in liberalism, associated with Adam Smith and the physiocrats, subordinated political and economic activity to the laws of production and exchange. Natural law was considered more fundamental than man-made law, but the former lost its moral meaning; instead, it was identified with free and unhampered production and exchange. This laissez-faire policy of the American economy led to a lack of organized social action and concern for the common welfare except as it was assumed that what was good for the aggressive individual was good for the general welfare—a forerunner of the corporate claim that what is good for, say, General Motors, is good for the country.
The theory was held that natural law would be violated if 'individual initiative' was interfered with by centralized policies of social reform. Men soon came to discover, however, that the economic matters would not always regulate themselves, a fact thoroughly illustrated by the differing federal actions taken to break the grip of recent depressions in this country. "It is the tragedy of earlier liberalism that just at the time when the problem of social organization was most urgent, liberals could bring to its solution nothing but the conception that intelligence is an individual possession." Liberals did not envision the possibilities of the application of the experimental method for the resolution of social problems.

Liberals are concerned today with civil liberties and the extent of state intervention in public affairs for social improvement. The most serious problem that contemporary liberalism now faces is to create the most effective social organization for American democracy. According to Dewey,

The only form of social organization that is now possible is one in which the new forces of productivity are cooperatively controlled and used in the interest of the effective liberty and cultural development of the individuals that constitute society. Such a social order cannot be established by an unplanned and external convergence of actions of separate individuals, each of whom is bent on private advantage.

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12 Ibid., p. 45.
13 Ibid., p. 54.
Niebuhr, equally, finds the liberalism of the Enlightenment to be woefully inadequate for today's world. He differs from Dewey, however, in the reasons he assigns for liberalism's shortcomings. Niebuhr states that the individualism of bourgeois liberalism is neither a clear gain nor a pure virtue.

Partly because it is the product of a mechanical civilization and partly because it is the fruit of rationalism, modern individualism is too mechanistic in its conception of society. The organic character of the individual's relation to society can be comprehended and illuminated by an adequate mythology but hardly by rationalism; for reason mechanizes human relations.14

Niebuhr would not go along with Dewey's plan for reconstructing liberalism, instead, he sees the problem from a different perspective and theoretical framework. He proposes the utilization of more stringent judicial and ethical controls to promote social justice. Both social critics, however, are aware of the outmoded character of laissez-faire economics, and advocate a greater cooperative control of the economic means of human sustenance. Each is critical of Marxism, of its rigorous determinism and glorification of utopian ideals and each suggests that increased cooperative control of the American economy is not a panacea, per se. And each believes that active experimentation should be utilized to determine the economic and social efficacy of proposals relating to the

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14Niebuhr, op. cit., p. 93.
reconstruction of society. Niebuhr states that 

The consistent socialization of all economic power is no more an adequate solution for our problem than a consistent disavowal of political authority upon economic process. The latter leads to anarchy as the former leads to tyranny. The wisest nations experiment in order to find a middle way which will insure a maximum of freedom and security. That middle way certainly involves the socialization of some forms of property that cannot otherwise be brought under social control. It means that placing certain governmental checks upon other forms of economic activity and yet allowing freedom in the economic process whenever possible, which means whenever that freedom will not tend to destroy freedom.15

Dewey would see the avenue of approach through a reversal of the means to which early liberalism was committed, along with the employment of experimental methods in the intelligent reorganization of our social system.

Organized social planning, put into effect for the creation of an order in which industry and finance are socially directed in behalf of institutions that provide the material basis for the cultural liberation and growth of individuals, is now the sole method of social action by which liberalism can realize its professed aims. Such planning demands in turn a new conception and logic of freed intelligence as a social force.16

Dewey states that bold new insights, based on the findings of cooperative intelligence, should be employed to fashion a social order designed to meet the needs of these changing times. Practices of yesterday, traditions, customs and all

15Niebuhr, "Will Civilization Survive Technics?" Commentary (December 1945), p. 5.

social policies will need to come under the scrutiny of critical intelligence. This is the approach, according to Dewey, that should guide our aspiration to create needed social reforms. "Not perfection as the final goal, but the ever enduring process of perfecting, maturing, refining, is the aim in living."¹⁷

CHAPTER IV

EDUCATION

Introduction

The assumptions underlying this dissertation are, first, that an educational philosophy is directly related to a social philosophy and, second, and inevitably, that the latter shapes the resulting educational program. This assumption seems warranted so long as we consider schools a function of the society they serve; it is completely warranted when we view education as a wider social function than schooling. Schools are not established and operated independently of the dominant cultural traits and patterns sanctioned by society. This is especially true when schools are public; indeed, private schools reflect particular values their supporters approve of as the proper norms for society. Schools help to transmit and perpetuate, at the formal level, those values, ideals, skills, and knowledges that society deems of greatest worth. Cultural values are reflected in the schools to such an extent that anyone with a thorough knowledge of the public schools of a given society should be capable of describing with fair adequacy its major characteristics.
A social philosophy should fall within the range of relevant and effective action, and it should criticize and transform social conditions. "And to criticize or transform, to supplement or strengthen the values embodied in a culture, is just what it means to have a philosophy of culture."¹ The vital role that formal education plays in assisting society in the realization of these aims should not be overlooked. Nor should a social philosophy neglect to recognize the great effect informal means of education play in achieving social goals. Plans for bringing about new social patterns and refining older ones will greatly influence the content, activities, and the aims of the school. The school is a social institution that has large responsibility for perpetuating and reconstructing the cultural patterns and value systems of society.

Dewey and Niebuhr consider the problems of education in their broader scope and widest implications. They recognize that agencies, associations, and social contacts play a significant role in shaping the ideals and values of the child. And just as important as schools and informal educative contacts are for the child, so it is vitally important to examine the wider educative influences in society that shape, nourish, or thwart adult thought and action. These social critics believe that society should provide a reflective atmosphere, not only for the child, but, also, for adults.

A. **Aims of Education**

Educative aims have been viewed in many ways. Among the many aims of education, accumulation of knowledge, training in a particular skill, and mental discipline have been most frequently advocated. Dewey and Niebuhr disagree with these aims. Instead, they focus their attention on the characteristics of the educative process. The educative process, in their positions, is moral in its implications, though each views the moral implications and social consequences of the educative process differently. They agree, nevertheless, that all acts which are truly educative have moral implications, that one of the purposes of education is to focus on problems of moral judgments.

Dewey warns us that we have considered morals too narrowly, by divorcing them from effective ability to perform socially needed acts.\(^2\) Conventions and traditions have limited morality to a given set of duties and actions. The mores, framed as negative prescriptions, are considered by some to set the limit and range of morals, an outlook has brought about a narrow and limited conception. Actually, morality is as broad as our relationships with others. There

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is some general awareness among the public that certain social relationships are moral--such as those that involve problems of honesty, trust, charity, and the like. These values are central in public thought, giving them the importance that they hold. But, actually, all our social relations are moral in character, whether or not we realize it. "For every act, by the principle of habit, modifies dispositions—it sets up a certain kind of inclination and desire. And it is impossible to tell when the habit thus strengthened may have a direct and perceptible influence on our associations with others."\(^3\) It may be said, properly, that morality is concerned with the whole character of man in all his social actions and manifestations. "The moral and social quality of conduct are, in the last analysis, identical with each other."\(^4\)

Education is threatened whenever it fails to be motivated by a social spirit. The needed qualities of this spirit can be found only when certain conditions are brought about, however. There are two vital conditions, according to Dewey, that should be maintained in every school: the school should be a miniature community and the learning process should be continuous with learnings gained out of school.

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 415.
\(^4\)Ibid.
The school is not isolated and apart from the social affairs of the community; schools are an essential and integral part of the community structure. Much artificiality arises when schools view themselves as separate and self-contained institutions that have the sole function of transmitting fundamentals to youth. "In place of the school set apart from life as a place for learning lessons, we have a miniature social group in which study and growth are incidents of presently shared experience."\(^5\)

Learning in school should be continuous with learnings out of school. There should be numerous points of contact between school activities and meaningful experiences and those in which he participates outside of school. Dewey has noted that ". . . as a rule, the absence of a social environment in connection with which learning is a need and a reward is the chief reason for the isolation of the school. . ."\(^6\) And we may add that as students become aware of this isolation they tend to take school less and less seriously. Dewey goes on to say that a narrow and prescriptive view of morals is responsible for the failure to recognize that "all the aims and values which are desirable in education are themselves moral."\(^7\) Niebuhr would concur with Dewey on this point.

\(^5\)Ibid., p. 416.
\(^6\)Ibid., p. 417.
\(^7\)Ibid.
Niebuhr, however, makes certain qualifications. Education, according to Niebuhr, should be moral in its aims and intentions; yet many educational opportunities, not only in the school but in the larger society, are subverted and exploited by selfish interests. Education should be a moral process having the objective, 'know thyself.' Dewey similarly believes that the purpose of education is self-realization. But Niebuhr and Dewey do not see this end as the proper purpose of education for the same reason. Niebuhr does not share Dewey's optimism about man's potential for developing everwidening and fruitful patterns of growth that will lead to more growth. Instead, Niebuhr envisions the need for self-examination as the crux of the educational process for the specific reason, far from optimistic, that man is a chronic distorter of his position and stature within the universe. Evil, for instance, does not stem from man's failure to learn the techniques of social compromise. Its roots go deeper. They are found in man's sense of pride, which causes him to overestimate his importance in the scheme of things. Man cannot facilitate understanding of his true character when he constantly identifies his ideals with those of the group. For human vices become compounded when mixed

\[8\] See Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics.*
with the strivings for group power. Man needs to recapture a moral state. 9

The individual should become sensitive to the fact that his will-to-live is frequently transmuted into a will-to-power. But groups and organizations only offer the individual elaborate rationalizations why their collective will-to-power should be sanctioned. The individual is left, therefore, with the realization that genuine self-understanding comes only through self-examination and solitude. Through the development of a humble and contrite spirit man may begin to understand his relationship to himself, to others, and to God. We may assume that man, then, will re-order his social and political relations, having recognized his true nature and stature within the cosmos. Actually, however, Niebuhr offers slight hope that man can ever attain this condition.

Dewey, on the other hand, believes that shared and conjoint activity is necessary to growth and, hence, necessary in the educational process. The child grows when he shares in the social consciousness of the race, and the never-ending process of growth leads to a continuous reconstruction of experience. "Education is that reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience,

9Man approaches this moral state, according to Niebuhr, by recognizing his finitude and his inexorable tendency to transmute the will-to-live into the will-to-power. By faith, at this point, man can come to understand the divine center of life and morality.
and which increases ability to direct the course of subsequent experience." The medium for these experiences is social. The import of these social experiences is moral.

Out of this moral experience what has commonly been called 'character' develops. Dewey would define character, in a general sense, in terms of an organized capacity for social functioning, social interest, and responsiveness. Niebuhr, on the other hand, sees the source of character as a contrite and humble spirit that serves as a means of comprehending one's unique individuality. Man needs self-examination, according to Niebuhr, in order that he may understand and fulfill his moral relationship to himself, to others, and to God.

B. Local Control of Education

Education grows out of the collective goals society wishes to achieve. Niebuhr and Dewey are aware of this. Education neither exists for itself alone nor apart from other institutions and agencies. Its goals and objectives

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10 Dewey, op. cit., p. 89.

11 Niebuhr makes much of "the sin of pride." Presumably he would maintain that those who advocate the scientific method for the resolution of social problems are also guilty of this sin. Those who espouse the scientific method and the use of reason, according to Niebuhr, elevate it to the level of an absolute and imagine disinterested intelligence can secure a place above the flux of process. Niebuhr, at this point, directs his criticism to Dewey, failing to realize that it is "the Reason of the Enlightenment" he is attacking. Niebuhr's social philosophy could also be accused of the sin of pride by virtue of his assumption that he knows man can comprehend, to some extent, what God intended him to comprehend.
do not develop solely from within its walls. But, on the other hand, not every significant change in society ultimately brings about changes in the educational structure. The relationship of the multiplicity of organizations, agencies, and people exerting pressures in various directions on American education creates a complex and unique picture.

Dewey breaks down the idea of sovereignty in his concepts of political pluralism. His system of political pluralism recognizes that sovereignty is divisible. The state does not exercise any type of authority that may be considered sovereign, rather, as Dewey shows, social responsibility is distributed in various voluntary groupings throughout the nation. Voluntary groups are vital to a democracy in helping to bring about social justice. Doctrines of state sovereignty, however, have neglected the vital role of voluntary groupings in a complex, technological society. If the state gains too much power it tends to limit the rights and privileges of voluntary groups. These groups sometimes arise spontaneously, but more frequently they are consciously developed by social planning to serve the particular purpose designated by their members. The totality of these groups, embodied in their aims and ideals, go to make up the will of the people, even though the importance of their activities may not be recognized by the government. The state, therefore, is only one form of human association. It does not exhaust the associative impulses of man. Voluntary groupings
are frequently better qualified than the state to fulfill the needs and interests of individuals. The primary, face-to-face relationships found in voluntary groups are helpful for individuals to gain direct understanding of the aims and purposes of the group.

From Dewey's concept of political pluralism we may infer that schools can best realize their immediate and long-range needs through local control of education. Dewey, however, claims that his system of political pluralism is neutral as far as state activity is concerned. Whether or not state intervention in local education is advisable, depends mainly on an analysis of the particular social and educational conditions that are disorganized and the social consequences that would accrue from proposed action. Dewey's system of political pluralism points up the vital role that voluntary groupings play, and it shows direct, face-to-face relations to be more desirable than impersonalized, secondary, centralized control.

Niebuhr maintains that the highest form of ethical attitudes can be found in primary communities and within the more intimate, face-to-face relationships of local groups. He points out that social sympathy tends to break down in large, metropolitan communities, even though there are agencies at work that hope to ameliorate this condition to some extent.

The failure of even the wisest type of social pedagogy to prompt benevolences as generous as those
which a more intimate community naturally evolves, suggests that ethical attitudes are more depend­ent on personal, intimate and organic contacts than social technicians are inclined to assume. The dependence of ethical attitudes upon personal contacts and direct relations contributes to the moral chaos of civilization, in which life is related to life mechanically and not organically, and in which mutual responsibilities increase and personal contacts decrease. 

This statement suggests that the most effective social and educational program can best be conducted through local communities and voluntary groupings. Ethical relations have their root in primary communities and in the simplicity of their relations. An educational program has the greatest hope of success where life is related to life organically because original nature may then function free of the institutional forms of the will-to-power. Dewey, however, would evaluate ethical relations in terms of the social consequences of acts. He would not look to a priori principles of human nature.

C. Liberalism and the Idea of Progress

Niebuhr is critical of many contemporary movements and various forms of liberal action that we looked upon by many as major solutions for our social and educational problems. It is at this point that his remarks are most critical of the scientific temper of our age. Niebuhr and Dewey differ markedly in their belief in the promise for liberal thought

\footnote{Niebuhr, Moral Man and Immoral Society, pp. 28-29.}
of the scientific method in its application to social problems.

Niebuhr states that there are certain presuppositions that form the framework for modern scientific examinations of the human scene. Two very dubious presuppositions underlie this contemporary outlook:

A) The idea of the perfectability of man and B) the idea of progress. The errors into which the examination is betrayed are reinforced by a characteristic method of inquiry. This method is to examine man as if he were no more than one of the many objects in nature, which the scientific method will be able to comprehend fully, if only its tools are sufficiently precise and the scientist is sufficiently objective.13

This modern optimism is found throughout contemporary literature that takes on a form of adulation of human progress through the scientific method. This method of inquiry, according to its protagonists, has dispersed superstition and ignorance and placed the social sciences on a firm foundation. As a result of this scientific temper and its concomitant optimism, modern man has designed plans to bring about an ideal society "either by a force immanent in nature itself, or by the gradual extension of rationality, or by the elimination of specific sources of evil, such as priesthoods, tyrannical government and class divisions in society. . ."14

13 Niebuhr, Christian Realism and Political Problems, p. 72.
Rationalists assumed the ultimate sources of evil and conflict to be the ignorance and selfishness of man. They believed the effects of these sources could be overcome by increasing human intelligence. They held, according to Niebuhr,

"... either that men were selfish because they were too ignorant to understand the needs of others, or they were selfish because the victims of their egotism were too ignorant to defend themselves against their exactations. Or they believed that the injustices of society were due to the perpetuation of ancient and hereditary abuses, which were sanctioned by irrational superstitions and would be abolished by reason."\(^{15}\)

The wise men of our time simply have not considered the recalcitrant impulses of men that militate against a more rational and moral life. These wise men continue to espouse the life of reason and the cultivation of rational impulses. "They have not yet seen what stubborn inertia life-as-impulse defies the obvious imperatives of life-as-spirit."\(^{16}\) Besides ignoring the magnitude of man's impulsive and self-seeking nature, social scientists are prone to oversimplify the causes of social problems. They are certain that nothing more than a "cultural lag" prevents modern society from overcoming its vices. "They attribute to disinterested ignorance what ought to be ascribed to interested intelligence."\(^{17}\)

\(^{15}\)Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, p. 23.
\(^{16}\)Niebuhr, *Reflections on the End of an Era*, p. 35.
\(^{17}\)Ibid., p. 45.
even when social scientists recognize self-interest in social policy, they maintain a simple faith in their ability to persuade society to cease pursuing self-interest. Anthropologists rightly insist that there are no biological roots for racial inequality, but they wrongly conclude that enlightenment is all that is needed to dispel ignorance. Bourgeois liberalism of today is no clear gain for society.

Partly because it is the product of a mechanical civilization and partly because it is the fruit of rationalism, modern individualism is too mechanistic in its conception of society. The organic character of the individual's relation to society can be comprehended and illuminated by an adequate methodology but hardly by rationalism; for reason mechanizes human relations.  

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The rationalism of modern bourgeois tendencies divorced reason from impulse too completely and underestimated the tendency of impulse to corrupt reason.

Present-day education has adopted a rationale similar to that of the social sciences and educational reform falls into the camp of bourgeois liberalism. Ready-acceptance of many aspects of social science methodology by educators has led to misinterpretations of human nature and social interest. The sharpest educational conflict between Dewey and Niebuhr, therefore, emerges right here, over the use and efficacy of critical thinking in its application to educational practice. Dewey points out that there is a serious need for freed intelligence, that the experimental method

18Ibid., p. 93.
should be used in resolving social and educational problems. By study of the past we discover that the forces which determined social institutions, arrangements, and changes were based on political, economic, and ecclesiastic power, whether exercised openly or by indirect and subtle means. Habit and impulse have had an impetus in comparison with which intelligence is feeble.\textsuperscript{19}

In view of the influence of collective illusion in the past, some case may be made out for the contention that even if it be an illusion, exaltation of intelligence and experimental method is worth a trial. Illusion for illusion, this particular one may be better than those upon which humanity has usually depended.\textsuperscript{20}

Dewey disavows the rationalism of the eighteenth century by stating that intelligence has no power per se. Hume was nearer to the truth, although guilty of exaggeration, when he said "reason is and always must be the slave of passion"—or interest.

But dominant interest is never the exclusive interest that exists—not when there is a struggle taking place. The real problem is whether there are strong interests now active which can best succeed by adopting the method of experimental intelligence into their struggles, or whether they too should rely upon the use of methods that have brought the world to its present estate, only using them the other way around.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{19}In \textit{Human Nature and Conduct}, Dewey recognizes the power of impulse and habit; however Niebuhr criticizes Dewey for neglecting their role in human affairs.

\textsuperscript{20}Dewey, "Intelligence and Power," \textit{New Republic} (April 25, 1934), 78, p. 306.

\textsuperscript{21}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 307.
Niebuhr tends to associate Dewey with everything from rationalism and bourgeoisie liberalism to the modern temper of social scientists. According to Niebuhr,

Professor Dewey has a touching faith in the possibilities of achieving the same results in the field of social relations which intelligence achieved in the mastery of nature. The fact that man constitutionally corrupts his purest visions of disinterested justice in his actual actions seems never to occur to him. Consequently he never wearies in looking for specific causes of interested rather than disinterested intelligence.\(^\text{22}\)

Niebuhr goes on to claim that one-half of Dewey's philosophy is devoted to what, in Christian theology, is called the creatureliness of man, his involvement in biological and social processes; the other half "seeks a secure place for disinterested intelligence above the flux of process; and finds it in organized co-operative inquiry."\(^\text{23}\) But, according to Niebuhr, Dewey is unaware that "no possible 'organized inquiry' can be as transcendent over the historical conflicts of interest as it ought to be to achieve the disinterested intelligence that he attributes to it. Every such 'organized inquiry' must have its own particular social locus."\(^\text{24}\) No court of law can remain free from party bias whenever it deals with issues profound enough to touch the very foundations of society upon which it is based. "Moreover, there can be no

\(^{22}\)Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, I, 110.
\(^{23}\)Ibid., p. 111.
\(^{24}\)Ibid.
'free co-operative inquiry' which will not pretend to achieve a more complete impartiality than is possible for human instruments of justice. The worst injustices of conflicts of history arise from these very claims of impartiality for biased and partial historical instruments.\textsuperscript{25}

Criticisms of instrumentalism which alleged that it assumes "a disinterested intelligence above the flux of process" is repudiated by Dewey. The role of critical intelligence is always a part of man's ongoing experience, but it never transcends process.\textsuperscript{26} Dewey answers Niebuhr's criticism that disinterested intelligence ultimately becomes interested intelligence.

The current assumption is that knowledge comes first and then action may—or may not—proceed from it. Critics who have attacked the idea that intelligence has an important role to play have based their attack upon acceptance of this idea; they have criticized me on the basis of attributing to me the very idea that I have been concerned to overthrow. Thus on the basis of a passage in which I denied that any amount of fact-finding apart from action aiming at control of social processes—in other words, a planned economy—could ever build up social knowledge and understanding, Mr. Niebuhr imputes to me middle-class prejudices in ignoring the role of class interests and conflict in social affairs! He imputes to me a great exaggeration of the potentialities of education in spite of the fact that I have spent a good deal of energy in urging that no genuine education is possible without active participation in actual conditions, and have pointed out that economic interests are the child cause why this change in education is retarded and deflected.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{25}ibid., pp. 111-112.

\textsuperscript{26}See Dewey, \textit{Experience and Nature and Logic—The Theory of Inquiry}.

\textsuperscript{27}Dewey, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 307 (italics supplied).
To give critical intelligence an opportunity to be tried in the area of human affairs does not seem to Dewey to be an extravagant demand.

What the method of intelligence, thoughtful valuation will accomplish, if once it be tried, is for the result of trial to determine. Since it is relative to the intersection in existence of hazard and rule, of contingency and order, faith in a final and wholesale triumph is fantastic. But some procedure has to be tried; for life is itself a sequence of trials. Careless and routine, Olympian aloofness, secluded contemplation are themselves choices. To claim that intelligence is a better method than its alternatives, authority, imitation, caprice and ignorance, prejudice and passion, is hardly an excessive claim.\(^2^8\)

D. Education, Society, and Social Reform

Many persons are inclined to consider social problems as somehow external and indifferent to their immediate personal problems. Most of us are unable to see how we are affected by social problems. "We as educators need first of all to recognize that social problems are something of our own; that they, and not simply their consequences, are ours; that we are part of the causes which bring them about in what we have done and have refrained from doing and we have a necessary share in finding their solution."\(^2^9\) These problems are social because they are common. To put it another way, "the causes which produce the suffering of the men and


women in these other groups are the causes which have generated the crisis in education."  

But educators are likely to be distant and remote in their interest and understanding of workers who are suffering from economic inequalities. Much of the economic ignorance of teachers is the result of this.

Our educational system suffers from a separation between head and hand, work and books, and action and ideas. This vividly symbolizes the separation between teachers and workers.

If all teachers were within the teachers unions and if they were in active contact with the working men and women of the country and their problems, I am sure more would be done to reform and improve our education and to put into execution the ideas and ideals written about and talked about by progressive educators than by any other one cause whatsoever, if not more than by all other causes together.

But, in another place, Dewey reinterprets his views on the relationship of education to labor unions, workers, and the American Federation of Teachers in particular.

In the sense in which "labor means socially productive agencies, I think, my self, teachers should be aligned with "labor." The difficulty, I think, with the present tendency of the A.F.T. is not so much its alignment with labor, even in the more limited sense of the A.F. of T., as is its tendency to align itself itself with a special economic fixed doctrine about the future of society and of (proletaria) labor. . . . There is a difference it seems to me between objecting to current

30Ibid.
31Dewey made these statements in 1933.
tendencies in the A.F.T. (which objection might be strong enough to induce resignation) and object­ing to connection with labor as such. The real question is rather where the social interest of labor really lies.\footnote{From an unpublished letter written by John Dewey to H. Gordon Hullfish on November 16, 1936.}

This statement points up the fact that there is not only a continuous relationship between school and community, but there must be a close interaction between educators, workers, and management. The real problem is to examine the tenor and direction of labor, management, and public agencies and see where their social interest really lies. Above all, educators should not be isolated from the affairs of the community—social problems are their problems.

Vast technological changes have wrought social dislo­cations throughout society, thereby, pointing out the imperative need for a better understanding between groups. Formerly people were interested mainly in local and immediate affairs until the advent of rapid transportation and communication. The railway, airlines, telegraph, telephone, and the print­ing press have changed all of this. Rapid transportation and communication have caused men to live as members of a vast and unseen community. The complexity and extensiveness of indirect and secondary social relations have never been greater. Most people cannot gain first-hand information of national and international affairs; they find, therefore,
they must rely on the accuracy and completeness of the communicative media. Public opinion may be controlled by manipulating communicative media. But even though it seldom comes about that one man or a group of individuals can control public opinion in a democracy, nonetheless, our social climate indicates that education has failed to provide people generally with critical thinking and the ability to penetrate to the crux of a problem.

Our schooling does not educate, if by education be meant a trained habit of discriminating inquiry and discriminating belief, the ability to look beneath a floating surface to detect the conditions that fix the contour of a surface, and the forces which create its waves and drifts.34

One of the fundamental criticisms that may be leveled against education is the lack of critical thinking that goes on in classrooms. "We dupe ourselves and others because we have not that inward protection against sensation, excitement, credulity and conventionally stereotyped opinion which is found only in a trained mind."35 One of the reasons for this ineptitude is the persistence of teaching traditional material which is irrelevant to present conditions and problems. There is no protection from being duped when this type of material composes the largest body of what is taught in our schools. "Our schools send out men meeting the exigencies of contemporary life clothed in the chain-armor

34 Dewey, Characters and Events, I, 779.
35 Ibid.
of antiquity, and priding themselves on the awkwardness of
their movements as evidences of deep-wrought, time-tested
convictions."\textsuperscript{36}

The other way in which the schools fail to provide a
discriminating attitude for the examination of current events
is the absence of critical thinking in teaching the social
studies, an absence based on the fear of controversial issues.
The effect is to send students out into life either oblivious
to, or unable to deal with, the social problems they meet.
The atmosphere of schools should be one of inquiry, based on
faith in intelligence to solve problems through the use of the
scientific method. Teachers need to become sufficiently
courageous to insist that education create discriminating
minds.

When this happens schools will be the dangerous
outposts of a humane civilization. But they
will also begin to be supremely interesting
places. For it will then have come about that
education and politics are one and the same thing
because politics will have to be in fact what it
now pretends to be, the intelligent management
of social affairs.\textsuperscript{37}

Niebuhr feels, as does Dewey, that answers to our pres­
ent social and educational problems cannot be found by a
simple return to the past. The great truths of past cultures
and civilizations can help illuminate our times only when

\textsuperscript{36}Ibid., pp. 779-80.
\textsuperscript{37}Ibid., p. 781.
they are attuned to present needs. Even the Christian attitude toward politics and social life is unrealistic in its affirmation and insistence on the use of absolute ideals to guide public policies.

The Christian attitude toward government reveals the same tendency to combine pessimistic realism with regard to the evils of government with a religious justification of those evils. The perspective of the pure love ethic makes the Christian Church conscious of brutal realities of politics. The love ideal implies uncoerced co-operations; but governments are by their very nature coercive. Yet their power is divinely ordained and the coercion that they use is a requisite of social cohesion and a guarantee against graver injustice in a sinful world.38

In religion, moral ideals must not become too lofty and remote from the world of concrete social affairs. The social validity of a "moral ideal which transcends social considerations in its purest heights, is progressively weakened as it is applied to more and more intricate, indirect and collective human relations."39 The problem of moral values, therefore, as these are applied to specific social problems, needs further examination.

It is well to note that even in comparative simple problems of individual relationships there is no moral value which may be regarded as absolute. It may, in a given instant, have to be sacrificed to some other value. Every action resolves a certain competition between values, in which one value must be subordinated to another. This is necessary in a specific instance even though there may


39Niebuhr, Moral Man and Immoral Society, p. 266.
be an ultimate harmony of all high and legitimate moral values.  

Absolutism in religious and political idealism, even though a strong incentive to heroic action, is a dangerous guide to specific situations. "In religion it permits absurdities and in politics cruelties, which fail to achieve justifying consequences because the inertia of human nature remains a nemesis to the absolute ideal."\(^{41}\)

Competing quests for power lead to injustice. Niebuhr proposes that we deal with competing power factions and value conflicts by equilibrating power. When this does not suffice among economic power factions, "we use the more broadly based political power to redress disproportions and disbalances within economic society."\(^{42}\) But Niebuhr holds forth little hope in his writings that this equilibrium can be maintained for long without resort to coercive measures that lead to injustice. Thus, "an uneasy balance of power would seem to be the highest goal to which society can aspire."\(^{43}\) Moreover, apart from presenting an unstable equilibrium as the highest goal society may reach, Niebuhr does not provide any method by which competing interests are to be arbitrated. Apparently, power is the boss, a position

\(^{40}\)Ibid., p. 174.

\(^{41}\)Ibid., p. 199.

\(^{42}\)Niebuhr, The Irony of American History, p. 89.

\(^{43}\)Niebuhr, op. cit., pp. 164-232.
reminiscent of the older doctrine of "might makes right." And this seems an odd ending for an admittedly Christian position.

What some educators and social critics have overlooked is that the moral roots of society are not derived from secular sources. Religious ideals and traditions may not be directly involved in the organization of the community; but they are the ultimate sources of the moral standards from which political principles are derived.

In any case both the foundation and the pinnacle of any cultural structure are religious; for any scheme of values is finally determined by the ultimate answer which is given to the ultimate question about the meaning of life. This is true even of ostensibly secular cultures which covertly raise some contingent value of life into the position of the ultimate, and worship it as god.44

When educators deal with moral values and problems of conduct in the classroom they sometimes forget this. Frequently, they utilize secular values as the source of decision-making for students. This serves to perpetuate a distortion of the moral relationships between school and society.

In contrast to Niebuhr, Dewey holds that moral and "religious" values do not stem predominantly from religion.45 It may be said, properly, that morality is concerned with the whole character of man in all his social actions and manifestations. "The moral and social quality of conduct are, in


45See Dewey, A Common Faith.
the last analysis, identical with each other."46 Dewey, in analyzing the relationship between moral values and education, states that it is the part of men

to labor persistently and patiently for the clarification and development of the positive creed of life implicit in democracy and in science, and to work for the transformation of all practical instrumentalities of education till they are in harmony with these ideas. Till these ends are further along than we can honestly claim them to be at the present, it is better that our schools should do nothing than that they should do the wrong things. It is better for them to confine themselves to their obvious tasks than that they should, under the name of spiritual culture, form habits, of mind which are at war with the habits of mind congruous with democracy and with science. It is not laziness nor cynicism which calls for this policy; it is honesty, courage, sobriety, and faith.47

Schools face the problem, as do individuals, of widespread social changes in society. Some contend that the role of the schools is to transmit the cultural heritage; others would like to see the schools initiate needed social changes. Obviously, the schools cannot merely reflect the status quo, if by this term we mean something stable and constant. The cultural heritage is in a state of flux and it is the responsibility of educators to decide what is of greatest worth at a particular time. The schools not only reflect the existing social order, they play a vital role in producing social change. We could say, therefore, that the problem is not

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whether the "schools should participate in the production of a future society (since they do so anyway) but whether they should do it blindly and irresponsibly or with a maximum possibility of courageous intelligence and responsibility."\textsuperscript{48}

Intelligent direction is especially needed from teachers at this time. The pace of change in many areas today is so swift that confusion and conflict are almost inevitable consequences of this fact. The national response of almost mass hysteria, so far as education is concerned, following the discovery that Russia had placed a satellite in orbit before the United States (or better, perhaps, the free world) is illustrative. There is no single clean-cut pattern, of course, that will stabilize and unify these multifarious social changes. The educational system may easily move into a state of disorder as it reflects the confusion and conflict of social conditions. But need it do so? Dewey asks,

What does democracy really mean? What would be its consequences in the complex life of the present? If we can answer these questions, then our next question will be: What direction should we give to the work of the school so that the richness and fullness of the democratic way of life in all its scope may be promoted? The cooperative study of these questions is to my mind the present outstanding task of progressive education.\textsuperscript{49}

In this dissertation an attempt has been made to illuminate the meanings of democracy for educational direction and


progress. Dewey and Niebuhr are representative social critics of the two dominant modes of thought in our culture—naturalism and supernaturalism respectively. Both Dewey and Niebuhr have provided illuminating insights within the framework of their systematic social philosophies.

A reassessment of these two positions is needed at this point. Dewey does not recognize the separation posed by Niebuhr between individual and social behavior. Niebuhr presents an intriguing but implausible picture of the moral individual as pitted against an immoral society. "The individual looks down upon the community because he is, as it were, higher than it is... Looking down at the community from his individual height the individual is embarrassed by the difference between the moral standards of the community and his own." Niebuhr postulates such a clearly demarcated separation between the individual and the social aspects of life that any basis for social relations is difficult to establish. Dewey, on the other hand, starts from acts which are performed, not from hypothetical causes for those acts. He considers their consequences, and, in this way, avoids the pitfalls of a dualism between individual and social behavior.

The problems of social justice are the focal points for Niebuhr's social philosophy. Ultimately, Niebuhr is

50 Niebuhr, The Self and the Dramas of History, p. 35.
faced with the problem of what to do with power. He claims that all power should be distrusted. But where would this lead? If social cohesion is impossible without coercion, and coercion is impossible without injustice, and self-interest cannot be checked without asserting competing self-interest, what are the prospects for social harmony? Niebuhr concludes that "an uneasy balance of power would seem to be the highest goal to which society can aspire," a conclusion that would seem to assure man that he is fighting a losing battle. Niebuhr has not offered a workable plan for social justice, in spite of his occasional flashes of brilliant insight.

Dewey proposes a political pluralism that recognizes the role of voluntary groups, demonstrating that the state does not exercise any type of power that may be considered sovereign. Dewey does not directly relate his concept of political pluralism to education, in spite of the great promise this concept holds. It is too bad that Dewey did not carry his political pluralism further so that the influence of this movement would be more widespread. Political pluralism has been superseded by state sovereignty, guild socialism, and other political theories.

Niebuhr decries Marxist determinism but is committed to a thesis of history that is, in its own way, as closed.

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and determined. Niebuhr speaks of "the perennial and persistent character of human egoism in any possible society," of "the vast forces of historical destiny," of "inexorable historical development," in a way that leaves him open to such criticism as Karl Popper uses to explode the concept of historical determinism in his *The Open Society and Its Enemies* and that put forth by Isaiah Berlin in *Historical Inevitability*.

His theory of history, therefore, cannot be regarded as a serious component of his own philosophy of man. If the evidence of history should fail to support his view, or even if it should at any moment appear to go against it, Niebuhr's attitude toward his own doctrine would not be seriously affected, since his own conviction rests on faith.52

Niebuhr's doctrine of the inevitably of sin rests on a theology which is based on faith, and this faith is always distorted by logic.

Nor can one think merely of the fact that he has often looked deeply into man's psychology. One must remember that his main psychological conclusions themselves carry the burden of his belief in historical inevitability, that this is indefensible in his case without appeal to a theology which is avowedly self-contradictory.53

In spite of these serious criticisms of Niebuhr's thought, he has been influential among liberals in some circles in helping bring about needed social reform.54

52 Morton White, *Social Thought in America*, p. 259.

53 Ibid., p. 264.

His criticisms of American social and political life have called attention to conditions in need of amelioration. Dewey's social philosophy, more optimistic in tone and more related to biological and social fact, remains to be proven on the widest social scale. When critical intelligence and experimentation are applied to social problems in the way that Dewey advocates, we will be in a position to evaluate the social consequences of these activities.

Finally, it seems fair to conclude that Dewey and Niebuhr have done more than develop some fruitful insights. Through their systematic treatises, they have helped modern man formulate more humane ends for education and society in this complex century of conflicting ethical relationships.
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